

Women and the work of cultural production in ATV's regional television news, 1956-1968

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Abstract

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The parallel histories of the establishment of regional television news and the changing patterns of women's employment in the English Midlands are the focus of this study. Analysing the points of intersection between these two historical processes provides new historical insight into the pace of social change in a period characterised by historians as a time of flux, rupture and transformation, but also, particularly in the context of women's history, as one of staid and sober living. In order to study these histories concurrently this research is based on an exploration of an extant collection of regional television news inserts, originated by Associated Television (ATV) for the Midlands broadcast region from its first broadcast in 1956 up to 1968. The moving image materials captured by the cameras of the regional news teams, and now available in an online digital archive, are the fragments of news stories filmed on location in the streets, workplaces and occasionally homes of the Midlands and edited into the daily news broadcasts.

The resulting analysis presented in this thesis details the various ways in which 'ordinary' women, as well as those paid to work at ATV, were made visible in ATV's television news programmes. For most women their ordinariness was defined by the fact that they were not paid for their television work, but also provides a category of analysis throughout this study. This thesis argues that ambiguities surrounding what was ordinary 'women's work' was central to their participation in this site of cultural production. By providing a critical evaluation of the agency embodied by ordinary women in the regional television news the public dimension of women's 'dual role' is recovered. This provides a route to contest understandings of mid-century domesticity to a far greater extent than previous accounts of women's history. The thesis concludes that the pace of change in women's lives was far more rapid than has previously been suggested. That the 'ordinary housewives' of the mid-twentieth century paved the way for change in the lives of later generations of women, normalising women's position in the workplace and becoming visibly recognised as a social force in the transformation of society in the 1950s and 1960s.

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List of Abbreviations

ATV	Associated Television
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
ITN	Independent Television News
ITV	Independent Television
M- OA	Mass Observation Archive
MRO	Modern Records Office
TUC	Trades Union Congress

Chapter One

Introduction

Television rapidly formed part of everyday life in Britain from the mid-1950s. As the second half of the twentieth century has received increasing attention in historical study, growing numbers of practitioners have acknowledged the need to address television as a crucial site of social and cultural experience. However there are considerable difficulties in translating this acknowledgement into practice. Television has generated a large amount of fragmented material in written, visual and audio-visual forms with relatively little published scholarly debate on how to approach them as historical evidence. Recently, the AHRC funded project ‘A History of Television for Women in Britain’ has highlighted the range of archive materials; such as studio floor plans, programme logs and shooting scripts that, where available, need to be included in discussions of the value of television as a historical source.¹ This variety of material has not yet been reflected in the few historical studies that have addressed television. As Virginia Preston has commented, social histories that have made use of broadcasting material largely cite written sources rather than the broadcasts themselves.² Moreover, with the exception of Joe Moran’s work, most historians engaging with television have

¹ Hazel Collie, Mary Irwin, Rachel Moseley, Helen Wheatley and Helen Wood, ‘Researching the history of television for women in Britain, 1947-1989’, *Media History*, 19:1 (2013), pp. 107-117.

² Simon James and Virginia Preston (eds.), *British Politics since 1945: The Dynamics of Historical Change* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 16.

focused on the history of political culture, rather than aspects of social and cultural history.³

In television studies, television is often referred to as a hybrid medium, collecting and reproducing cultural references from numerous media forms. This has been a particular point of interest in the study of Independent Television (ITV) in Britain due to its distinctive production structure. Namely, a commercial television provider with a public service remit, an ongoing policy debate around the merits of ‘popular’ versus ‘quality’ television, and a tension between the operation of a simultaneously national and regional television service.⁴ This hybridity makes the written and audio-visual archives of the companies on the ITV network particularly rich and valuable for historians researching contemporary social commentary and cultural production.

In the last twenty years the sub-discipline of television history has sought to assess critically how the place of television in British culture and society has changed over time. Detailed archival research and oral history work has overturned many assumptions about television production, content and reception in the 1950s and 1960s. This has included studies into the relationship between the BBC and ITV,⁵ how

³ Joe Moran, “‘Stand up and be counted’: Hughie Green, the 1970s and popular memory’, *History Workshop Journal*, 70 (2010), pp. 172-198; Lucy Robinson, “‘Sometimes I like to stay in a watch TV...’ Kinnock’s Labour Party and media culture’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 22: 3 (2011), pp. 354-390; Jamie Medhurst, “‘Minorities with a message’: The Beveridge report (1949-1951) and Wales’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 19:2 (2008), pp. 217-233; Lawrence Black, “‘Whose finger on the button?’ British television and the politics of cultural control’, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 25:4 (2005), pp. 547-575.

⁴ Catherine Johnson and Rob Turnock, ‘Conclusions: ITV a hybrid subject’, in Catherine Johnson and Rob Turnock (eds.), *ITV Cultures: Independent Television Over Fifty Years* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005), pp. 196-199.

⁵ Su Holmes, “‘A friendly style of presentation which the BBC had always found elusive’? The 1950s cinema programme and the construction of British television history’, in Helen Wheatley (ed.), *Re-viewing Television History: Critical Issues in Television Historiography* (London: IB Tauris, 2007), pp. 67-81.

television entered the home⁶ and the employment of women in television production.⁷

Despite this, however, the field remains largely focused on research into the BBC rather than ITV and national rather than regional programming. Furthermore, although gender has been a central point of consideration, analysis of the representation of women in fictional rather than actuality genres has predominated. Where there has been consideration of women's contribution to news and current affairs programming, studies have largely focused on the small number of women working in television production roles.

This thesis seeks to address these gaps by focusing on the appearances of 'ordinary' women in a collection of regional television news originated by Associated Television (ATV) for the Midlands between 1956 and 1968. The aims are, firstly, to make an original contribution to the historical literature on women and the media and secondly to provide methodological insights into the use of audio-visual (also discussed in this study as moving image) material in historical research. Central to this analysis is the consideration of the appearances of unpaid and usually anonymous Midlandsers who featured daily on their own television screens and the essential 'work' they accomplished in this field of cultural production. The relationship between television and the everyday has been a major point of scholarly discussion,⁸ but there has been relatively little consideration into how 'ordinary' people featured on screen despite their

⁶ Tim O' Sullivan, 'Researching the viewing culture: television and the home 1946-1960, in Helen Wheatley (ed.), *Re-viewing Television History: Critical Issues in Television Historiography* (London: IB Tauris, 2007), pp. 159-169.

⁷ Patricia Holland, *The Angry Buzz: This Week and Current Affairs Television* (London: IB Tauris, 2006); Patricia Holland, 'When a woman reads the news', in Helen Baher and Gillian Dyer (eds.), *Boxed In: Women and Television* (London: Pandora, 1987), pp. 133-150.

⁸ Roger Silverstone, *Television and Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 1994); Charlotte Brunsdon, *Everyday Television: Nationwide* (London: BFI, 1978).

centrality to the medium's popularity.⁹ This study therefore takes up Charlotte Brunsdon's argument that:

Television is not just a popular medium because lots of people watch it. Television is a medium which constantly inscribes its own popularity into its programming in the way in which it displays its ability to mobilize all different kinds of people to participate, and thus legitimise it, as *the* popular form.¹⁰

In referring to 'ordinary' people, I broadly mean those people who appeared on television, but were not paid as reporters, actors, or 'glamour girls'. These ordinary people, although they provided a significant amount of television content, received few financial rewards for their work in cultural production. Jane Root has described them as 'the uncelebrated and underpaid foot soldiers of non-fiction TV', and suggests that since the inception of television their job has been: 'to be just like those watching, to act as viewers momentarily whisked to the other side of the screen'.¹¹ However, television production has established various selection processes to mediate the construction of ordinariness on screen. These have been shaped by production teams according to contemporary news values and the television producer's perceptions of their target audience. Ordinariness did not map directly onto a particular class, gender or ethnicity, but was developed in dialogue between the production teams and those

⁹ Su Holmes, *The Quiz Show* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008); Su Holmes, 'The "give-away" shows –who is really paying?: "ordinary" people and the development of the British quiz show', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, 3:2 (2006), pp. 284-303.

¹⁰ Charlotte Brunsdon, 'Text and audience', in Ellen Seiter, Han Borchers, Gabriele Kreutzner and Eva-aria Warth (eds.), *Remote Control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power* (London: Routledge, 1989) pp. 116-129.

¹¹ Jane Root, *Open the Box: About Television* (London: Comedia, 1986), pp. 95-97.

they captured on camera. In the Midlands between 1956 and 1968, the regional news teams established the ordinary Midlander as, white, working class and gainfully employed. However, exceptions were made for ethnic minorities, the middle class and the unemployed as news stories required. In analysing how the regional news was established in the Midlands the present study argues that ordinary woman played a crucial and distinctive role in the development of a televisual style for ATV's regional news programmes.

The complexities of women's relationship with the media are most apparent in visual forms, whether in print, film or television. Media images, such as 'page 3 girls' and the televising of the 'Miss World' contest (1970), have periodically been the focus of feminist campaigns critical of media representations of women. Feminist practitioners of media and women's history have developed critical analyses of media constructions of femininity and the objectification of women's bodies in its images. Analyses of women's magazines have also criticised individuating and misleading representations of how women combined domestic and paid work. In her research into US magazines Joanne Meyerowitz has argued that such analysis, as exemplified by Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* has maintained 'a surprisingly strong influence on historiography'.¹² Revisiting archives of popular women's magazines, Meyerowitz presents a more complex relationship between women and postwar mass culture, arguing that although popular magazines did not directly challenge the conventions of marriage or motherhood, neither did they tell women to 'stay at home'.¹³ She thus encourages historians to base their assessments of women's relationship with mass

¹² Joanne Meyerowitz, 'Beyond the feminine mystique: a reassessment of postwar mass culture, 1946-1958', *The Journal of American History*, 79:4 (1993), p. 1456.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1480.

culture on archival research that looks at cultural products in their entirety, interrogating some of the assumptions made by a previous generation of practitioners.

A comparable argument has recently been made by Adrian Bingham in his study of gender and the popular press in interwar Britain. In it he warns historians of making assumptions about how the popular press discussed gender roles. By focusing on the popular press, rather than ‘women’s interest’ media, he has sought to trace the ‘multivocal debates’ within the mass media.¹⁴ Similarly, this thesis surveys how women appeared across the regional news collection as ATV employees, ‘housewives’ and ‘workers’ analysing how both progressive and conservative discourses intersected in the broadcast material. In addition, Bingham’s study is based on the popular press at a time where it became part of everyday life for the majority of the population.¹⁵ In the post-war period television was challenging the place of the print media as the most important everyday form of visual mass media communication. Hence it is imperative that historians begin to make use of televisual material in their research, as exemplified in the present study.

This thesis seeks not only to address some of the gaps in television and media history, but to draw together media and women’s history in order to reframe questions central to the research agendas of both fields. Women’s participation in ATV’s television news programmes was mediated by a complex relationship between women’s roles as housewives, mothers and paid workers. Using oral history interleaved with documentary sources Claire Langhamer’s work has problematised accepted understandings of women’s relationship with work and leisure. She discusses how

¹⁴ Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 17.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

women's domestic work was, especially in print media, often described as leisurely or as a pleasurable expression of their femininity. She has stressed the importance of life-cycle in structuring women's experiences of leisure, demonstrating that young women (like men) often understood leisure time in relation to the completion of paid employment, although they did often have more domestic duties than their brothers. In contrast married women's leisure preferences were generally subsumed into their domestic duties.¹⁶ Since this study is located at the historical juncture when increasing numbers of married women went 'out to work', especially part-time, analysis of the discursive and visual ambiguities in relation to women's work and leisure are extended to include women's paid employment outside the home. As Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson have suggested in relation to the representation of women in British cinema during the Second World War, images of women at work were constructed to 'provide the means by which it was possible to imagine the working woman without disrupting the image of the women as homemaker'.¹⁷ By analysing how this reconfiguration of domestic work, paid work and leisure were visualised, regional television news material can similarly reveal much about the development of new working patterns for women in the 1950s and 1960s and how this differed from interwar and wartime representations.

Contemporary sociologists Ferdynand Zweg, Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, and Pearl Jephcott discussed the impact of new patterns of paid employment for women in the 1950s and 1960s. Defending working mothers against child deprivation theories was an important function of this sociological work, which has been reflected in the

¹⁶ Claire Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England 1920-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 187-191.

¹⁷ Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson (eds.), *Nationalising Femininity: Culture, Sexuality and British Cinema in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 1.

historiography. For example, Dolly Smith Wilson's discussion of the 'good working mothers' reveals how, in the face of criticism, women emphasised the material benefits their wages made to their families.¹⁸ However, the focus on the relationship between women's paid employment and the home has meant that historians have overwhelmingly affirmed that paid work remained ancillary to women's lives, something that was organised around domestic responsibilities and childcare.¹⁹ I argue that women's agency in the 1950s and 1960s has been extensively explored through the expansion of 'consumer culture' and modern forms of domesticity,²⁰ at the expense of examining women's lives in the round. I suggest that the impact of (part-time) paid employment in (married) women's lives in the 1950s and 1960s has been labelled 'marginal' without a thorough exploration of how it featured in women's experience of this period. This point is illustrated in greater detail in the historiographical review below. Likewise in media history, the home-centeredness of television as a form of leisure has meant practitioners have drawn out the connections between women, television and domesticity.²¹ This neglects an important aspect of women's experience

¹⁸ Dolly Smith Wilson's article provides an exception in this case: Dolly Smith Wilson, 'Postgraduate Essay Prize Winner for 2005 A new look at the affluent worker: the good working mother in post-war Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17:2 (2006), pp. 206-229.

¹⁹ Selina Todd, 'Affluence, class and Crown Street: reinvestigating the post-war working class', *Contemporary British History*, 22:4 (2008) pp. 501-518; Gerry Holloway, *Women and Work in Britain since 1840* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p. 181; Sue Bruley, *Women in Britain Since 1900* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p. 134; Penny Summerfield, 'Women in Britain since 1945: companionate marriage and the double burden', in J Obelkevich and P Catterall (eds) *Understanding Post-War British Society* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 63; Jane Lewis, *Women in Britain since 1945: Women, Family, Work and the State in the Post-War Years* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 90-91.

²⁰ Judy Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb: Domestic Identities, Class, Femininity and Modernity* (Oxford: Berg, 2004); Maggie Andrews and Mary Talbot (eds), *All the World and Her Husband: Women in Twentieth-Century Consumer Culture* (New York: Cassell, 1999).

²¹ Maggie Andrews, *Domesticating the Airwaves: Broadcasting, Domesticity and Femininity* (London: Continuum, 2012); Janet Thumim, *Inventing Television Culture: Men, Women, and the Box* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Janet Thumim (ed), *Small Screens, Big Ideas: Television in the 1950s*

highlighted by contemporary sociologists, who also discussed how engaging in paid employment afforded women a valuable social role. Myrdal and Klein were emphatic that the 'dual role' would restore women's place in public life severed by the onset of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century.²² Zweig found in his 1952 study that as more women engaged in paid employment the 'justifications' they provided for going out to work (or indeed staying at home) necessarily changed to reflect their material circumstances.²³ Thus alongside discussions of consumer culture and the effects of women's paid employment on their home life, historical research must also consider how 'going out to work' provided opportunities for working-class women's engagement in social and cultural life.

This study argues that the place of paid work in women's lives in this period was far from static, even if it was organised in relation to domestic work and responsibilities. Using a collection of television news material to elucidate this history is important for two reasons. First, it can be triangulated with the evidence from official records and oral histories, which point to very different conclusions about the place of work in women's lives during the 1950s and 1960s. Statistical records suggest women's position in the workplace was changing, as greater numbers of women, entered a wider range of industries and professions.²⁴ Oral histories, conversely, reveal the continuing

(London: IB Tauris, 2002); Lynn Spiegel, *Make room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

²² Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, *Women's Two Roles: Home and Work* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1956), pp. 1-12.

²³ Ferdynand Zweig, *Women's Life and Labour* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1952), p. 23.

²⁴ Rosemary Crompton, *Women and Work in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 41-47.

importance of male breadwinners and women's roles as wives and mothers.²⁵ As a contemporary record of women's public appearances as wives and workers the regional television news collection provides insight into women's history between these two positions. It can provide qualitative, contemporary evidence, to complement the quantitative and retrospective evidence prevalent in current studies. Of course the collection is not a mirror image of contemporary experience, which leads to the second point. The ATV television news collection is a valuable lens on this history, precisely because when women appeared on screen the visual references to their work were blurred with those of leisure.

Claire Langhamer observed in her survey of the *Manchester Evening News* that by 1960s the paper frequently featured photographs of women, especially beauty queens, and the activities of young women more generally. However, within the repositioning of leisure in the post-war period, the lives of married women were presented as 'ever more home focused' despite the increasing numbers of women in the labour force.²⁶ Langhamer argues that in the newspaper women's work was increasingly blurred into leisure, with 'strikingly few' references to women's leisure outside the home.²⁷ Her analysis is centred on women's work in the domestic realm, but it also raises questions for the women workers who moved across the home/ workplace divide and who appeared in the regional television news. Since the regional television news was viewed within the home as part of 'leisure time' the blurring of women's work into leisure could be understood as a consequence of a visual culture that was dominated by images

²⁵ Margaret Williamson, "'I'm going to get a job at the factory': attitudes to women's employment in a mining community, 1945-1965", *Women's History Review*, 12:3 (2003), p. 411.

²⁶ Claire Langhamer, 'Women and Leisure in Manchester, 1920-c.1960', Ph.D. thesis (University of Central Lancashire, 1996), pp. 86-87.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

of women's bodies as a source of pleasure. This was not necessary a product of the male gaze but also a form of pleasure for the (heterosexual) female audience. As Janice Winship has suggested, the pleasure that women's magazines provided for female readers was present in the opportunity to spend time looking at glamorised images of 'women's work' that allowed them to simultaneously acknowledge, but evade their domestic labours.²⁸ Thus the ambiguous framing of women in the regional television news collection is emblematic of women's work as a whole and therefore has the potential to resonate with the changing position of work in women's lives, rather than purely as an indicator of women's lives as 'home focused'.

This study is presented as a regional case study of ATV. Since regional culture is often conflated with working-class culture it is well placed to comment on to what extent the regional news was inflected by class.²⁹ Natasha Vall has warned of the tendency to associate regional forms of cultural production as complete and distinct, and has suggested that rather than providing distinct expressions of regional identity, analysis of regional broadcasting exposes the limits between the popular and the vernacular.³⁰ In this study the limits between the popular and the vernacular are analysed through the visualisation of ordinary Midland women. As Stephen Brooke's research has sought to reveal, working class women were not only objects of nostalgia representative of a supposedly lost working-class culture in the 1950s and 1960s, but also appeared in cultural representations as 'cipher[s] of the new working classes'.³¹ Thus the young

²⁸ Janice Winship, *Inside Women's Magazines* (London: Pandora, 1987) p. 56.

²⁹ Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 136-169.

³⁰ Natasha Vall, *Cultural Region: North East England, 1945-2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 7.

³¹ Stephen Brooke, 'Gender and working class identity in Britain during the 1950s', *Journal of Social History*, 34:4 (2001), p. 781.

wives and working mothers that appeared on the Midlands television news provide the opportunity to extend Brooke's discursive analysis, exploring working class women's position as 'ciphers of the new' in visual forms of communication. Drawing together the common gap in media and women's history by exploring how paid work was changing women's role in this 'new' regional site of cultural production, this thesis reveals how women's work as a cultural activity provided new routes for working class women's participation in public culture.³²

The remainder of this introduction will provide a chapter by chapter outline of the thesis, followed by a historiographical review of relevant work in media and women's history. The originality of the thesis lies in how it uses audio visual material as historical evidence of women's changing relationship with work and public culture, thus going beyond an analysis of the representation of women in the television text by combining visual analysis with social history analysis. The historiographical review therefore provides a critical survey of how previous research has presented the relationship between women and the media and emphasises how this study seeks to depart from this focus.

Outline of chapters

The central aim of this research is to explore and analyse how women appeared in the ATV regional news collection between 1956 and 1968. The majority of the news items used in this project are available to view online, since this research was funded by the AHRC as a Collaborative Doctoral Award they were uploaded as part of the project. A

³² Patrick Joyce initiated discussions on 'work as a cultural activity, rather than simply an economic one': Patrick Joyce, *The Historical Meanings of Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). More recent work on this area has been published in: Krista Cowman and Louise A Jackson (eds.), *Women and Work Culture: Britain c.1850-1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

DVD featuring a core selection of the news stories discussed in chapters four to seven has been produced to accompany the thesis, and to facilitate an easily accessible introduction to the images under discussion. However, the written thesis can be read and understood without viewing the material if this is preferred. It is also worth noting that the resolution of the images on the DVD is of a visibly higher quality than the material available to view online. Chapter two discusses previous approaches to film and history, with a focus on newsfilm and women in visual culture. It then describes the approach to the ATV regional news material, the sampling method used and the value of the collection as ephemera. The chapter also describes the other archival collections employed to contextualise the television material throughout the thesis. Chapter three provides a statistical analysis of women's changing work patterns and of television viewing in the Midlands between 1956 and 1968. Although obviously not directly comparable with the later qualitative analysis of the audio-visual news material, these quantitative accounts of the Midlands provide a sense of scale. Although the focus of this thesis is the ordinary woman on screen, women's employment in television production roles is also examined. Chapter four discusses the production context of the regional television news and especially the gendered working practices of Midlands ATV. It demonstrates that the period 1956-1964 was particularly productive for women in the industry, but that following the Pilkington report published in 1962 women lost out as stylistic changes across the television network meant they were increasingly replaced by men. However, the importance of the female audience meant that although female reporters and newsreaders lost their on-screen positions, ordinary women remained highly visible to television viewers throughout the period of this study.

The final three chapters explore the visibility of ordinary women, firstly in the various guises of 'the housewife'. The appearances of women labelled as housewives in the

television news are compared with the representation of housewives in television adverts, before moving on to discuss news items where the housewife featured as a civic campaigner. The last part of this chapter discusses how the regional news was used as a vehicle to encourage housewives back into the workplace (especially as teachers and nurses) but also how women's so called feminine skills were redefined in the expansion of secretarial roles and office work for women in the 1960s. Chapter six discusses women's dual role as producers and consumers and the uses of the 'working woman' on screen. A limited iconography of the female worker meant that frames, poses and gestures were borrowed from elsewhere in popular visual culture. The chapter demonstrates how the television news blended the iconography of the female worker, drawn from photography, industrial films and cinema newsreels, with the popular iconography of the pin-up and commercial advertising. The ambiguous status of the female worker as an economic agent meant that she entered into a wide ranging role as a social commentator. Lastly, chapter seven looks at how women participated in news reports of industrial action. This chapter again demonstrates the diversity of women's roles in the television news items as they appeared as both wives and workers. Chapters four to seven have been organised thematically, but points of intersection are recognised and discussed throughout the thesis. This means some of the news items appear in more than one chapter as the various dimensions of their relationship to women's cultural production are analysed.

This research is based on the ATV regional news collection broadcast between 1956 and 1968. It is therefore only a partial account of women's participation in regional television news in this period, since it does not include an analysis of the BBC's regional output, nor other regional television providers on the ITV network. However, in establishing a working methodology and beginning to explore the potential of audio

visual material for historical study, it is hoped that these findings could usefully inform future studies that seek to make use of television material in this crucial but currently under-researched area of historical enquiry.

Media and Women's History: Historiographical review

In recent scholarship there have been some engaging examples of studies inspired by the intersections between media and history from various sub-disciplinary perspectives. Within this trend historians have moved away from using periodicals, newspapers and other media products as 'repositories from which they can remove "facts"',³³ by taking closer account of the form of media texts.³⁴ Concurrently, film studies, which had since the 1970s been highly influenced by textual analysis, has witnessed a 'historical turn' resulting in a wealth of research more deeply invested in the historical contexts of film production and reception.³⁵ The erratic survival of audio-visual television programme material has meant that practitioners in television history have often looked beyond the text in their research, but a commitment to a holistic view of the medium's history has recently been restated.³⁶ These multidisciplinary perspectives share an interest in the representation of women and women's ability to control these representations.³⁷

³³ Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800-1914* (London: Routledge, 1996) p. 6.

³⁴ Andrews, *Domesticating the Airwaves*; Adrian Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life and the British Popular Press 1918-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain*.

³⁵ Melanie Bell and Melanie Williams (eds.), *British Women's Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2010); James Chapman, Mark Glancy and Sue Harper (eds.), *The New Film History: Sources, Methods, Approaches* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

³⁶ Helen Wheatley (ed.), *Re-Viewing Television History: Critical Issues in Television Historiography* (London: IB Taurus, 2007).

³⁷ I have used the term 'multidisciplinary' deliberately here, because the project draws on the knowledge generated by media, film and television studies, and social and cultural history, but is very

Integrating the parallel histories of media and women's history, specifically, is a growing point of interest in historical study.³⁸ This review will begin with an assessment of approaches to print, film and television in women's media history, before turning to relevant work in women's social and cultural history and providing a survey of approaches to the subject and identifying the gaps in both literatures that this study addresses.

Margaret Beetham's (1996) study marked an important development in the theorisation of the relationship between the woman's magazine and its readers. Tracing the development of magazines specifically for women, she analysed the cultural production of nineteenth-century bourgeois femininity. She demonstrated that periodicals, such as Beeton's *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, redefined the content of women's print journalism by synthesising domestic themes with fashion commentary and in doing so constructed 'the lady' as a specific form of femininity.³⁹ Importantly, in terms of later developments in twentieth-century women's magazines, she demonstrated how periodicals encouraged women to see themselves as consumers rather than producers. She draws generally negative conclusions on the impact of women's magazines on their readers, suggesting they negated the complexities of women's lives in favour of encouraging them to seek change through the transformation of their bodies into

much presented as a history thesis. It is therefore not an interdisciplinary project, because it does not attempt to provide a new form of knowledge outside existing disciplinary boundaries. These definitions have been taken from: Joe Moran, *Interdisciplinarity* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 16.

³⁸ Maggie Andrews and Sallie McNamara (eds.), *Women and the Media: Feminism and Femininity in Britain, 1900 to the Present* (London: Routledge, forthcoming 2013); The AHRC-funded project 'A History of Television for Women in Britain' has been jointly conducted with Dr Mary Irwin, Dr Rachel Moseley and Dr Helen Wheatley (University of Warwick) and Hazel Collie and Dr Helen Wood (De Montfort University) and culminates in May 2013 with 'Television for Women: An International Conference'.

³⁹ Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?*, pp. 59-70.

desirable objects. Beetham also touches on the importance of the first-person interview and confessional literature in New Journalism. This point has been expanded upon in a recent article surveying the long history of ‘audience participation’ in the media, as part of discussions which have attempted to understand the agency of the audience from different media perspectives. A more thorough understanding of these practices reveals how the audience has shaped the media as well as media producers. Within discussions of the agency of the audience there have been debates over the veracity of modes of expression, such as reader’s letters, but Bridget Griffen-Foley suggests this misses the point. She argues that these devices were important to the popularity of the magazines and demonstrate the desire to be part of the ‘community of readers’.⁴⁰ Both the impact of magazines upon their readers and the participation of readers in magazine articles have been important to later studies of women’s magazines.

In twentieth century scholarship, Cynthia White’s (1970) study remains the most comprehensive survey of women’s magazines. In it she discusses the aesthetically contradictory trend in popular British women’s magazines from the mid-1950s, which juxtaposed increasingly glamorous and sexualised images in advertising with stories based around ordinary women. Advertising was increasingly informed by ‘depth’ techniques that became known as ‘the sexual sell’.⁴¹ Editors, such as Mary Grieve of *Woman*, therefore increasingly used ‘readers own stories’ as a counterpoint to the sensational adverts.⁴² White’s conclusions on twentieth century women’s magazines are similar to those drawn from other studies in other eras. She suggests that magazines

⁴⁰ Bridget Griffen-Foely, ‘From Tit-Bits to Big Brother: A century of audience participation in the media’, *Media, Culture and Society*, 26:4 (2004), p. 540.

⁴¹ Cynthia L White, *Women’s Magazines 1693-1968* (London: Michael Joseph, 1970) p. 157.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 159.

often glossed over the realities of the problems facing women in combining paid and domestic work, for example *Woman's Own* continued to condemn married women who went out to work into the early 1960s as 'second best mothers' and inferior wives'.⁴³ In addition, she suggests that such magazines remained important as a 'women's club' where they could find 'warmth, friendship and identification, as well as a little harmless escapism', but does not attempt to analyse this tension.⁴⁴

In her analysis of popular British women's magazines in the mid-twentieth century, Janice Winship goes further than White in explaining the apparently contradictory relationship between the content of women's magazines and women's daily work and leisure routines. She argues that: 'Women's magazines reflect the conflation of work and leisure in "women's work"'.⁴⁵ Winship also extends her analysis to the visual elements of women's magazines and suggests that glamorous adverts were an important element in women's brief spells of leisure time, since they allowed women to 'acknowledge those [domestic] labours, while simultaneously enabling the reader to avoid doing them'.⁴⁶ Thus Winship suggests that the process of identification between readers and magazine was not simply based on the magazine's ability to discuss the realities of the difficulties women faced in their everyday lives, but related to the way women experienced the merging of 'work and leisure...work and pleasure'. She also suggests that by the 1960s television may have started to replace magazines in offering a similar relationship between women's work and leisure time.⁴⁷ In her discussion of

⁴³ Ibid., p. 116.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 299.

⁴⁵ Winship, *Inside Women's Magazines*, p. 13.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 56.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 43-44.

feminist magazine *Spare Rib*, Winship acknowledges the difficulties of creating visual pleasure for women where women are the object of the image. From the interwar period, women's magazines became an increasingly visual experience therefore her discussion of women's pleasures is valuable.⁴⁸ She advocates judging magazines on how they combined text and images to provide women with pleasure, rather than just considering how they aimed to express an account of women's lives.

Joanne Meyerowitz has also discussed how women joined in the 'process of classification', identifying what was acceptable and unacceptable, in images of women in the mid-century described as 'cheesecake'. The term Cheesecake originated from American slang and was in common use by 1915 to describe 'publicly acceptable, mass-produced images of semi-nude women'.⁴⁹ Although, women did not generally control the publications that produced such images, neither were their views totally absent. For Meyerowitz female readers letters penned in response to cheesecake images reveal women: 'not only as objects of sexual representation but also as engaged and embattled participants in the construction of sexual meanings.' Women articulated both their pleasure and their disgust with the increasingly commercialised sexual representations in popular magazines.⁵⁰ Women's defence of cheesecake images as depictions of healthy and beautiful women resonate with enthusiasm for the women's health and beauty movement of the interwar period.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Sally Stein, 'The graphic ordering of desire: modernization of a middle-class women's magazine 1914-1939', in Richard Bolton (ed.), *The Context of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989) p. 146.

⁴⁹ Joanne Meyerowitz, 'Women, cheesecake, and borderline material: responses to girlie pictures in the mid-twentieth-century U.S.', *Journal of Women's History*, 8:3 (1996), p. 10.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 11.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 17.

The importance of magazines as purveyors of formative femininities is perhaps most explicit in Penny Tinkler's and Stephanie Spencer's work on young women's magazines and popular literature. Their research has identified the role they played as a site of informal education for women, influential in informing lifestyle expectations.⁵² Spencer's article on career stories for adolescent girls demonstrates how particular discourses could momentarily flourish in women's print culture. Thus the career novels of the 1950s were distinct in the forms of aspiration they displayed within the discursive framework of the dual role for this generation of women.⁵³ Tinkler takes an oblique look at the women's magazine in order to focus in on cigarettes and trends in women's smoking through visual culture. She successfully demonstrates that the 'feminisation of smoking that occurred between 1880 and 1980 was fundamentally, but not exclusively, a visual phenomenon'.⁵⁴ Her analysis is based on the increasing visibility of women smokers, the use of smoking practices as visual statements, and the proliferation of visual images of women smokers. She also considers how smoking gave women visual pleasure as well as being a physical sensation. The value of Tinkler's study for this thesis is in her demonstration that visual materials and the analysis of visual culture can provide unique historical insight into social trends.

Another theme which has reappeared in discussions of modern femininity is glamour. Scholars have traced its various and shifting forms in the relationship between women and visual culture in the twentieth century. Carol Dyhouse made extensive use of

⁵² Penny Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England, 1920-1950* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1995); Stephanie Spencer, *Gender, Work and Education in Britain in the 1950s* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

⁵³ Stephanie Spencer, 'Women's dilemmas in postwar Britain: career stories for adolescent girls in the 1950s', *History of Education*, 29:4 (2000), pp. 329-342.

⁵⁴ Penny Tinkler, *Smoke Signals: Women, Smoking and Visual Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Berg, 2006) p. 2.

women's magazines in her analysis of glamour. Although, as Dyhouse discusses, in many ways glamour is a slippery term, which at times plays an ambiguous role in its relationship with female agency, her historical analysis of glamour demonstrates how trends in the presentation and identification with the female images could change fairly rapidly. The links Dyhouse makes between glamour and aspiration, or in her terms 'a dream of transformation' appears to bear particular significance for women at certain historical junctures.⁵⁵

The 'sex kitten' glamour that dominated the 1950s and 1960s was perhaps not as easily identifiable with female agency as the powerfully glamorous screen sirens of the 1930s, but it resonates with the refashioning of post-war feminine modernity amid the turbulence of the sexual revolution. For example Dyhouse describes how Alma Cogan celebrated her celebrity status by using her earnings from a successful career in television to buy silver-blue mink coats for herself and her mother, whereas her younger sister rejected the offer of a fur, instead choosing a 'serious' duffle coat.⁵⁶ The rejection of mink coats in the 1960s and the rising emphasis on youth are symbolic of a crisis in glamour as a tool of feminine agency. The promotion of the dual role discourse, the entrance of married women into the formal workplace and the expansion of mass media in the form of television all suggest that the mid-1950s to late 1960s was a time where women could, or were perhaps required, to renegotiate femininity to reflect their changing material circumstances. In terms of understanding what women did with glamorous images, the most comprehensive study of female spectatorship remains Jackie Stacey's, *Star Gazing*. Based on a study of women's memories of film going in Britain in the 1940's and 1950s she describes three central forms of women's

⁵⁵ Carol Dyhouse, *Glamour: Women, History, Feminism* (London: Zed Books, 2010) p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

relationship with popular film: escapism, identification, consumption.⁵⁷ Like Winship's study of magazines, Stacey surveys the diverse ways that film viewing and film stars were constructed into the women's lives. She argues that the use of psychoanalytic theory in film studies has 'often produced a universal model of cinematic spectatorship which is unable to account for its specific forms and located pleasures'.⁵⁸ She therefore insists on the importance of historically located audience studies.⁵⁹

Moving more explicitly to the literature surrounding women in film in the 1950s and 1960s, several works have analysed and revised this area of historical study. Research by Sue Harper and Christine Geraghty, in particular, has rejected the view that films of the 1950s were formulaic and insignificant, sandwiched between the more important and innovative film making of the 1940 and 1960s. Harper states that the key challenge to historians of 1950s film is to understand the volatility of cinema-goers taste in the 1950s. Within her thesis of the 'decline of deference' she suggests that: 'The aristocracy had reached the end of its usefulness as a dynamic explanatory model, for the cinema at least.'⁶⁰ Her discussion also rests on the acknowledgement of the 'nature of exchange' between film producer and cinema-goer,⁶¹ which she discusses elsewhere the unruliness and untidiness as symbolic of a new social order that was allowed to flourish under the 'big three' film distributors (Rank, ABPC, British Lion) that were 'complex and unwieldy' thus allowing 'textual gaps through which iconoclasts could

⁵⁷ Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 234-236.

⁶⁰ Sue Harper, *British Cinema of the 1950s: The Decline of Deference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

wriggle'.⁶² This is comparable to Melanie Bell-Williams' article on *A Young Wives Tale* where she suggests that a combination of 'old' and 'new' femininities made for the most popular films, rather than one which pushed boundaries too far.⁶³ This analysis resonates with successful television shows of the mid-1950s such as *I Love Lucy*, an American show broadcast in Britain by ITV in 1955 and popular with British audiences. In the show Lucille Ball used comedy to subvert her representation of the 'traditional' housewife. The programme featured frequently in a Mass Observation directive from 2003 on 'Television and images of the 1950s and 1960s'. One respondent, who claimed never to have watched ITV, recalled enjoying the programme and another wrote: 'I enjoyed American TV shows right from the start – *I Love Lucy* was great'.⁶⁴ These responses also suggest that viewer's memories of television they enjoyed exposed transgressions in markers of taste that they were keen to present elsewhere in their testimonies. Like the successful films of the 1950s, Ball's character in *I Love Lucy* represented the reframing of the 'old' to present it anew; a housewife who frequently transgressed the boundaries of domesticity. Although the 'film audience' and the 'television audience' are usually discussed within their respective sub-disciplines, this brief example suggests that from a broader historical perspective these literatures can usefully be brought together.

⁶² Sue Harper, *Women in British Cinema: Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know* (London: Continuum, 2000), p. 271 and pp. 233-344.

⁶³ Melanie Bell-Williams, 'Gender and modernity in post-war British cinema; a case study of *Young Wives' Tale* (1951)', *Women's History Review*, 16:2 (2007), pp. 227-243.

⁶⁴ Mass Observation Archive [hereafter MO-A]: Television and Images of the 1950s and 1960s, A2212, B1533, 2003.

This study seeks to bring these insights to the representations of women into the ‘actuality’ genre of news. Drawing together analysis of realist and melodramatic visual styles has been a feature of Christine Geraghty’s research. She has argued that:

The idea that realism could not speak to women’s contradictory position was widely adopted and the practice of reading for ‘cracks and fissures’ offered feminists a way of looking again at film and genres that, at first sight, seemed to offer only unrealistic stories and stereotyped heroines.⁶⁵

As a result films such as *It Always Rains on Sunday*, produced by Ealing studios, have been criticised for the limited roles they provided for women, because of their realist style. Whereas melodramatic Gainsborough productions have been rehabilitated because of the imaginative space they provided. However Geraghty suggest that in Ealing’s films ‘their realist and melodramatic elements work together to offer an account that is both emotional and analytical’.⁶⁶ Focusing on how this was communicated visually, this study, like Geraghty’s work, seeks to reveal how dramatic and realist visual styles intertwined in the regional television news providing a framework to understand the conflation of work and leisure in ‘women’s work’ and how this was translated into viewing pleasure in the regional television news.

Jenny Hammerton’s research into the newsreel *Eve’s Film Review*, the Pathé Cinemagazine produced between 1921 and 1933 that pertained to be ‘for ladies only’, provides an example of the synthesis of drama and realism in the visual style of news

⁶⁵ Christine Geraghty, *British Cinema in the Fifties: Gender, Genre and the ‘New Look’* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 79.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 91.

film. Hammerton demonstrates how the production of a separate cinemagazine for women reflects the gendered configuration of pleasure in the 1920s and 1930s, where men and women 'were *supposed* to enjoy different pleasures'.⁶⁷ However she goes on to suggest that:

Within the cinema, the sexual identity of the viewer becomes blurred. Seated in the dark the spectator is invited to stare at the screen and can enjoy the images without having to justify the appropriateness of his or her pleasure. The female body, the frocks and the frou-frou fripperies of the feminine wardrobe are on display for both men and women in *Eve's Film Review*.⁶⁸

Hammerton's research reveals how the gendered cultural values of the time are reflected in the structuring of media products, but this did not ultimately determine how audiences received them. The viewing contexts of film and television are of course very different. Reception studies have pointed out that when television ownership remained low many early viewing experiences were collective, but nevertheless television spectatorship remained a domestic rather than public experience.⁶⁹ Television has usually been identified with the demise of film-going as a weekly leisure activity for the working class. However, Su Holmes has suggested that the relationship between

⁶⁷ Jenny Hammerton, *For Ladies Only? Eve's Film Review Pathé Cinemagazine 1921-33* (Hastings: The Projection Box, 2001), p. 114.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁶⁹ Tim O'Sullivan, 'Television memories and cultures of viewing 1950-1965', in John Corner (ed.), *Popular Television in Britain: Studies in Cultural History* (London: British Film Institute, 1991), pp. 159-181.

film and television was not necessarily as antagonistic as previously identified.⁷⁰ Her research reveals that in some areas, such as the portrayal of emotion on television, taste has changed significantly since the establishment of television as a mass medium in the late 1950s to early 1960s.⁷¹ However, in other aspects of television history there has been more continuity than previously recognised, such as the dynamics of television fame and celebrity.⁷²

Studies into women and television in the 1950s and 1960s have generally started from the premise that television, like radio and magazines, was (and remains) a domestic pleasure. Maggie Andrews' recent work *Domesticating the Airwaves* contributes an understanding of how domesticity shaped media texts to existing knowledge of how broadcasting was incorporated into the domestic sphere and its routines. This fits with the thrust of academic interest in this period, which stresses the turn towards better housing conditions, suburbia, home-centred leisure, affluence and consumer culture. This context has led Janet Thumim to argue that in the mid-1950s television maintained 'a strikingly overt address to women'.⁷³ The link between advertising soap and the broadcasting of the soap opera has been well discussed. Although in Britain the afternoon television schedule was dominated by magazine programmes rather than soaps, it was, like the North American day-time schedules, heavily feminised. However there was a place for the working woman in 1950s television drama, as Thumim has

⁷⁰ Su Holmes, *British TV and Film and Culture in the 1950s: "Coming to a TV Near You!"* (Bristol: Intellect, 2005).

⁷¹ Su Holmes, "'Outrageously bad taste": The BBC and the controversy over *This is Your Life* in the 1950s', in Michael Bailey (ed.), *Narrating Media History* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 125-137.

⁷² Su Holmes, "'Whoever heard of anyone being a screaming success for doing nothing?": "Sabrina", the BBC and television fame in the 1950s', *Media History*, 17:1 (2011), pp. 33-48.

⁷³ Janet Thumim, "'A live commercial for icing sugar" researching the historical audience: gender and broadcast television in the 1950s', *Screen*, 36: 1 (1995), p 54.

discussed: 'The destabilised relation between domesticity and the workplace, experienced daily by the majority, was explored in many of the contemporary fictions available each evening for family viewing'.⁷⁴ She suggests that in the 1950s television dramas, such as *I Love Lucy* and *Emergency Ward 10* 'the public work of women was heavily circumscribed by their subservience to, and dependence on men' but in later dramas, such as *Coronation Street* (first broadcast in 1960) 'the homes and the workplace are conflated, and the home itself is clearly acknowledged to be a workplace in its own right'.⁷⁵ This suggests that at times the domestic setting of the television meant that it was more adept in dealing with women's complex relationship between work and leisure than film production.

There have been far fewer studies into women in news and current affairs. The edited collection *Boxed In* and more recent articles by Suzanne Franks and Mary Irwin offer the most sustained studies into women's work in television,⁷⁶ while *The Angry Buzz* by Patricia Holland provides the most comprehensive study of women in current affairs programming. Reading this work together suggests that, as is often the case in 'new' industries, women benefitted from the lack of defined routes into working in television in the 1950s, but following the Pilkington Report (1962) and a change of emphasis in television news, female reporters were less often trusted to maintain the stories

⁷⁴ Janet Thumim, 'Women at work: popular drama on British television c.1955-60', in Janet Thumim (ed.) *Small Screens, Big Ideas: Television in the 1950s* (London: I B Tauris, 2002), p. 214.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁷⁶ Suzanne Franks, 'Attitudes to women in the BBC in the 1970s –not so much as glass ceiling as one of reinforced concrete' [special edition] *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* (2011), pp. 123-142; Mary Irwin, "'What women want on television" - Doreen Stephens and BBC television programmes for women 1953-1964 - media for and by women: a historical perspective', special edition, *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* (2011), pp. 99-122; Helen Baehr and G. Dyer (eds.), *Boxed In: Women and Television* (London: Pandora, 1987).

presented.⁷⁷ Francis Eames' work comparing ITN and ATV's broadcast journalism on the Ugandan Asian Crisis in the 1970s, suggests significant disparities in the reporting of migration to the Midlands. Her case study highlights the 'instability of the news text as a historical record' and therefore the need for further study into regional news archives.⁷⁸ In her critique of television news Patricia Holland suggested that the elements which symbolically annihilate women from national news programming are potentially not so apparent in regional news. She suggests that, regional news deals in a completely different set of 'topics and imagery'.⁷⁹

Soap opera has been set up as the archetypal 'women's television' as opposed to television news. For example, following a discussion of an interviewee's tastes for soap opera Dorothy Hobson asked: 'do you watch the news?' The woman replied:

I watch a little bit of it, erm (pause). I don't really like the news much because it's all politics, generally and British Leyland out on strike again, and this and that. I like to hear the news, if, er, - if there's been a murder, I know that sounds terrible, but I like to hear - 'Oh what's happening next, what have they found out?' That sort of news I like, you know -gossip.⁸⁰

In this response there is room to identify what this woman liked and disliked about television news. Although she does not mention regional news explicitly, the topics covered by regional television news teams can be more closely identified as 'gossip'

⁷⁷ Holland, *The Angry Buzz*, pp. 35-38.

⁷⁸ Frances Eames, 'ITV and the 1972 Ugandan migration', *Media History*, 15: 4 (2009), p. 455.

⁷⁹ Holland, 'When a woman reads the news', p. 142.

⁸⁰ Dorothy Hobson, *Crossroads: The Drama of a Soap Opera* (London: Methuen, 1982).

than the content of national news programmes. Thus as this study will make clear ATV's definition of news maintained a degree of elasticity in order to accommodate opportunities for gossip and discussion in their programmes as well as a record of daily events. Linking this back to Holland's suggestion above, this study analyses how Midland women were part of this approach to news making and the implications of this at a time where women's increasing presence in the workplace was central to social change in Britain.

To summarise the first part of this review, recent studies in media history have led researchers to question the accepted contours of the relationship between women and media culture. This creative and ground-breaking research has opened up a variety of archives to historical scrutiny. However, this thesis seeks to broaden the research agenda still further by integrating an understanding of changing patterns of women's paid employment and the implications for women as social agents more thoroughly into this history. It is perhaps impossible to know how women reacted to images of themselves and other Midland women in the regional television news, and attempting to recover this knowledge is certainly not part of this project. What is possible and intended, in this study, is that by using a visual analysis to unpack ordinary women's participation in this arena of cultural production, extant audio-visual television news material can provide valuable insight into the significance of women's changing place in twentieth-century society. In particular, this project seeks to contribute an understanding of the importance of women's paid work to what is currently a domesticated history.

Research by practitioners of women's history has been central to complicating historical narratives of 'home-centeredness', especially in identifying the common aspirations for a 'home of one's own' in the mid-twentieth century, which Judy Giles

has argued was important for working-class as well as middle-class women.⁸¹

Langhamer has also discussed meanings of home in postwar Britain. Using evidence from Mass Observation her conclusions coalesce with Giles in the way she urges historians not to 'identify a postwar return to "traditional" models but to unravel the complex manner in which dreams first dreamt before the Second World War were realised, adapted or rejected in the Cold War years'.⁸² A collection of work on the interwar period has provided a significant challenge to the ideas of a feminist 'backlash' following the First World War. Historians have identified the media as a source of new aspirations and expectations among young women, positive representations of working women and the 'disappearance of the home as the locus of the female's interest'.⁸³ This is also apparent in histories that have assessed women's civic roles in this era.⁸⁴ It is from this context that the second part of this review begins. It will survey debates on changing patterns of women's domestic work, identifying important jumping-off points for this study. Secondly it will assess why women's paid employment has not been a more prominent feature within the women's history of the 1950s and 1960s, both in terms of trends in historical enquiry and approaches to historical research.

⁸¹ Judy Giles, 'A home of one's own: women and domesticity in England 1918-1950', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 16: 3 (1993), pp. 239-253.

⁸² Claire Langhamer, 'The meanings of home in postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40: 2 (2005), p. 362.

⁸³ Billie Melman, *Women and the Popular Imagination in the Twenties: Flappers and Nymphs* (Basingstoke: Macmillan: 1988), p. 150, cited by Adrian Bingham, "'An Era of Domesticity'? Histories of Women and Gender in Interwar Britain' [review essay], *Cultural and Social History*, 1:2 (2004), p. 232.

⁸⁴ Caitriona Beaumont, 'Citizens not feminists: the boundary negotiated between citizenship and feminism by mainstream women's organisations in England, 1928-39', *Women's History Review*, 9:2 (2000), pp. 411-29; Maggie Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women's Institute as a Social Movement* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1997).

Comparing the oral accounts collected from women who featured in her 1995 study *Women and Families* with those of her earlier research for *A Woman's Place*, Elizabeth Roberts has argued that in the 1950s working-class housewives experienced a loss of status. This left them less likely to take the lead on the household budget than their formidable mothers or grandmothers and less likely to be identified as 'the boss of the house'. She cited the declining age at first marriage as a contributing factor, with young wives more likely to be 'looked after' by older husbands.⁸⁵ Her evidence suggested that while living conditions had undoubtedly improved for most:

Increasing prosperity not only adversely affected women's financial control, it also tended to marginalize women's traditional management skills. Working-class women had previously taken immense pride in being able to make 'something out of nothing'...Gradually earning skills became more important than managing skills, and the ability to purchase a new object became more important than recycling old ones.⁸⁶

She also describes how, as children were less involved in domestic labour, they were less likely to respect the value their mother's domestic skills.⁸⁷ This was also reflected in an analysis of maternity care by Angela Davis, who discovered that the generation of women coming of age and bringing up children in post-war Britain were less likely to trust advice from their mothers, instead taking their questions to medical

⁸⁵ Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families: An Oral History, 1940-1970* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 84-89.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

professionals.⁸⁸ This rejection of inter-generational advice provides an additional perspective on the potential loss of status of established housewifery skills and knowledge.

Roberts' work can be usefully compared with Judy Giles' who has a very different interpretation of the place of consumption in women's lives. She has suggested that even if working-class women could not participate in consumer culture to the same extent as middle-class women, the cultural dominance of the identity of the 'ordinary housewife' from the 1930s through to the 1950s provided a valuable material and imaginative space for women's aspirations.⁸⁹ Drawing on her oral history work, Giles discusses how the experience of alienation through childhood poverty during the 1930s led some women to embrace the normalising effects that identifying themselves as 'ordinary' housewives in homes of their own in the 1950s allowed. For some women this provided liberation from their past as 'an object of charity', a particularly compelling point in Giles' research.⁹⁰ Giles situates her discussion of 'the housewife' in terms of women's access to modernity. She rightly questions the feminist orthodoxy of the 1960s and 1970s that going out to work was liberating and that the experience of modernity could only be achieved in the public sphere.⁹¹ Elsewhere Giles has examined the complex relationship between the housewife as a civic identity and the middle class

⁸⁸ Angela Davis, 'A revolution in maternity care? Women and the maternity services, Oxfordshire c. 1948-1974', *Social History of Medicine*, 24:2 (2011), p. 402.

⁸⁹ Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb*, p. 139.

⁹⁰ Giles, 'A home of one's own', pp. 246-251.

⁹¹ Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb*, p. 143.

women as the public face of 'housewifery' who could only maintain her position by employing working class women in her home.⁹²

Moving outside the home, Giles has suggested that consumer culture offered a public identity to women as 'Mrs Consumer'. She maintains that although this was an identity more readily available to middle-class women. Working-class women could also participate in the visual spectacle of modern life:

The impact on women of being able to look cannot be overestimated. Conventionally the object of (male) scrutiny and surveillance, 'just looking' enabled women to position themselves as both subject and object as they gazed, for example, upon displays of clothing and cosmetics that might enhance their femininity at the same time as weighing the cost of these against the cost of a labour-saving cleaner that could make more time for self-fashioning. These complex calculations were not simply financial; they involved...active decisions about self-worth and identity.⁹³

Although Giles' analysis of women's increasing ability to look is based largely on experiences of department store shopping, the themes of looking, shopping and self-fashioning can be applied to television spectatorship. Janet Thumim has stressed that British television drama and situation comedies in the late 1950s and early 1960s generally relied upon 'familiarity, domesticity, character-driven and intimate plots'.⁹⁴

⁹² Judy Giles, 'Help for housewives: domestic service and the reconstruction of domesticity in Britain, 1940-50, *Women's History Review*, 10:2 (2001), pp. 299-323.

⁹³ Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb*, p. 109.

⁹⁴ Thumim, *Inventing Television Culture*, pp. 125-126.

Mary Irwin's recent research has identified a hitherto unacknowledged diversity in the content of these day time programmes for women. Her study has revealed that the programmes *About the Home* (1951-8) and *Leisure and Pleasure* (1951-55) contained: 'very traditional items alongside the programme's adjustment to the new developments in domestic technology and lifestyle which took place throughout the 1950s'.⁹⁵

Opportunities for visual shopping through television viewing were therefore most apparent in Admags,⁹⁶ such as *Television Beauty Salon* (1957) presented by Honor Blackman, and television magazine programmes.⁹⁷ Further investigation is required in order to understand the impact of television on women's spells of leisure during housework.

The amount of time women spent on domestic work in the latter half of the twentieth century has been particularly contested. Identifying what became known as the 'paradox of labour-saving devices', contemporary sociologists Myrdal and Klein suggested that rather than reducing the amount of time spent on domestic labour, labour-saving devices expanded it 'to an almost unlimited degree'.⁹⁸ While this point has been echoed in some historical research,⁹⁹ what was initially identified as a paradox has been increasingly qualified. Jonathan Gershuny's work has sought to provide a

⁹⁵ Irwin, 'What women want on television', pp. 105-106.

⁹⁶ Admags were also known as shopping magazines. They were broadcast on ITV from 1955 until they were outlawed in 1963. Their format was adapted from print media and radio where several products. During the live broadcast several items, their prices and qualities would be discussed. These were presented by a host or through a consisted mise-en-scene. For further discussion of Admags see: Thumim, 'Women At Work', pp. 211-212.

⁹⁷ Joy Leman, "'Programmes for women" in 1950s British Television', in Helen Baehr and Gillian Dyer (eds.), *Boxed In: Women and Television* (London: Pandora, 1987), pp. 86-87.

⁹⁸ Myrdal and Klein, *Women's Two Roles*, p. 37.

⁹⁹ Roberts, *Women and Families*, p. 32; Caroline Davidson, *A Woman's Work is Never Done: A History of Housework in the British Isles 1650-1950* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1982), p. 192.

differentiated view of the time women spent on domestic labour by class, marital and employment status. The basis of his thesis is that although often understood as a period of increasing social equality, when considered in terms of the time spent on unpaid and paid labour combined, this was a period of growing inequality between men and women, specifically husbands and wives. In the following quote he comments on the disparity in time spent working between partners if the hours women spent on paid and domestic work were combined:

[T]he consequences of the sexual segregation of tasks do become serious at the point at which the segregation begins to break down. If a wife who has previously borne the full responsibility for the household work obtains a paid job, she does not, in general, reduce her unpaid work in proportion to her paid work, nor does her husband significantly increase his contribution to domestic production. Under these circumstances...very considerable disparities between husbands and wives' working times may develop.¹⁰⁰

Female workers engaged in full-time employment had previously drawn on the support of female relatives and neighbours, to whom they gave a portion of their wages in return for carrying out the heaviest of their domestic work. Miriam Glucksmann found that for female textile workers of the 1930s, domestic labour was almost completely absent from their memories of daily life.¹⁰¹ However, this model of organisation was

¹⁰⁰ Johnathan Gershuny, *Social Innovation and the Division of Labour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 47.

¹⁰¹ Miriam Glucksmann, *Cottons and Casuals: The Gendered Organisation of Labour in Time and Space* (Durham: Sociology Press, 2000), pp. 68-69.

breaking down in the 1950s with a greater proportion of women working part-time and combining paid work outside the home with domestic labour. In discussing the impact of technology on women's domestic labour, the most important point for Gershuny is to understand the relationship between domestic labourer, the labour task and the model of labour-saving device being used. This is because the 'product cycle' of labour saving technologies significantly shaped the amount of time women spent on domestic labour, for example:

The first, top-loading electric washing machines involved quite a lot of ancillary labour, and sold very easily, particularly as their price declined; but as the market for them approached saturation, the competition, particularly for the 'replacement market' centred around performance, and specifically around automation, the reduction of the amount of labour involved in their use. So the domestic productivity of the washing-machine initially grew slowly, but subsequently increased its rate of growth.¹⁰²

Gershuny's work reframes the debate beyond the terms of more domestic work or less domestic work, demonstrating the importance of specific technologies and how they fitted into and were combined with women's patterns of paid employment. In their study of consumer durables Sue Bowden and Avner Offer have focused on the sequence of diffusion in which these goods entered the home. Their research suggests that households prioritised the acquisition of radios and televisions over labour-saving devices, which they argue reveals that it was easier to convince the public to invest in

¹⁰² Gershuny, *Social Innovation*, p. 47.

leisure technologies rather than technologies to ‘reduce the burden of housework’.¹⁰³

This would seem to suggest that the home was prioritised as a place of leisure, rather than a place of work. However, while there is value in attempting to understand the acquisition of consumer durables as a social trend, Carolyn Steedman’s reflections provide a reminder of the idiosyncrasies of the household dynamics, when she describes how fridges entered homes as children’s birthday presents.¹⁰⁴

Returning to the class dynamics of women’s domestic work in the second half of the twentieth century, recent historical research by Selina Todd and Lucy Delap affirms the continuing importance of paid domestic labour in the second half of the twentieth century, challenging the view that new forms of housing and domestic technologies eroded class distinctions to such an extent that the 1950s housewife was a classless identity.¹⁰⁵ Describing the history of domestic service as one of ‘development rather than decline’ Selina Todd has asserted:¹⁰⁶

Domestic workers remained vital to the economic condition of the working class: they provided crucial supplements to industrial workers’ wages just as they had done before the Second World War; they also changed earning patterns, and made new forms of leisure and working possible for

¹⁰³ Sue Bowden and Avner Offer, ‘Household appliances and the use of time: The United States and Britain since the 1920s’, *The Economic History Review*, 47:4 (1994), p. 732.

¹⁰⁴ Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman* (London: Virago, 1986), p. 36.

¹⁰⁵ Lucy Delap, ‘Kitchen-sink laughter: domestic service humour in twentieth-century Britain’, *Journal of British Studies*, 49:3 (2010), pp. 623-645; Selina Todd, ‘Domestic service and class relations in Britain 1900-1950’, *Past and Present*, 23 (2009), pp. 181-196.

¹⁰⁶ Todd, ‘Domestic service and class relations’, p. 181.

themselves, their families, and particularly for their teenage children.¹⁰⁷

Todd goes on to argue that despite the value of women's wages earned through paid domestic labour to the household economy of the working class, these women have not been considered part of the working class in historiography.¹⁰⁸ The particularity of the invisibility of domestic service from the history of the twentieth century has also been commented on by Delap. For her, because domestic service was persistently described as 'incompatible with novel features of "modernity"' it has slipped from view despite remaining an important source of employment for women.¹⁰⁹ Together, the research of Todd, Delap and Giles presents a tension between the situating of the housewife as a social citizen with a legitimate civic position and the continuing use of paid domestic labour so that the (middle-class) 'housewife' was free to participate in public life. This was a tension that contemporaries usually resolved by claiming that working-class women were naturally disposed to enjoy domestic labour.¹¹⁰ Elements of the domestic labour debate resonate with women's work more broadly, in that discussion surrounding the poor wages women received was displaced in favour of a conversation where the value of domestic service was defined in terms of its potential to encourage suitable feminine behaviour in women. Reformers therefore attempted to discursively ameliorate the status of the profession without addressing the concerns of domestic servants: long hours, social isolation and low pay.¹¹¹ In recovering this history, which

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁰⁸ Todd, 'Domestic service and class relations', p. 189.

¹⁰⁹ Delap, 'Kitchen-sink laughter', p. 624.

¹¹⁰ Giles, 'Help for housewives', p. 315.

¹¹¹ Delap, 'Kitchen-sink laughter', p. 651.

has evaded official record, both Todd and Delap have made use of cultural documents in the form of memoirs, published autobiographies, archived life histories and cartoons. Todd describes this approach as an attempt to move beyond ‘the polarisation of socio-economic and cultural history’.¹¹² This approach resonates with this thesis, a point which will be returned to in the last section of this review.

Elements of this work on paid domestic labour, and its continuing importance for working class women as a means by which they contributed to the household income, are apparent in a more generalised picture of women’s paid employment in the 1950s and 1960s. In the second half of the twentieth century it was the employment of married women and the increase in availability of part-time work that fuelled the trend of increasing numbers of women in paid employment. Within this discussion historians such as Penny Summerfield, Gerry Holloway and Sue Bruley have emphasised how paid employment remained secondary in women’s lives. Gerry Holloway foregrounded a focus on family life for women in the 1950s and 1960s.¹¹³ Sue Bruley has described how married women’s paid work was organised so that it caused minimal disruption to domestic routines.¹¹⁴ Penny Summerfield suggests that in the context of contradictory messages for women to embrace their roles as wives and mothers, but also campaigns to engage in paid employment, there is significant evidence to suggest that women saw paid work as marginal to their lives.¹¹⁵ Jane Lewis’ work on marriage suggests that successful ‘companionate marriages’ relied on an unequal division of labour between married couples and the adoption of the ‘one and-a-half-breadwinner’ model in the

¹¹² Todd, ‘Domestic Service and Class Relations’, p. 181.

¹¹³ Holloway, *Women and Work*, p. 196.

¹¹⁴ Sue Bruley, *Women in Britain*, p. 124.

¹¹⁵ Penny Summerfield, ‘Companionate marriage and the double burden’, p. 63.

second half of the twentieth century.¹¹⁶ Selina Todd concurs that the wages that working-class women contributed to the total household income presented no serious challenge to the male breadwinner.¹¹⁷ These conclusions have meant that women's paid work has been relatively neglected in women's histories of the 1950s and 1960s. Women may not have been using paid employment to forge careers, nor necessarily identify their paid work as a means of seeking equal status in the household with their husbands, but to ignore the changes that paid employment nonetheless *did* make in women's lives does not provide a satisfactory account of change over time. The point here is to privilege neither consumer culture, nor paid employment as the central site of women's agency in this period, but to understand how they operated together in women's experience of the 1950s and 1960s.

As discussed above, paid domestic work remained important for working-class women in the second half of the twentieth century. Factory work, although in absolute decline,¹¹⁸ maintained a prominent position in working-class women's employment, against the growing importance of clerical work in quantitative terms. Of course the second half of the twentieth century has also been associated with increasing numbers of women entering university and moving into professional jobs, but since this thesis will focus on the women most visible in the ATV regional news collection this review will focus on factory and clerical work. The expansion of part-time work and the development of the 'housewife shift', an evening shift which was largely filled by

¹¹⁶ Jane Lewis, *The End of Marriage? Individualism and Intimate Relations* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2001), pp. 60-62.

¹¹⁷ Todd, 'Affluence, class and Crown Street', pp. 501-518.

¹¹⁸ For further discussion of the decline of manufacturing in the labour market see, Sean Glynn and Alan Booth, *Modern Britain: An Economic and Social History* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 277-282.

working mothers from 6pm-9pm, have been acknowledged in historical literature. However, Margaret Williamson's oral history work has added a valuable regional dynamic to these discussions. Sociologists working in the 1950s, such as Jephcott's study of Bermondsey reported optimistically on the increasingly companionate relationships between working class women and men in urban centres.¹¹⁹ These have usually been contrasted with the less than equitable picture of mining communities, as represented in *Coal is our Life* by Norman Dennis (1969). Williamson's study adds nuance to these two positions, she argues that couples did maintain the status of the men as breadwinners, but against a backdrop of women taking up the opportunities for factory work in nearby towns. The testimony collected by Williamson suggests that the backdrop of male unemployment in mining communities meant that men unable to fulfil their role as breadwinners perhaps felt more displaced by their wives' employment than the affluent worker with a wife who was also engaged in paid employment.¹²⁰ The social implications of women going out to work, forming friendships and joining social outings without their husbands also appears as a reason why some couples faced difficulties when women went out to work.¹²¹ As with Selina Todd's work on Crown Street, Liverpool, Williamson suggests a continuing collaborative approach to the working-class household economy, but with realigned dimensions. It appears that the opportunities that paid work provided for women, in terms of connecting with the social world, were often suppressed in interviews and oral histories. It is the identification of these opportunities within this realignment that is the focus of this study.

¹¹⁹ Jephcott, *Married Women Working*, p. 126

¹²⁰ Williamson, 'I'm going to get a job at the factory', p. 411.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

One study that has looked critically at the way ‘working wives’ defended ‘going out to work’ is Dolly Smith Wilson’s analysis of the ‘good working mother’. Like contemporary sociologists, Smith Wilson shows how working women defended themselves from attacks surrounding latch-key children and juvenile delinquency by emphasising the material benefits that their wages brought the family. Married women’s paid employment had been characterised as an undesirable necessity for the poorest working-class families in the earlier twentieth century, but as Smith Wilson demonstrated definitions of ‘necessity’ were changing in post-war Britain.¹²² Surveying contemporary interviews, where women largely reported that they were primarily motivated to engage in paid employment for the money, Smith Wilson suggests that women perhaps thought this was the most acceptable reason for a married woman going out to work, or what the interviewer wanted to hear, although, some women also hinted that paid work staved off boredom and provided companionship.¹²³ For Smith Wilson, visions of women as spenders, not earners, was a major factor in underestimating women’s contribution to the economy and helps to explain their absence from the body of work on affluent workers.¹²⁴ Smith Wilson concludes that working mothers’ responses to interviewers’ questions on their paid employment should be understood as responses to the contemporary criticism of working mothers, rather than statements of the significance of paid employment in their lives at large. She suggests that:

The discourse of working mothers, families and extras created a vicious circle. The tendency to characterise women’s work as

¹²² Smith Wilson, ‘A new look at the affluent worker’, pp. 216-217.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

being for pin money ironically strengthened the male breadwinner ideal in the face of the major social shift regarding married women's work. It also upheld the notion of women's position as second-tier workers outside the real workforce, depriving them of any possible status as affluent workers in their own right.¹²⁵

This study aims to break out of this 'vicious circle' of primarily identifying women and their paid work in relation to the home and family by analysing the place of the 'ordinary' (working) woman in cultural production. This lack of engagement with how women's changing relationship with paid employment effected public culture and women's participation in cultural production has allowed 1968 to stand as a watershed moment of the awakening of women's social consciousness. In current historiography women's militancy in the Dagenham machinists strike (1968) neatly coincides with the rise of the Women's Liberation movement, without exploring how women's experience of paid work, frequently part-time, may have contributed to this activism.¹²⁶ What is required is a more nuanced discussion of how women's changing relationship to domestic and paid work (no matter how 'secondary') changed women's relationship with public culture. Stephanie Spencer's work on young women's educational literature, hints at this change when she suggests that the oppressed figure of the working wife was present in this literature, but that the dual role discourse was utilised in order to encourage young girls to find ways of combining paid work and family life.¹²⁷ In line with Spencer's approach, this study explores the civic dimension to the

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 228-229.

¹²⁶ Holloway, *Women and Work*, p. 181.

¹²⁷ Spencer, 'Women's dilemmas in postwar Britain', pp. 329-342.

working-class woman's participation in the news and the ways in which their performances on screen provided a view of women as social actors distinct from other areas of cultural production. In doing so it uses contemporary sources to explore a dynamic that has frequently been suppressed in retrospective sources such as oral history interviews, namely how the presence of women in the workplace changed work culture and women's social status.

In quantitative terms the most important site of work for women in the second half of the twentieth century was the office. Their position in the office in the postwar period was informed by the longer term trajectory of women's entry into clerical work from the 1870s. Rosemary Crompton's research has analysed the complexities of gender segregation in office work. She demonstrates that distinct areas of office work have obtained or maintained a feminised status, especially typists, shorthand writers and secretaries. She also remarks upon the ageing demographic of this group: 'the feminisation of the clerical labour force since the Second World War would seem to have involved the substitution of older male clerks by older female clerks.'¹²⁸ This is set against differences between industries, where female clerks tended to dominate if the industry as a whole was feminised and where all white collar workers were subject to the effects of rationalisation.¹²⁹ In comparison, Rosemary Pringle's study of office workers in Australia picked up on shifts in the cultural representation of the secretary that coincided with increasing numbers of working class women in the office. The older discursive strategy of the 'office wife' was eclipsed by the 'sexy secretary' and also

¹²⁸ Rosemary Crompton, 'The feminisation of the clerical labour force since the Second World War', in Gregory Anderson (ed), *The White-Blouse Revolution: Female Office Workers Since 1870* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 125.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

competed with the ‘career woman’.¹³⁰ These significant shifts in the cultural representation of the female office worker provide an indication of how women’s increasing visibility had an impact in the world of work. Elements of this have also been explored in Michael Roper’s study *Masculinity and the British Organisation Man since 1945*. Roper’s work suggests that for the generation of male managers in his study the woman in the office remained the ‘office wife’.¹³¹ In contrast, Julie Berebitsky connects the woman in the office with the history of sexuality by suggesting that the publications of Helen Gurley Brown’s, *Sex and the Single Girl* (1963) and *Sex and the Office* (1965), encouraged women to use their sexuality to level the playing field.¹³² Together, this research into secretarial and clerical roles provides a useful example of how the relationship between socio-economic and cultural dimensions of history can be drawn together.

The last section of this historiographical review will examine the role of available source material in determining why women’s paid work in the 1950s and 1960s has received relatively little attention in historical research. This is especially evident in histories of workplace activism and is the product of the established frameworks of historical enquiry and the availability of documentary sources. Sonya O Rose has argued that the structure of Labour History, founded on a public-private dichotomy has limited understandings of the importance of work in women’s lives. Locating ‘the fount of resistance’ as Rose has described it ‘at the point of production’ has also led to gendered interpretations of men’s and women’s political conscious:

¹³⁰ Rosemary Pringle, *Secretaries Talk: Sexuality, Power and Work* (London: Verso, 1988), pp. 5-21.

¹³¹ Michael Roper, *Masculinity and the British Organisation Man since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 161-188.

¹³² Julie Berebitsky, ‘The joy of work: Helen Gurley Brown, gender, and sexuality in the white-collar office’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 15:1 (2006), p. 126.

By uncritically assuming that women (naturally) gain their identities from the domestic sphere while men (just as naturally) gain theirs in the workplace, men's labour historians have carried forward nineteenth-century ideology as historical argument...It is important to recognise that those who were marginal to those organisations and movements may actually have been central to the dynamics of labour history.¹³³

A reliance on trade union membership to understand commitment to work and agency in the workplace has been recognised as inadequate in histories of the inter-war period, but this has not yet extended to postwar historiography.¹³⁴ One reason for this appears to be the difficulties in accessing records of women's work. Recent articles have discussed the role of workplace trips and opportunities for socialising in maintaining membership among women, which appears in archival material, but not their connection to specific episodes of industrial action.¹³⁵ Women appear in photographic records of the workplace, but it is far more difficult to trace them in written records. In the 1970s sociologists like Sallie Westwood took jobs in factories in an attempt to embed themselves in the lives of women who worked there.¹³⁶ A recent collection of essays edited by Mary Davis reflected the sense of uncertainty about the level of historical knowledge of women's labour with the sub-title *Renewing the Debate (or*

¹³³ Sonya O Rose, 'Gender and Labour History: The nineteenth-century legacy', *International Review of Social History*, 38 (1993), pp. 157-162.

¹³⁴ Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England 1918-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹³⁵ Cathy Hunt, 'Dancing and days out: the role of social events in British women's trade unionism in the early twentieth century', *Labour History Review*, 76: 2 (2011), pp. 104-120.

¹³⁶ Sallie Westwood, *All Day, Every Day: Factory and Family in the Making of Women's Lives*, (London: Pluto Press, 1984).

Starting it).¹³⁷ Indeed, while the legislative contours of women's labour history are well known, the links between landmarks, such as the Equal Pay Act (1970) and women's experience of the workplace remain absent from these historical accounts. For example, despite an acknowledgement of increasing numbers of women in the workplace in the 1950s and 1960s the history of industrial action in the 'affluent' Midlands has focused on the engineering worker and the motor industry.¹³⁸

Richard Whiting has also noted that, although they covered all employees, the 1956 Redundancy and 1971 Industrial Relations Act, were shaped by explorations of the issues surrounding the male manual worker.¹³⁹ Within this analysis, the vulnerability of the car worker to redundancy and layoffs has been recognised, as has the reality that the legendary £20 per week wages could only be achieved by engaging in significant amounts of overtime.¹⁴⁰ Quantitative analysis of strike action in post-war Britain has identified that the fastest growth in the net total of strikes appeared in 1960, with a wider range of industries affected than those previously represented as 'strike-prone'.¹⁴¹ The quantitative data demonstrates that strike action had relevance for a greater number of workers than those identified as affluent workers. This suggests that extending analysis of industrial action beyond the affluent worker can provide a valuable point of

¹³⁷ Mary Davis (ed.), *Class and Gender in British Labour History: Renewing the Debate (or Starting it?)* (London: Merlin, 2010).

¹³⁸ Stephen Tolliday, 'High tide and after: Coventry engineering workers and shopfloor bargaining 1945-1980', in Bill Lancaster and Tony Mason (eds.), *Life and Labour in a Twentieth Century City: The Experience of Coventry* (Coventry: Cryfield Press, 1986), p. 238.

¹³⁹ Richard Whiting, 'Affluence and industrial relations in post-war Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 22:4 (2008), p. 526.

¹⁴⁰ John Rule, 'Time, affluence and private leisure: the British working class in the 1950s and 1960s', *Labour History Review*, 66:2 (2001), pp. 223-242.

¹⁴¹ JW Duncan, WEJ McCarthy and GP Redman, *Strikes in Post-War Britain: A Study of Stoppages of Work Due to Industrial Disputes, 1946-73* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), pp. 400-401.

access into existing discussions of the changing nature of class and the experience of social change in what has been discussed by some historians as ‘affluent society’.¹⁴² The most recent scholarship has emphasised that car workers, despite their relatively powerful position in industrial action, were unexceptional as members of the working class. In his qualitative reassessment of the material collected for the ‘Affluent Worker’ study, Savage suggests the Luton interviewees’ emphasis on being ‘ordinary individuals’ undermined the idea that working-class identities are established in particular workplace experiences.¹⁴³ This provides a route into this history for the female worker.

Interest in women’s labour activism in post-war Britain has prioritised the issue of equal pay.¹⁴⁴ However this issue has gained relevance in the aftermath of the Dagenham machinist strike (1968), which is often neatly correlated with emergence of the Women’s Liberation Movement and the Equal Pay Act of (1970).¹⁴⁵ Although equal pay was a perennial point of discussion throughout the twentieth century and was achieved by professional women working in the civil service by legislation passed in 1955, there is not yet an adequate historical account of how these two high profile campaigns relate more generally to women’s activism in the 1950s and 1960s. Material from the 1950s and 1960s suggests that equal pay was not a primary issue towards which working-class female workers directed their activism. This has lead to vague

¹⁴² Nick Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics: Coventry, 1945-1960* (London: Routledge, 1990); Lawrence Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain, 1951-1964: Old Labour, New Britain?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

¹⁴³ Mike Savage, ‘Working-class identities in the 1960s: revisiting the affluent worker study, *Sociology*, 39:5 (2005), pp. 929-946.

¹⁴⁴ Sarah Boston, *Women Workers and the Trade Unions* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1980).

¹⁴⁵ Holloway, *Women and Work*, p. 181.

assumptions that these are the years where the ‘roots of militancy’ must lie, but with little to substantiate such claims.¹⁴⁶ For example Sarah Boston has described the early 1960s as ‘curious years for women workers’ lodged between the 1950s conservatism and the ‘new militancy’ which began with the machinists strike at Dagenham in 1968.¹⁴⁷ This also leads her to pessimistic conclusions:

The fact that more and more women, in particular married women, worked led to no fundamental change in attitude towards the female worker.¹⁴⁸

Boston based her pessimistic conclusions on the absence of women in trade union records. However, it is incorrect to assume that because women were not present in these sources they lacked agency in the workplace and on the picket line. More recent studies of women’s labour activism in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century have made use of report of women’s industrial action in the print media.¹⁴⁹ Although working with media products has certain challenges as a source for women’s labour history, it does appear to be a useful route into this subject. As Pat Thane has argued it is difficult to understand women’s activism in the 1950s, because ‘there has been so little historical analysis of the social and cultural history of the nineteen-fifties and so much polemical stereotyping of the decade as dull, static and uniformly

¹⁴⁶ Boston, *Women Workers and the Trade Unions*, p. 262.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

¹⁴⁹ Selina Todd, “‘Boisterous workers’: young women, industrial rationalisation and workplace militancy in interwar England”, *Labour History Review*, 68:3 (2003), pp. 293-310; Louise Raw, *Striking a Light: The Bryant and May Matchwomen and their Place in History* (London: Continuum, 2009).

conservative'.¹⁵⁰ There has been some attempt to recover women's activism as consumers,¹⁵¹ but dividing women's political agency into spheres of consumption and production artificially separates these roles that were deeply intertwined in women's lives.

Summarising the second half of this historiographical review, current literature indicates that the home remained an important venue of women's work in the 1950s and 1960s, even if the consumer durables acquired by families suggest that it was also becoming an important sphere of family leisure. However, in order to add nuance to historical understandings of women's changing social and cultural roles in this period, it appears that new sources of historical evidence are vital. In particular, this review has highlighted the limitations of the contemporary sociological studies and retrospective oral history interviews, where women's performances as interviewees makes it difficult to identify points of change in their experience of paid work. Likewise, the pessimistic conclusions reached on the impact of increasing numbers of women in the workplace in the 1950s and 1960s based on trade union records must be addressed. Although not without its own limitations, which will be discussed in the next chapter, the regional television news collection provides an alternative record of this era and one which is contemporary to the events documented. Moreover, the theme of 'ordinariness' that has appeared in the historical literature reframing the impact of 'affluence' on working-

¹⁵⁰ Pat Thane, 'What difference did the vote make? Women in public and private life in Britain since 1918', *Historical Research*, 76:2 (2003), p. 278.

¹⁵¹ Lawrence Black, *Redefining British Politics: Culture, Consumerism and Participation, 1954-1970* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

class identity can be uniquely illuminated in this material, especially when combined with analysis of the ‘ordinary’ housewife, as articulated in women’s history.¹⁵²

Problematizing the concept of work has provided a rich seam of debate for studies in women’s history. This is reflected in the classic studies by Alice Clark and Ivy Pinchbeck, as well as later generations of historians energised by the women’s liberation movement. Historians have sought to tread carefully through distinctions between women’s paid and unpaid work, less they ‘perpetuate gendered ideologies that have valued work in business or industry over “free” work in the home’.¹⁵³ The ambiguities surrounding definitions of ‘women’s work’ and the value of ‘woman power’ are apparent in the audio-visual materials at the centre of this study. The title of this thesis *Women and the Work of Cultural Production*, reflects the attempt to explore how the ambiguities of ‘women’s work’ were visually and discursively framed in a ‘new’ but increasingly popular site of cultural production. By using the term ‘work’ within this title, I suggest that the women who participated in the regional news films played an active part in shaping this history, but acknowledge that this was not always in circumstances of their own choosing. This raises questions about the extent to which regional news teams mediated the participation of ‘ordinary’ Midlanders and the agency they retained over the images of themselves on film. Detailed archival research into women’s appearances in the regional television news provides a means to add ‘some shades of grey in a scholarly discussion that is too often conducted in black and white’.¹⁵⁴ Using the ATV news collection it is possible not only to explore the contours of women’s ambiguous relationship to work, but to reveal how the news teams actively

¹⁵² Mike Savage, ‘Working-class identities in the 1960s’, pp. 929-946; Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb*.

¹⁵³ Cowman and Jackson (eds.), *Women and Work Culture*, pp. 1-24.

¹⁵⁴ Adrian Bingham, ‘Ignoring the first draft of history?’, *Media History*, 18: 3-4 (2012), p. 312.

drew from and played upon these ambiguities. This forms the basis for the contention that it was precisely the inability to concretely define what ‘women’s work’ was and how to value their ‘labours’ that set women at the centre of a variety of social questions and contemporary discussions that have not been previously explored by historians and which this thesis will illuminate.

Chapter Two

Theory and Method

[W]e need to learn to interpret visual images because they are an important means through which social life happens.¹

A variety of scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds have discussed how visual culture was part of twentieth-century society in numerous forms: in photographs, advertising, paintings, films and latterly television. Some scholars have described the visual as an integral part of Western modernity.² Luke McKernan has gone as far as to describe a ‘fury for seeing’ among the London cinema audience of the 1910s.³ In this thesis, situated in the second half of the twentieth century, rather than a ‘fury for seeing’ the regional television news is set within the everyday context of domesticated television viewing where ‘seeing’ is defined by familiarity and routine. This differentiation marks an important distinction between this study and previous research and has naturally shaped the approach to the project as described in this chapter. In discussions of how to use moving images as historical evidence, as with all elements of visual culture, historians have focused on defining their relationship with past social realities in order to provide an interpretative framework for their analysis. On the one

¹ Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*, (London: Sage, 2nd ed., 2007), xiii.

² C Jenks, ‘The centrality of the eye in western culture: an introduction’, in C Jenks (ed.), *Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995).

³ Luke McKernan, ‘A fury for seeing: cinema, audience and leisure in London in 1913’, *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 6:3 (2008), pp. 271-280.

hand, forms of ‘actuality’ film and television, such as documentary film and television news, seem to tell the viewer so obviously about the past. However, on the other hand, it is difficult to pin down exactly *what* they express and *how* best to extract aspects of the image for historical research. This thesis is grounded in a cautious realist perspective; that there is social reality outside the consciousness of the individual and that it is possible for the researcher to gain knowledge of this using moving images, but acknowledges that any knowledge acquired will be partial and incomplete in terms of its ability to know past social realities.⁴ This approach is therefore reflexive, discussing images in relations to their contemporary audience and the potential for their meanings to change as they are recontextualised as archival material.

This chapter provides a brief summary of the debates articulated by the ‘film and history movement’ of the mid-twentieth century, before considering more recent analyses raised by discussions of the ‘visual’ and ‘pictorial’ turn. It also considers how gender has affected social actors’ ability to look and see, and how best to provide a historical understanding of the position of women in visual culture. The chapter then moves on to provide an outline of the approach used in this research, summarised chapter by chapter.

Interest in the potential of film as a historical record has existed as long as the medium itself. In 1895 film enthusiast W K L Dickson discussed his vision for moving picture records of ‘great national scenes’ comprehensively archived so that students and historians would benefit, replacing ‘the dry and misleading accounts, tinged with the exaggerations of the chroniclers’ minds.’⁵ Later, in 1948 John Bradley promoted a

⁴ Penny Tinkler, *Using Photographs in Social and Historical Research* (London: Sage, 2013), pp. 10-11.

⁵ Anthony Aldgate, *Cinema and History: British Newsreels and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Scholar Press, 1979), p. 2.

similar vision for the Library of Congress in their collections of motion pictures:

‘History so recorded will have not only a new fidelity but a present tense value not found in other mediums’.⁶ These visions situate film as a scientific process with a level of objectivity unobtainable by written record. Their claims for film’s objectivity are of course overstated; film records are as selective in what they include in their frame as written documents. However, it is precisely this quality, the veracity of immediacy, captured in moving images that was admired by the likes of Dickson and Bradley that has proved the most difficult to incorporate into historical research. Sceptics have questioned the authenticity and reliability of moving image material and questioned how historians can reconcile the ‘unfixed nature of the image’ with their desire to use images as historical evidence.⁷ Moving images have also been criticised for tending to confirm what social historians already know from written sources.⁸ The tension at work here is between the ability to understand the aesthetic power of the image, and the need to stabilise this ambiguous force so that it can be bound into scholarly historical discussions.

For archivists and historians working in the 1960s and 1970s, a major barrier to research was the lack of access to moving image material. Unwieldy reels of fragile film made research using moving images a lengthy and costly process. Digital technologies have (or have the potential to) ameliorated these issues to some extent, perhaps at least providing researchers with knowledge of a collection and its contents

⁶ John G Bradley, ‘Motion picture archives of the Library of Congress’ (1948), p.6, quoted in John B Kuiper, ‘The historical value of motion pictures’, *The American Archivist*, 31: 4 (1968), p. 386.

⁷ Penelope Houston, ‘The nature of the evidence’, *Sight and Sound*, 36 (1967), pp. 89-92.

⁸ JAS Grenville, *Film as History: The Nature of Film Evidence* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1971), p3; More recently this argument has been discussed by Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Use of Images as Historical Evidence* (London: Reaktion, 2001), pp. 183-189.

before they journey to the archive. Working in the pre-digital age, the ‘film and history’ movement of the 1970s drew together a group of historians including John Grenville, Arthur Marwick, Anthony Aldgate and Nicolas Pronay who promoted film as a serious source for serious history. Their enquiry focused on wartime propaganda and newsreels, but they also debated the various challenges of using media archives and their collections in historical research. In identifying what kind of evidence historians could extract from film, Grenville and Marwick were concerned about the ‘historical accuracy’ of film, which meant they tended to divide the material into two categories of analysis: ‘information’ and ‘messages’, or in the case of Marwick: ‘unwitting’ and ‘witting’ testimony. ‘Information’ (or ‘unwitting testimony’) was defined as the evidence provided in portraits of historical actors and their clothing, the material culture and built environment captured on film. ‘Messages’ (or ‘witting testimony’) referred to the purpose of the film and its cultural resonance with the audience.⁹ For the ‘film and history’ group, the incidental information a film provided about its subject was distinguishable from the messages purposefully represented in the production. Where Grenville found the ‘messages’ of film most important, since they provided evidence of attempts to ‘mould public opinion’, for Marwick it was the ‘unwitting’ testimony, the elements of ‘reality’ that, he argued, survived the processes of cutting and editing, that were most valuable.¹⁰

This approach also allowed Grenville and Marwick to tackle convincingly debates over the status of film as a source for history. Because they argued that film could be

⁹ Grenville, *Film as History*; Arthur Marwick, ‘Notes on the use of Archive Film Material’ [appendix], *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century: A Comparative Study of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States* (London: Macmillan, 1974); Paul Smith (ed.), *The Historian and Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Anthony Aldgate, *Cinema and History* (London: Scholar Press, 1979); Nicholas Pronay, *Propaganda, politics and Film, 1918-1945* (London: Macmillan, 1982).

¹⁰ Aldgate, *Cinema and History*, p. 12.

unpacked and studied for information and messages independently, this opened up space to understand film as a primary as well as secondary source for history. For Grenville, film could be used as primary evidence, if studied for its incidental details, or secondary evidence if analysed for its messages. As he described:

The nature of the evidence, primary or secondary, and the importance to be attached to it depends on the question the historian asks of it, and on its relationship to other evidence available to the historian.¹¹

For Grenville, the value of archive film in historical research depended upon the subject of the historian's enquiry. This is one of Grenville's most important points, because he emphasised that the type of moving image material being used in the research must suit the enquiry, as well as encouraging practitioners to tailor methodologies to their project. Some mediums will suit their subject better than others, since film 'must render all meanings in physical terms.'¹² This point has been upheld in more recent discussions within the visual turn.¹³ Importantly for this thesis, as moving images are recontextualised in the media archive, it is possible to begin to develop an understanding of the categories of social commentary they fit into: labour, leisure, citizenship rather than simply understanding them as examples of their medium and part of media history. To do so an appreciation of the contemporary relationship between the medium and its message is required.

¹¹ Grenville, *Film as History*, p. 9.

¹² Michael Roemer, film-maker and critic, quoted in William Hughes, 'The evaluation of film as evidence', in Smith (ed.) *The Historian and Film*, p. 65.

¹³ Peter Burke, 'Interrogating the Eyewitness', *Cultural and Social History*, 7:4 (2010), pp. 435-443.

The discussions presented by Grenville and Marwick remain valuable for practitioners today, but are also a reflection of an attempt to identify an approach that would distil interpretations of moving image into the conventions of scholarly history. Thus, they did not explicitly deal with the issue of aesthetics when using visual sources. Dawn Ades has made the interesting point that while the ‘aesthetic quality’ is the most slippery for historians to tackle, rather than ‘bracketing off’ this problematic issue, this should prompt historians to draw upon dialogues of ‘expertise, languages and literatures’ between historians and art historians.¹⁴ Other members of the film and history movement did consider this challenge. William Hughes in particular recognised the paradox that, while treating film ‘as any other document’ allowed it to be incorporated into the historical project alongside other sources, it limited ‘unnecessarily the range of information we might extract from film sources’.¹⁵ In line with Ades’ conclusion, Hughes advocated that visual literacy would lead the historians to a better appreciation of the similarities and difference between film and written documents.

The last point considered in this brief discussion, is the impact images have on the social world. In the 1976 publication *The Historian and Film*, film is described not only as a ‘historical document’, but as a ‘historical factor’: ‘developing within and operating upon a particular historical context.’¹⁶ The contours of this discussion resonate with more recent debates in the social history of art, in which discussions of representation have expanded beyond reflection theories to ‘insist on the transformative power of

¹⁴ Dawn Ades, ‘Objects of enquiry, an art historian’s response to Peter Burke’, *Cultural and Social History*, 7:4 (2010), p. 451.

¹⁵ Hughes, ‘The evaluation of film as evidence’, pp. 50-51.

¹⁶ Smith, *The Historian and Film*, p. 4.

pictures'.¹⁷ Lynda Nead urges historians 'to think through the relationship of the picture as a historical document and as aesthetic experience' to understand pictures as 'historically responsive and expressive'.¹⁸ For Nead, acknowledging the historian's own aesthetic responses to her or his source material also 'allows a comprehension of the image as a whole, rather than as a collection of pieces of evidence.'¹⁹ Thus Nead recognises the aesthetic value of images by calling for historians to synthesise their analysis of the 'information' and 'messages' apparent in the visual materials they study. What this project hopes to achieve in building an approach to the regional television news collection, is perhaps best described as tracing the 'visual path from screen to everyday life'.²⁰ This is particularly appropriate for television news, which provided a (selective) daily account of the region and also allows a range of sources for social and cultural history to be drawn in alongside the news film.

This approach also allows the impact of the news images on everyday life to be considered, as Penelope Hudson has suggested:

Cameramen have provided us with a kind of shorthand visual imagery for this century: a British political crisis means a crowd in the rain outside Number Ten; the depression means cloth-capped men on street corners the General Strike, a shot of idle machinery or empty railway lines; the Battle of Britain, that

¹⁷ Charlotte Behr, Cornelia Osborne and Sabine Wieber, 'The challenge of the image', *Cultural and Social History*, 7:4 (2010), p. 427.

¹⁸ Lynda Nead, 'The History in Pictures', *Cultural and Social History*, 7:4 (2010), p. 486.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 491.

²⁰ Patricia Hayes, 'Introduction: visual genders', in Patricia Hayes (ed.), *Visual Genders, Visual Histories* (London: Blackwell, 2006), p. 13.

shot from *Fires Were Started* of fire-hoses snaking away down
a London street after a raid.²¹

This study looks at how this ‘shorthand visual imagery’, as developed in cinema newsreels for national and international distribution, is inflected in the Midlands regional television news and the circumstances under which these frames of reference were altered. Luke McKernan has made some useful points on how cinema newsreels visualised the news. In assessing the form and function of newsreels past, present and future, he sees newsreels as an important benchmark since they were the first to visualise the news, providing a measure for how we expect the past, at large, to be visualised. Like Penelope Hudson quoted above, he argues that newsreels were an important part of the visualisation, and in turn comprehension, of the twentieth century.²² Television news stories from the 1950s drew upon devices developed in cinema newsreels, such as the vox pop, but also developed them as news teams experimented in creating a televisual news style. McKernan has also emphasised how newspapers and cinema newsreels operated in a reflexive news market.²³ Given this assertion, this study not only compares the regional television news collection with cinema newsreel, but also the news agenda of the local print media. In addition, the regional focus of this study is vital to the project of opening up the media archive for social and cultural history research. News film of national significance, in the form of cinema newsreel and television broadcasts, has been incorporated into studies of political culture. In contrast, regionally produced material reveals how film and

²¹ Penelope Hudson, ‘The nature of the evidence’, *Sight and Sound*, 36:88 (1997), p. 92.

²² Luke McKernan, ‘Newsreels: form and function’, in Richard Howells and Robert W Matson (eds.), *Using Visual Evidence* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2009) p. 105.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

television have become part of the fabric of everyday life, allowing historians to connect moving image material more thoroughly with the themes of socio-historical enquiry.

It is also important to note that visual devices do not always follow neat evolutions from one medium to another. In developing a televisual news style both national and regional television news teams revived the practice of putting the audience on screen first developed by the ‘actuality’ film makers of the 1890s. In his study of Mitchell and Kenyon’s Factory Gate Film, Tom Gunning, suggests that they provided a new visibility for the working class in an age of looking. He also suggests that the difference between the Lumière’s factory gate films and Mitchell & Kenyon’s is that the former were shown to an elite audience, while the latter were seen by those featured on the film.²⁴ This relationship is resonant of the relationship between Midlanders who participated in the filmed inserts for the regional television news and the local television audience. Although it is important to take into account the production values that mediated the images of themselves that Midlanders watched, the essential element of ‘ordinary’ people being able to see themselves on screen is an important point of consideration in identifying the agency of ‘ordinary’ people captured on film. Thus in its visual devices ATV’s television news was simultaneously innovative, as well as representative of a longer term relationship between moving images, their producers and their audiences.

As with all areas of social and cultural life, social actors’ experience of it is determined by class, gender and ethnicity. The focus of this study is how women appeared in the

²⁴ Tom Gunning, ‘Pictures of crowd splendor: the Mitchell and Kenyon factory gate films’, in Vanessa Toulmin, Patrick Russell and Simon Popple (eds.), *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on Film* (London: BFI, 2004), pp. 48-51.

regional television news collection. The position of women as objects and observers in visual culture remains a contentious issue and identifying potential points of agency for the ordinary woman on screen requires careful consideration. Theorists such as Laura Mulvey and John Berger have tended to emphasise the objectification of women in visual culture. Both these writers have been influential in feminist studies of visual culture, but both developed their theories at a specific historical juncture and thinking with specific visual materials. Laura Mulvey's widely influential essay on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' used psychoanalysis to analyse Hollywood films of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Mulvey argued that: 'The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly' thus, for Mulvey, the representation of women in film reflected the 'active/passive heterosexual division of labour' where women are cast in passive social roles. She also argued that this could not be overturned, because: 'According to the principles of the ruling ideology and the psychical structures that back it up, the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification'.²⁵ Likewise in his *Ways of Seeing* John Berger argues that '[M]en act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at'.²⁶ Published in 1975 and 1972 respectively both these theories emerged from the milieu of the Women's Liberation movement and focused on relationships between white, heterosexual men and women. This focus precluded engagement with a more complex understanding of women on screen defined by class, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation, as well as a discussion of women's social relationships, rather than sexual relationships.

²⁵ Laura Mulvey, 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema', in Amelia Jones (ed.), *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 47-48.

²⁶ John Berger, 'From *Ways of Seeing*' in Amelia Jones (ed.), *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 38.

Griselda Pollock has demonstrated that women increasingly became the 'primary objects of visual culture' from the nineteenth century,²⁷ but this does not mean that as a result women were devoid of agency in screen culture. 'Men' may have owned the means to cultural production but this does not mean that all media only spoke to a male audience, or that within all the diversity of visual culture forms only one-dimensional and sexualised images of women were produced. Historians, such as Penny Tinkler and Judy Giles, interested in the relationship between women and visual culture, have emphasised the importance of women being able to look, as well as the knowledge that they were being looked at.²⁸ Likewise Jenny Hammerton has emphasised the space that screen culture provided for women to look: 'Social niceties are dispensed with and the captive audience can, and do stare'.²⁹ In her analysis of the women who appeared in *Eve's Film Review*, a popular cinemagazine made by Pathé (1921-1933), Hammerton goes on to describe the circumstances where it is possible to reclaim women's screen agency:

Eve's Film Review is a women's world where men seldom appear except as dance partners, entertainers and hairdressers. Unlike the classical Hollywood narrative which almost without fail involves a complex interaction of looks between male and female characters, within Eve's Film Review there is no male mediator of the look. It is as if the woman defines herself. There is of course the cameraman, the film editor and Mr Watts who

²⁷ Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art, Ideology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 116.

²⁸ Tinkler, *Smoke Signals*, pp. 5-11; Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb*, p. 109.

²⁹ Hammerton, *For Ladies Only?*, p. 66.

decide what the audience will see, but the power of the woman-centred image unmediated by the look of an on-screen male shines through.³⁰

ATV's regional television news was not produced expressly for women, but there are certainly numerous news stories where female bodies filled the screen and especially when interviewed by a female reporter, there was no 'male mediator of the look' present. However, although Hammerton's arguments are appealing and resonate with the aims of this study the relationship between women's visibility and agency on screen can be differentiated further. As Patricia Hayes has discussed visibility does not necessarily equate to agency:

In older feminist historical discourses of the 'recovery' of lost histories, the oft-stated problem of the invisibility of women begins to take on a different slant when visibility itself becomes the central focus. This helps us to move beyond the positivist mandate to 'make visible' as the panacea for all gender ills, because it questions how things are made visible and asks on what terms this takes place. We immediately engage in a problematic zone, for the act of 'making visible' can silence women further.³¹

It is the aim of this project to provide a historically located discussion of how the visibility of 'ordinary' women in the regional television news interacted with their potential for social agency and how this changed during the period 1956-68. Providing a

³⁰ Ibid., p. 67.

³¹ Patricia Hayes (ed.), *Visual Genders, Visual Histories* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 3.

productive discussion of female agency is central to this project and its assessment of the value of the regional news collection as historical evidence. As well as discussing opportunities for women to look, this study also moves the discussion of women's appearances on screen from a psychological to a socio-historical framework. As Elizabeth Edwards has discussed in her work on the photographic survey movement: 'Methodologies concerned with critical forensic and semiotic readings tend to have their roots in either a traditional art-historical address of single images or in psychological visual communication'. For her what is of significance are 'the shapes, forms, relations and structures of this body of material'.³² This has implications for the understanding of agency in this project. Edwards' work suggests that the agency of the image as a material object must be considered, rather than solely the potential for the image to provide an echo of the social agency of the subject it captured. In this approach, the image as a material object can be understood as 'extending or replacing embodied experiences'.³³ Taking up Edwards' argument, in this thesis I approach the discussion of ordinary women's agency in the regional television news collection as dynamic and multi-layered. Their agency is discussed in terms of how their participation in the cultural production of the *Midlands News* was affective to contemporary audiences, but also how the emblematic qualities of the images themselves can reframe our understandings of social change. In so doing, this thesis is part of a broader project to provide a historically differentiated view of women's agency in visual culture and its significance in understanding the historical process of social change.

³² Elizabeth Edwards, 'Photography and the material performance of the past', *History and Theory*, Theme Issue, 48 (2009), pp. 134-135.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

These comments on the analysis of women's appearances in the regional news collection must be contextualised within the broader understanding to the relationship of the regional news collection to the social world of the 1950s and 1960s. Raymond Williams comments on cultural history are useful here:

Cultural history must be more than the sum of the particular histories, for it is the relations between them, the particular forms of the whole organisation, that it is especially concerned. I would then define the theory of culture as the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life.³⁴

Therefore cultural production is as much part of everyday life as say industrial production. As a historical record the regional television news collection does not provide an index of social and cultural change in the region, but this partiality reflects the preoccupations of contemporary social commentary, which Williams describes as a 'structure of feeling'.³⁵ The regional news teams produced news film of the events and stories that they felt expressed the mood of the region and attempted to communicate the significance of these contemporary events for that region. It is necessarily selective and produced with an 'imagined audience' in mind, but nevertheless the way in which it presented the Midlands is of historical value for the historical investigation of what was significant to contemporary life and people.

This research is explorative and this methodology is therefore necessarily experimental. Provoking discussions on the use of moving image as historical evidence is comparable

³⁴ Raymond Williams, 'The Analysis of Culture', in John Storey (ed.), *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, third edition (London: Pearson, 2006), p. 35.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

to the establishing of oral history in the 1980s. Methodological debates will continue, but anxieties over the use of this source material in history will only diminish if productive historical discussions can be initiated. This thesis therefore presents both a working methodology and new historical insights relating to its subject of enquiry. This project shares with oral history the difficulties of presenting its conclusions and analysis in written form. Just as the process of transforming audio recording to textual transcription risks losing the essential orality of the material, in this research written descriptions of the material viewed are only partial reconstructions of the visual material in a new written form. Where transcriptions of the audio track of visual material have been produced, an attempt has been made to punctuate these descriptions in a way that retains their sense of immediacy for the reader. Equally there are pieces of moving image material used here that have lost the audio element of their audio-visual status. This has necessitated the flexible methodology, outlined above and described in further detail below, which allows the researcher to appreciate what is present in these decontextualised materials, rather than lamenting what is absent. It is also worth noting here, that the kind of spoken testimony that is present in the vox pops and to-camera interviews in the regional news material provides an insight into the range of views acceptable to broadcast at a particular point in time. As in an oral history interview, the performative elements in these exchanges must be appreciated rather than simply taking the testimony at face value.

The outline below describes how this project has been organised to meet the aims described above. The next part of this chapter discusses how this theory was put into practice in the approach to this project.

Approaching the ATV regional news collection

The MACE archive holds thirteen thousand reels of news items broadcast by Midlands ITV regional franchise holders between 1956 and 1988. This is the largest and most comprehensive collection of regional news material held by any repository in the UK. This project is based on the first twelve years of regional news broadcasting as the service was established by ATV in the Midlands. The archived items are not complete programmes, but the film inserts, the pieces of news film shot on location that were later edited and scheduled into the evening news programme. Since the news programmes were broadcast live the link segments and voiceovers are irretrievable. Items which did not have sound embedded in the film are therefore mute in their archived form.

ATV initially produced three news and current affairs programmes: *Midlands News*, *Midland Montage* and *Look Around the Midlands*. In 1956 Midlands ATV broadcast between 3pm and 6pm in the afternoon, closed down between 6pm-7pm and reopened at 7pm for the evening schedule until closedown at 11pm. *Midlands News* was broadcast for five minutes before the 6pm closedown. *Midland Montage* was a weekly news magazine programme, whereas *Look Around the Midlands* was documentary in style. *ATV Today* a 20 minute news magazine programme was first broadcast in October 1964, replacing *Montage* and *Look Around*. Until 1968 the *Midlands News* bulletin preceded *ATV Today* in the broadcast schedule when it became the only regional news programme.

Historical research using the archival material originated by the companies contracted to the ITV network has a distinct set of challenges compared to similar research using the BBC archive. As Su Holmes has discussed, audio-visual evidence is relatively

plentiful, but there remains a lack of ‘written traces’ for ITV programmes.³⁶ This poses a challenge in terms of considering the institutional history of the regional news programmes, something that is necessary in order to understand the production values and news agenda behind the surviving moving image material. Likewise, identifying exactly who is featured on screen and their social background is, in the majority of cases, likely to be impossible. Working with the ATV archive, the researcher is presented with precisely the opposite position to that described by Jason Jacobs in *The Intimate Screen*, where he worked entirely with written archival material to explore the aesthetics of early television drama. Rather than using the written ephemera to reconstruct the image, working with the audio-visual fragments of ATV requires the researcher to start with the images and work outwards to reconstruct their historical context. As a daily record of ‘ordinary’ people, their streets, work and leisure in the postwar Midlands this is an immensely attractive collection to researchers, especially because, like all moving image, it retains a provocative immediacy. Considering the potential of the regional television news as a social record has shaped my approach to the collection. The news material is compared to other genres of film and visual material, and the written documents more frequently used to study the history of the twentieth century. This provided the basis for the interpretation of the ATV television news material that could identify the unique perspectives offered by the collection, while remaining grounded in the existing historiography.

This study aims to use the regional television collection as evidence for the social and cultural history of women’s work. However, the status of the collection as a piece of media history must also be acknowledged in the approach to this project. James Curran has outlined six mainstream interpretations of the evolution of the media in society:

³⁶ Holmes, ‘A friendly style of presentation’, pp. 69-70.

Liberal, Feminist, Populist, Libertarian, Anthropological, Radical. He suggests that in writing modern British media history a synthesis of these interpretations are required in order to provide a 'contingent view of ebb and flow, opening and closure, advances in some areas and reversals in others' thus avoiding linear narratives of progress and regress which currently prevail in this sub discipline.³⁷ This approach is a good fit for the study of British broadcasting history. ATV operated as a commercial television service, but was also bound by public service requirements laid out by the Independent Television Authority (ITA). Thus in analysing its broadcasting output we must be able to accommodate these tensions, recognising that television news companies may have simultaneously fitted into more than one of the categories outlined above. The level of agency this afforded its subjects should be discussed in these terms. Chapters four to seven will examine to what extent 'ordinary' people filmed by the regional news teams, retained more agency in the earlier news material from 1956-1964, where news teams were experimenting with a televisual news style, than they did from the mid-1960s when established news formulae were increasingly evident.

The fragmented nature of the ATV regional news collection and lack of supporting production documents means that the inserts can be described as ephemera. John Ellis has commented that it can be difficult to make distinctions between the significance of television's 'own history versus "wider" history', but he has suggested:

For the historian, however, the prime importance of television lies in the temporary meaningfulness of programmes at their initial broadcast. Like any other ephemera, it provides a means of grasping the texture of a particular moment in history, what it

³⁷ James Curran, 'Media and the making of British society', *Media History*, 8:2 (2010), p. 149.

felt to be alive at that moment, what the experience of the everyday might have been.³⁸

Ellis' description of television as ephemera is taken up in this study. Although centred on print media, recent discussions on ephemera resonate with the challenges of working with the material in the ATV archive. James Mussell's article, 'The Passing of Print', reminds us that ephemera are meant to be forgotten, and thus argues that when they accidentally survive they provokes a:

distinct affectual shock that accompanies the rediscovery of something we had forgotten: this is not just nostalgia, an opportunity to recollect and reframe a moment from the past, but also a peculiar reminder of the constructedness of memory...

...Of the different forms of printed ephemera, newspapers are a key resource for restoring the clutter of the everyday.³⁹

Mussell's approach can be usefully applied to ATV's film inserts produced for the regional television news. The collection holds records of what have become known as defining moments of the late twentieth century at a national as well as regional level, such as the Ugandan Asian crisis and the Miners' Strike. However, arguably the strength of the collection lies in the mundane, forgotten visions of the twentieth century. These hold immense potential to challenge the accepted historiography of contemporary life in the region, by restoring the clutter to visions of everyday life in the Midlands, from a contemporary rather than retrospective point of view. Complicating

³⁸ John Ellis [review], 'Television and History', *History Workshop Journal*, 56:1 (2003), pp. 282-283.

³⁹ James Mussell, 'The passing of print', *Media History*, 18:1 (2012), pp. 80-85.

this account by ‘cluttering’ this history with images of the women worker provides an approach consistent with the historical enquiry of this project.

This study used a theoretical sampling technique to identify material within the ITV regional news collection required for the project.⁴⁰ This means search terms such as ‘woman’, ‘worker’, ‘housewife’, ‘machinist’ were used to identify items from the online catalogue, using the results from the initial searches these key terms were then expanded upon to refine the searches by company, locality, or topic. This process was continued until they failed to turn up ‘new’ and relevant material. A full list of the sample can be found in the filmography at the end of the thesis. Using this technique the analysis chapters were formed around the appearances of women in the collection as ‘housewives’, workers with a ‘dual role’ and the participation of women in news stories of industrial action. The category of ‘housewife’ has been used where women’s appearances were connected to domestic work as well as civic issues concerning the home and children. The ‘dual role’ category refers to news items in which women were approached in their workplaces or at their factory gates for commentary on their position as consumers and broader social issues. The final category, women’s participation in news stories of industrial action, again reflects a degree of ambiguity, since women’s participation could be built around their roles as consumers, bearing the brunt of the ‘effects’ of strike action, or producers; as wives supporting their husbands on strike or, as striking workers in their own right.

Turning to the visual analysis of the news inserts, the interpretation of the moving image is largely compositional, focusing on the frame, pose and gesture of those captured on film. This draws upon art history, which has relied less on precise

⁴⁰ Norman Blaikie, *Designing Social Research: The Logic of Anticipation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

methodologies and more on developing a 'good eye'. As the first project to assess the collection historically, close analysis of its visual style is imperative. As Gillian Rose has summarised, although compositional interpretation has been criticised for a tendency to look at images in a vacuum, the advantage lies in allowing the 'power of the image' to be considered without subordinating it to theoretical toolkits.⁴¹ However, addressing this potential criticism, identifying points of 'intervisuality' has been crucial to this analysis. In the context of the study of television news this refers to the literal re-use of film from previous broadcasts as well as visual references to other images in popular visual culture such as newsreel, industrial film, advertising and Hollywood film.

After careful consideration I did not carry out a content analysis of the archive. In other studies of women in the media content analysis has provided quantifiable evidence of the deficit of women appearing in news and current affairs programmes.⁴² However, the material available for this project does not reflect the totality of what was broadcast to contemporary audiences. Thus it would be impossible to make judgments on the presence of women in the regional news based on quantitative analysis, because it is impossible to know to what extent women were present in the material that has been lost. For example, it is impossible to know how frequently women appeared as studio guests, and whether the voiceovers to the mute archive items were male or female. Thus the value of a quantitative analysis would be seriously undermined when there is no way of discerning whether the extant material is a representative sample. Moreover, the way women are present in the collection, it is argued, reflects something of the

⁴¹ Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, p. 39.

⁴² Katherine Mendes, *Feminism in the News: Representations of the Women's Movement Since the 1960s* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011).

time. In the ATV regional news women appear across the news hierarchy in both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ news stories. Men appeared as workers in headline news and at leisure in ‘soft’ news items, but the regional news teams played on the ambiguities of women’s social relationship to production and consumption/ work and leisure. Consequently, it can be difficult to identify whether women are appearing in the news film as workers, housewives, or at leisure. Exploring the blurring of these boundaries qualitatively, an analysis can begin to be built around the ambiguities in defining, ‘housewives’, ‘women’s work’ and ‘women’s jobs’. The challenge of understanding the framing of women in the regional news remains a qualitative question requiring qualitative analysis.

In addressing the challenge of working with an absence of production documents, anthropological approaches have been used to inform an understanding of the ‘social life’ of the fragmented film inserts as ‘visual objects’. Arjun Appadurai’s highly influential volume *The Social Life of Things* is the obvious starting point for this analysis. Appadurai’s analysis focused on commodities more conventionally associated with anthropological study; decorated necklaces, shells and early medieval relics. He aimed to understand how the value and cultural meaning of these commodities changed as they were exchanged at various points throughout their social life. Appadurai suggests looking at the *total* biographical trajectory of a commodity *in motion* in order to understand its cultural significance across multiple contexts. For Appadurai:

Even though from a theoretical point of view human actors
encode things with significance, from a methodological point of

view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context.⁴³

Using this approach, moving image is understood as a visual object and all ‘points of exchange’ in its social life become valuable points of analysis. Therefore as well as the established sites of production and reception currently analysed by film and television historians, junctures where the material has been filmed, edited and re-used also become points worthy of study, as Nicholas Thomas suggests: ‘objects are not what they were made to be but what they have become’.⁴⁴

This has important implications for the understanding of the agency of the people captured on screen. Situating the encounters of ordinary Midlanders with the television news teams as the initial ‘point of exchange’ in the social life of the television news film allows their agency to be considered in the interpretation of the resulting moving images as historical evidence. This agency was of course mediated in the editing process, the second point of exchange, and shortly after, in a third point of exchange, broadcast to the television audience. The film material was then stored as library footage and potentially reused, perhaps more than once, before being recontextualised in the MACE archive. By the time they come to be interpreted as historical evidence they may have gone through several significant points of exchange in their social life, each time producing a particular meaning. This is a complex yet knowable process, and therefore the immediacy that the images maintain, and the affect they have on the viewer even many years after their first broadcast can be traced back to that initial point

⁴³ Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 5.

⁴⁴ Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 4.

of exchange. Therefore if these points of exchange can be correctly contextualised the historian can consider the dialogue between the news teams and their subjects and the agency of the filmed subjects.

This is especially useful, because difficulties in establishing where the images come from, or dealing with the complications of editing has meant that moving image has at times been labelled ‘unreliable’. However, bringing these aspects into the discussion as sites of analysis in their own right provides insight into the practices of the regional television news team through episodes of re-use and repetition.

At this point it is worth providing an example from the collection. ATV kept all its news film as stock library footage. It was therefore standard production practice to re-use material over time. The following example shows how at times shots from an earlier news story were cut into a new one, in order to improve the visual narrative for the television audience. This is exemplified in an item called *Nylon Stockings* broadcast in 1959 for the weekly news magazine programme *Midland Montage*.⁴⁵ The structure of the *Nylon Stockings* item was representative of a popular formula for extended ‘soft’ news stories based on work and workplaces found in the weekly magazine news programmes, and the classic ‘...and finally’ news story. The standard formula was: an establishing shot (usually of a built structure), followed by an interview with the workers, cut to a close-up, ending with an interview with the manager. *Nylon Stockings* was filmed entirely at the factory gates, but the opening establishing shot was not a view of the factory. Instead the item opened with a shot of a woman’s hands feeding material through a sewing machine (see Figure 1). This shot had been cut from a news

⁴⁵ *Nylon Stockings* in *Midland Montage* [online video, ID: 21051959], (ATV, first broadcast 21 May 1959), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midland-montage-21051959-nylon-stockings/MediaEntry/153.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

item broadcast the previous year, *Manufacture of Stockings* (1958), which featured the Corah factory, Leicester.⁴⁶ Re-used in the 1959 news item, it provided a visual reference to the work that the women did in the factory. The close up shot of the factory machinery in motion, which appeared as the items cut from the interview with the female workers to the interview with the male manager (see Figure 2) was also taken from the 1958 news item.



Figure 1 *Midlands Montage* still, close-up of machinist hands, Corah, Leicester 1958

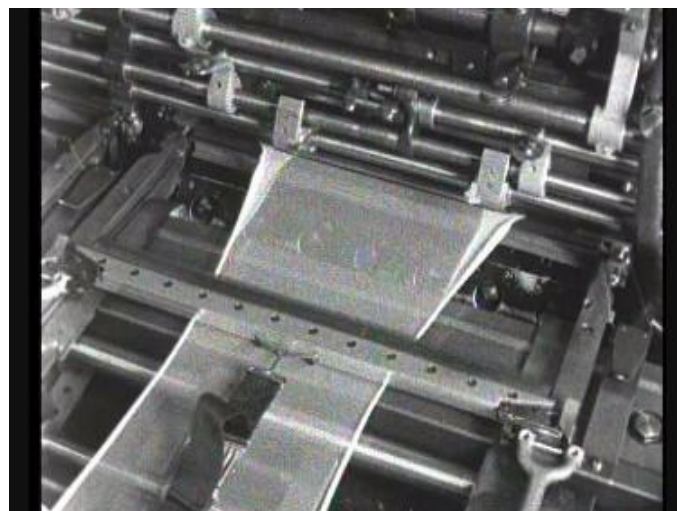


Figure 2 Close *Midlands Montage* still, close up of machinery in motion, Corah, Leicester 1958

⁴⁶ *Manufacture of Stockings* in *Midland Montage* [online video, ID: 17071958] (ATV, first broadcast 17 July 1958), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midland-montage-17071958-manufacture-of-stockings/MediaEntry/36050.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

Returning to the close-up shot of the women's hands, the re-use of this image is especially significant. This type of close-up shot was the predominant image of the female textile worker on film. The repetition of this image, in this case literally by re-using it, provides a point of reference to other images of the machinist circulated at this time, both in the ATV news collection and in other forms of visual culture (this point is discussed in more detail in chapter six). Thus, cutting material into the *Nylon Stockings* item was a necessary part of the visual communication of the story, because of its familiarity. Identifying this aspect of the social life of the 1958 footage therefore makes this material more valuable to the historian as evidence of how women were made visible in the regional television news collection. The effects of this limited and routinised iconography of the female worker will be discussed further in chapter six.

The lack of supporting written documents means that the potential of the regional news collection itself to provide insight into the production, content and reception nexus central to media research must be maximised; this approach inspired by visual anthropology supports this endeavour. In film and television research particular types of document are usually associated with a particular site of analysis: written documents with production, text/content with audiovisual material, audience with interview/ethnography. The ATV regional news collection is a good example of how these boundaries can be blurred. As exemplified above, the audio-visual material, when approached from an anthropological perspective, can provide insight into the process of television production. Likewise, the collection provides a valuable insight into the television audience. Of course this is the audience as imagined by ATV, but when viewing the collection from the mid-1950s to the 1980s it is possible to gain an insight

into the developing relationship between the ‘imagined’ on-screen audience and the television news team.

Numerous archives and collections of printed ephemera were crucial to this research. A chapter by chapter summary will now be provided of how they were used in this project. Chapter three, has already been sufficiently discussed and will not be considered further here. Chapter Four focuses on women’s on screen and off screen production roles at ATV. Extant copies of the staff magazine *ATV Newsheet* were vital to study women’s work off screen. The format and layout of *Newsheet* is largely consistent across all the available volumes from April 1961 to March 1969. Within this format the most frequent mode of appearance for female off-screen staff was as ‘cover girls’. These images can be described as portrait photographs, close-ups or full-length, with a short paragraph detailing their name, age, position in the company and hobbies. The images in *ATV Newsheet* were contrasted with appearances of women in the BBC’s staff magazine *Ariel* and the *TV Times* (Midlands Edition) for a comparative perspective. The ways in which the women working at ATV were made visible (through beauty contests, as pin-ups, and in advertisements) present a challenge in attempting to recover an accurate account of women’s agency as workers. However, the volume of images of female staff as cover girls, compared to a paucity of images of them ‘at work’ provides an insight into women’s experience of working in the media. Moreover, the dominance of the visual record opens up discussion on aspects of television production absent from written records, as discussed by Patricia Holland:

The visual has continued to be linked with frivolity, triviality
and a lack of seriousness, as well as an excess of emotion and

even with femininity, which in the 1950s, itself had a distinctly frivolous air.⁴⁷

The centrality of the visual, the frivolous and the feminine to the establishment of television in the mid-1950s suggests that women's contribution to television must be brought in from the margins of historical analysis. Building on Holland's argument, the frivolity and femininity captured within visual television ephemera arguably better conveys women's experience of television in the 1950s and into the early 1960s than written documents.

For the women working on screen, the above materials were triangulated with the news inserts which featured female reporters. They provide evidence of the topics covered, the imagery used in the news stories and, I will argue, show how gender featured in the aesthetics of the regional news. The career of ATV newscaster and reporter Pat Cox is compared to her ITN contemporaries Barbara Mandell and Lynne Reid Banks and news film from ITN Source is examined alongside that from the ATV regional news. ITN Source is a commercial archive, holding a vast collection of ITN news material. The orientation of the archive towards commercial enterprise makes it difficult and costly to approach for academic study. Therefore the comparisons that have been made in this thesis are based upon the digitised preview material freely available from the archive's website. While this is not ideal it has allowed me to begin to compare and contrast how these female television reporters were framed in national news programmes compared to ATV's regional programmes and to survey the kinds of news stories they covered.

⁴⁷ Holland, *The Angry Buzz*, p. 3.

In chapter five, women's appearances as housewives, commentary on housing and 'woman power' recruitment drives are studied. The material in the regional news collection is compared with contemporary television adverts where women also appeared in order to discuss the extent to which ATV's status as a commercial television provider influenced its visual representations of women in their domestic role. The television commercials used in this study were acquired from the History of Advertising Trust (HAT), which delivers material for academic purposes at a discounted rate. The adverts produced for Hoover used in this thesis were produced by D Arcy Masius MacManus (DMM), a US firm that established offices in London in the 1920s. Unfortunately, HAT does not hold the written documents that accompany the audiovisual material. Requests were made to the company Leo Burnett who subsumed DMM, but no access to the written material was granted. Nevertheless the audio-visual material does provide insight into the changing address to women in the television commercials and levels of participation of female models in these commercials.

Chapter six, which looks at women's dual role as producers and consumers, and compares the appearances of women at work in the regional television news collection with images of female workers in Pathé cinema newsreels and industrial film. This allows for an analysis of how the ATV news team picked up on the dominant representational strategies of female workers already present in moving image culture and also the extent to which the regional television news provided a new role for ordinary women in cultural production. Pathé produced three newsreels a week, allowing audiences to see in moving pictures the news and events covered in their daily newspapers. Cinema newsreels pioneered many of the techniques later used by television news, such as vox pops, asking a series of members of the public to provide

an answer to the same short question. It is in this capacity, providing a historical comparison to the ways female workers were made visible in the regional television news collection, that the Pathé material has been used in this study. The Pathé material is also valuable for analysing how the novelty value, central to framing images of the female worker in news film, was retained in the regional television news, even though the presence of women in the workplace was far from uncommon. Like ITN Source, British Pathé is operated as a commercial archive, however, detailed catalogue information is usually provided alongside its online previews.

Industrial film can be defined as film commissioned, or at times produced in house, by commercial enterprises and can take a variety of forms and uses. Promotional material and training film are both available in the MACE archive, however it is time and motion studies that have been analysed as part of this research. Time and motion studies filmed workers on the production line in order to analyse their movements and find the most efficient methods of completing the required processes. They have been used in this study as a cross medium comparison with the cinema newsreels and television news. Since the industrial film was not widely distributed or broadcast it provides insight into the making visible of the female worker but from an internal company perspective.

The focus of chapter seven is women's participation in Midlands television news reports of industrial action. Reports of strike action in the regional television news are compared to trade union records and accounts in the local print media, namely *The Birmingham Mail*. The Trades Union Congress (TUC) archive held at the University of Warwick provided insight into how women's industrial action was supported at a union

level and the details of the resolutions reached with women's employers. This is useful because an action had often disappeared from the local print and television news agenda before a resolution was set in place. However, the documentation available is far from a complete record of women's industrial activism in the 1950s and 1960s because women were often fighting for union recognition, so their actions were often not official. Therefore *The Birmingham Mail* provides a useful record of the variations in Midland strike activity, workers' motivations for industrial action, and the perceived effects on the community. *The Birmingham Mail* was selected because it was identified as the most popular evening paper in the Midlands, and given that it held shares in Midlands ATV, was the most likely to have a comparable news agenda. The details from these sources provide contextual detail to the regional television reports, however, they are largely records of the strike from the perspectives of union officials. Reporters rarely quoted workers themselves and few stories of strike action were printed with accompanying photographs. In contrast the regional television news provides the historian with a fragmented, but contemporary record of Midland picket lines and picket practices.

Summary

In this chapter, I have surveyed the existing literature to provide an overview of previous discussions surrounding the value of moving image as historical evidence. This has been combined with insight from practitioners conducting research across various sites of visual culture to outline the position of this project. For the direction of the thesis as a whole one of the most important points to acknowledge is the regional production context of the extant news material, which provides an elastic and experimental definition of news and thus allows the content of the news inserts to be

considered as part of social and cultural history. This means valuing the mundane and everyday qualities of the material, and understanding their ephemeral status as a strength of the collection. Thus the extant moving images become productive irritants in established historical accounts of the period. This study provides a route into a dynamic and multi-layered analysis of women's agency in visual culture, which is reflexive and historically located. To achieve this, the present study has developed a working methodology where the extant extracts of television news film are understood as material objects with a 'social life'. The various points of exchange in the social life of the news film provides insight into how meaning was produced and also allows the relationship between the news producers and the ordinary Midlanders participating in the films to be seen as a dialogue, where both groups have agency that can be considered even if it is not equally weighted.

In the next chapter I move away from a description of the methodology used in this thesis to provide a statistical overview of women's changing work patterns in the Midlands and the establishment of television in the region. Like this chapter, it provides contextual information to the visual analysis in chapters four to seven, but also an original analysis of the material examined.

Chapter Three

The Midlands 1956-1968: a statistical analysis of patterns of women's work and the establishment of the television audience

The aim of this thesis is to draw together the parallel histories of women's changing employment patterns and the establishment of Midlands ATV through the regional television news collection. Although this study is based primarily on visual analysis, the cautious realist approach to this project means that the relationship between the vision of the Midlands provided by the regional television news teams and 'real' life in the Midlands is part of the analysis. This chapter presents an original survey of the available statistical information on these two social trends, providing a sense of scale to the visual and discursive analysis presented in the later chapters. The statistical data on women's changing employment patterns and the television audience will be analysed in turn. The data on women's employment patterns was collected from the 1951, 1961 and 1971 Census for England and Wales. This has been supplemented where necessary with analysis from Ministry of Labour publications. The data on the transmission of television in the Midlands and the growth of the Midlands audience has been taken from the Independent Television Authority (ITA) Annual Reports and Accounts. These statistical analyses are followed by some concluding thoughts on the relationship between these two sets of data and a brief comparison of the perspectives on twentieth century Midlands provided by a statistical picture of the region, compared to the ATV regional news collection.

Women's experience of paid employment in the Midlands

The first point to note about the history of 'women's work' in the Midlands is the diversity of experience. The range of opportunities for women in neighbouring counties in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's could vary dramatically between the rural and agricultural, and urban and industrial areas, to the extent that it is impossible to describe a typical experience of 'women's work' in the Midlands. Certain counties of the Midlands have historically been associated with high levels of paid female employment, due to the presence of the textile industry in the East Midlands, chain making in the Black Country and the potteries of Staffordshire. Metal work in the Black Country was notable for its employment of women in areas of production only open to men in Birmingham.¹ Early feminist activists also used studies of areas of the Midlands to raise questions concerning the definition of 'women's work'. The following example comes from Margaret G Skinner's analysis of married women's work in Leicester in 1909-10:

One is forced to ask, too, why heavy laundry work and scrubbing floors should be considered a woman's work rather than rolling cigars in a factory, shall we say?²

M F Davies survey of rural women's work in the same volume suggests that at the turn of the century it was also changing, with many women experiencing greater gender segregation in rural labour.³ This dynamic history of women's labour means it is

¹ Miriam Glucksmann, *Women Assemble: Women Workers and the New Industries in Inter-War Britain* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 55-57.

² Margaret G Skinner, 'Leicester' in Clementina Black, *Married Women's Work* (London: Virago, 1983, first published 1915), p. 227.

³ M F Davies, 'Rural districts', in Black, *Married Women's Work*, p. 230.

inaccurate to attempt to suggest a distinct Midlands experience in relation to women and paid work in the first half of the twentieth century. In the second half of the twentieth century quantitative data at a national level shows a rise in the number of women in the workplace. National statistics suggest that women made up 32 per cent of the workforce in 1951 and 38 per cent in 1971.⁴ Young women have been recognised as prominent wage earners across Europe and North America in the interwar period. Selina Todd's research has explored in detail the experience of these young female workers and the significance of their work socially and culturally in the English context.⁵ In contrast, the growth in the number of women in the workplace in the postwar period has been attributed to increased labour-force participation by married women, often working part-time. The proportion of married women within the labour force rose significantly over this period, from 22 per cent in 1951 to 43 per cent in 1971.⁶ In the 1960s almost half of all married women were engaged in part-time paid employment, whereas this had been less than ten per cent before the First World War.⁷ The declining age of women at first marriage was also a factor in changing work patterns. In postwar Britain women were more likely to work up to the birth of their first child, rather than leaving work on marriage as they had done earlier. This change was assisted by the failure to reinstate marriage bars following the Second World War and by labour shortages more generally. Women were also more likely to return to paid employment once their children reached school age, thus working in what has become known as the bi-modal work pattern.

⁴ Glynn and Booth, *Modern Britain*, p. 278-279.

⁵ Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family*, pp. 2-3.

⁶ George Joseph, *Women and Work: The British Experience* (Oxford, 1983), p. 6.

⁷ Ministry of Labour, *The Pattern of the Future, Table 2 (d)*, (London: HMSO, 1964), p. 49.

At a regional level an analysis of female activity rates taken from the 1961 and 1971 Census suggests that in the West Midlands the proportion of women in paid employment rose from 41.5 per cent to 45.4 per cent and in the East Midlands, from 37.6 per cent to 43.3 per cent.⁸ Looking at this trend at a Midland county level adds an important dimension to historical understandings of women's work. The Census data collected in 1951, 1961 and 1971 is not directly comparable, since the categories used responded to changes in housing, migration and employment in an attempt to capture the most relevant data for the decade. C H Lee's, *British regional employment statistics, 1841-1971* provides a set of census data adjusted to provide accurate comparisons over time. Comparing the percentage rise in the numbers of women in paid employment in Midland counties reveals that those that had previously returned relatively low levels of paid female employment, such as Rutland and Lincolnshire, in some cases more than doubled the total percentage of women in paid employment. In contrast, in those counties with historically high levels of paid working women, such as Herefordshire and Leicestershire, numbers rose far less sharply. Thus the statistical evidence suggests that by the 1970s women across the Midlands were approaching a much more uniform experience of paid employment compared to any other time in the twentieth century. Table 1 shows this trend, revealing that the difference between the county with the highest percentage of women workers and the lowest dropped from 14 to 12 per cent between 1951 and 1971. This trend is even more pronounced if Rutland, the county with the lowest percentage of women workers is excluded. The difference between counties is then reduced from 13 percent in 1951 to 9 per cent in 1971.

⁸ Department of Employment, *Women and Work a statistical survey, Table 5*, (London: HMSO, 1974), p. 46.

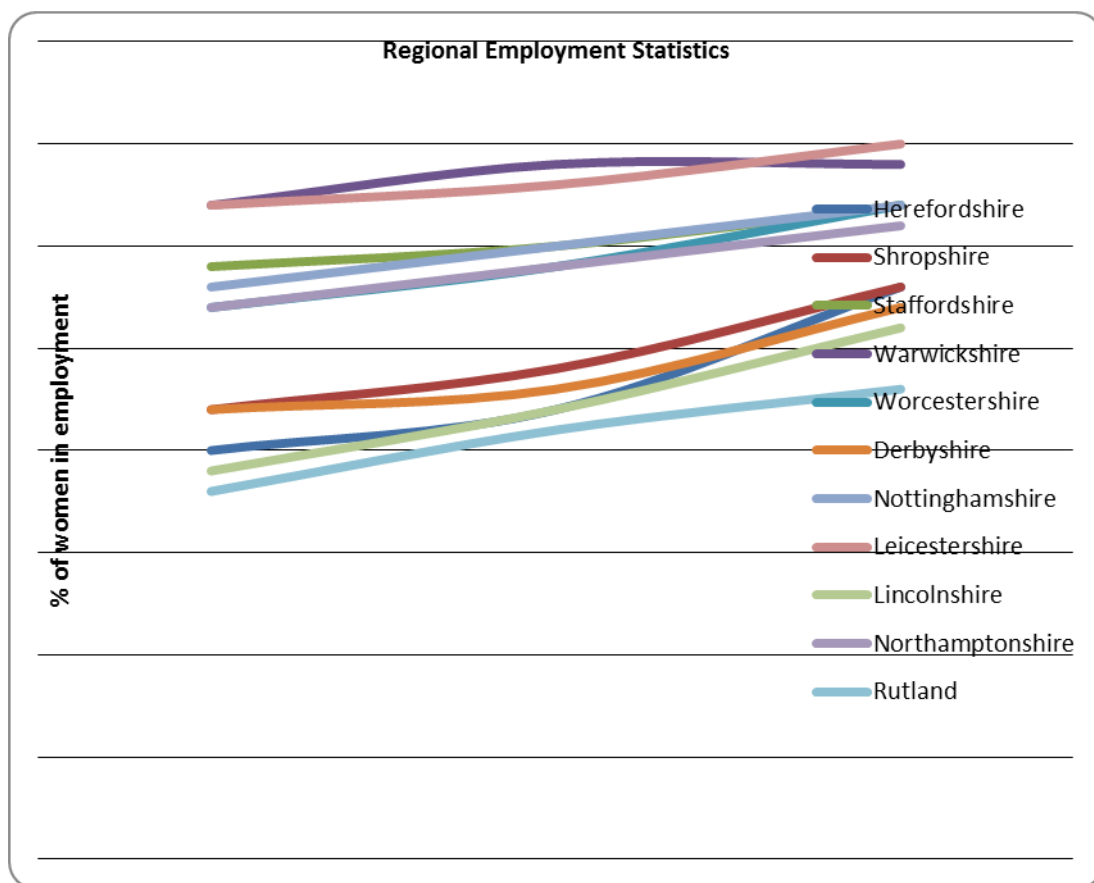


Table 1 Adapted from C H Lee, *British Regional Employment statistics, 1841-1971* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

An attempt to understand the dynamics of this broad trend requires data on the age and marital status of the female labour force. For the 1951 and 1961 Census the County Reports do not provide employment statistics by occupation. The 1961 Census recorded the number of women working in the North Midland Region as 509, 120. The percentage of married women within that total was 55.2 per cent. In the Midland Region a total of 760,180 women were recorded as in employment, with a 55.3 per cent of this female workforce recorded as married.⁹ The County Reports of the 1971 Census included the numbers of men, women and married women in employment by occupation. Table 2 shows the percentage of males, females and married females in

⁹ General Register Office, *Census 1961: England and Wales, Industry Tables part 1, Table 8 Industry and Status*, (London: HMSO, 1961), pp. 122-123.

employment, aged 15 and over, in Midland counties in 1971. It shows a remarkable similarity in the percentage of unmarried and married women in employment. In Worcestershire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire marginally larger percentages of married women were recorded in employment than those for unmarried women. Across all counties the percentage of women in employment was roughly half of that of men.

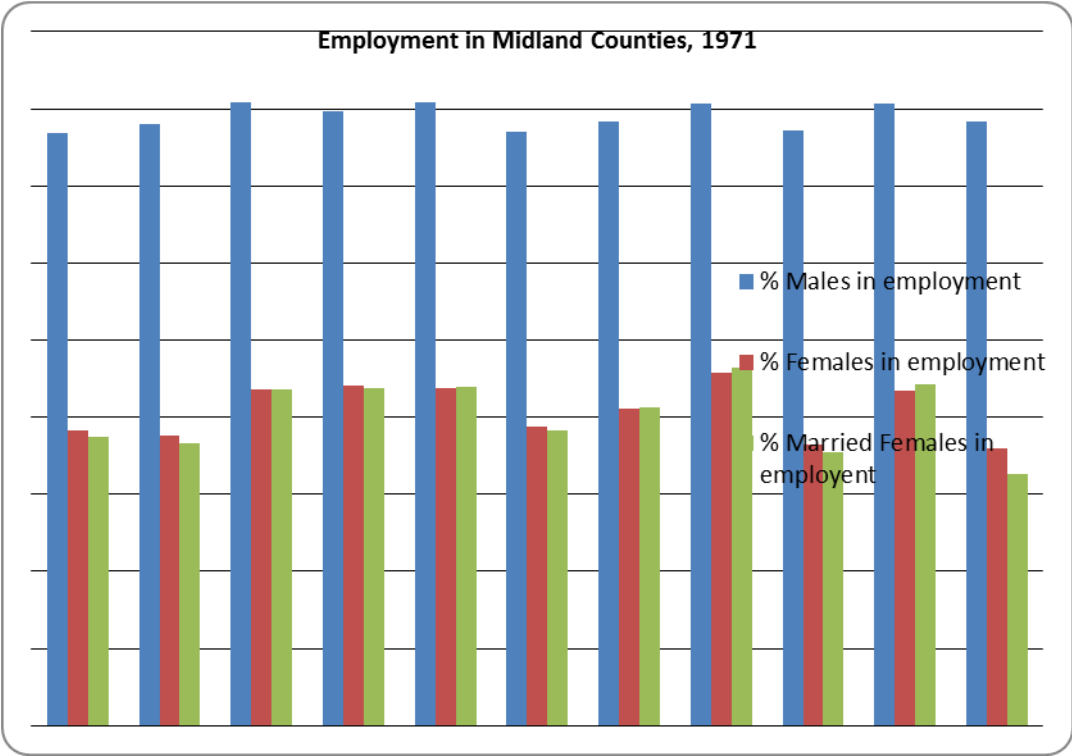


Table 2 Percentage of Men, Women and Married women in employment, aged 15 and over, adapted from *Census 1971: England and Wales, Economic Activity County Leaflets, Table 1 Occupation and status by area of usual residence and sex* (London: HMSO, 1971)

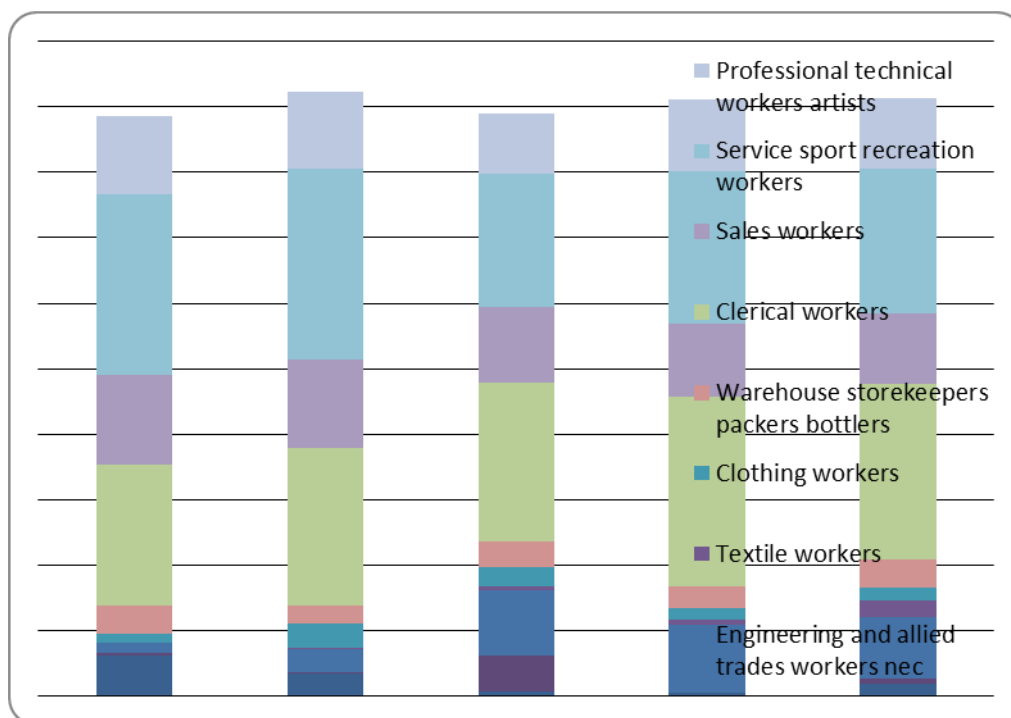


Table 3a Percentage of females in employment by occupation in West Midlands counties expressed as a % of total female employment, adapted from *Census 1971: England and Wales, Economic Activity County Leaflets, Table 1 Occupation and status by area of usual residence and sex* (London: HMSO, 1971)

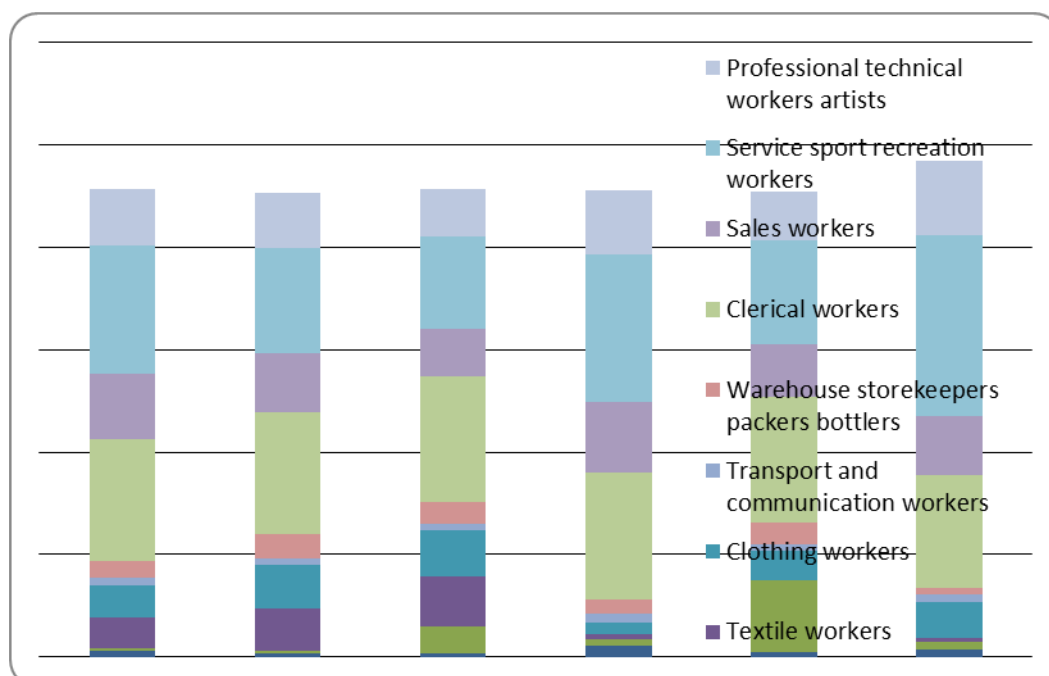


Table 3b Percentage of females in employment by occupation in East Midlands counties expressed as a % of total female employment, adapted from *Census 1971: England and Wales, Economic Activity County Leaflets, Table 1 Occupation and status by area of usual residence and sex* (London: HMSO, 1971)

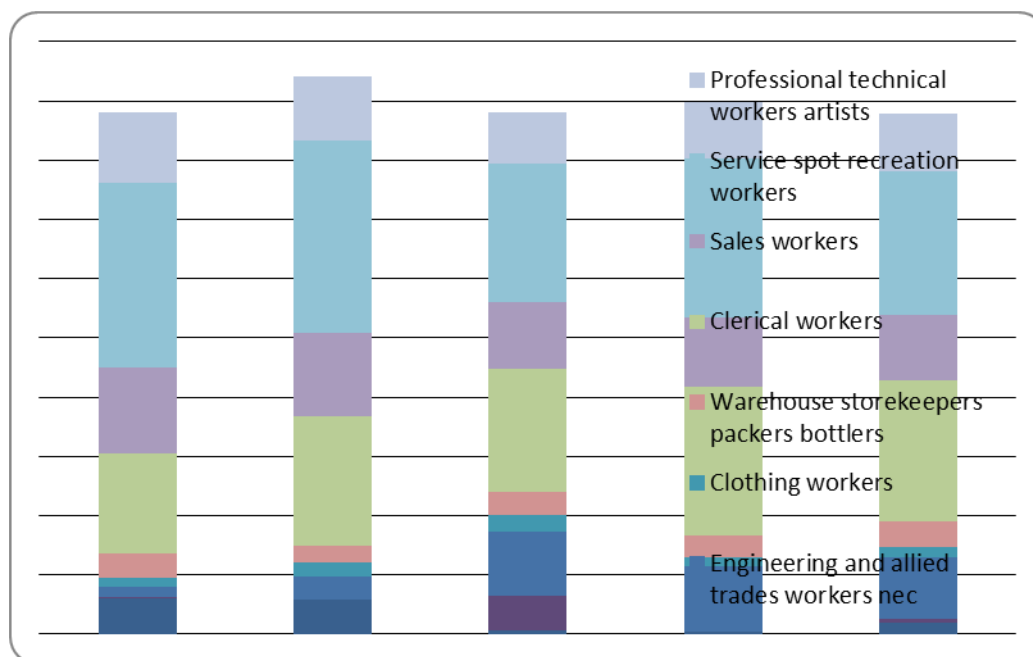


Table 4a Percentage of married females in employment by occupation in West Midlands counties expressed as a % of total female employment, adapted from *Census 1971: England and Wales, Economic Activity County Leaflets, Table 1 Occupation and status by area of usual residence and sex* (London: HMSO, 1971)

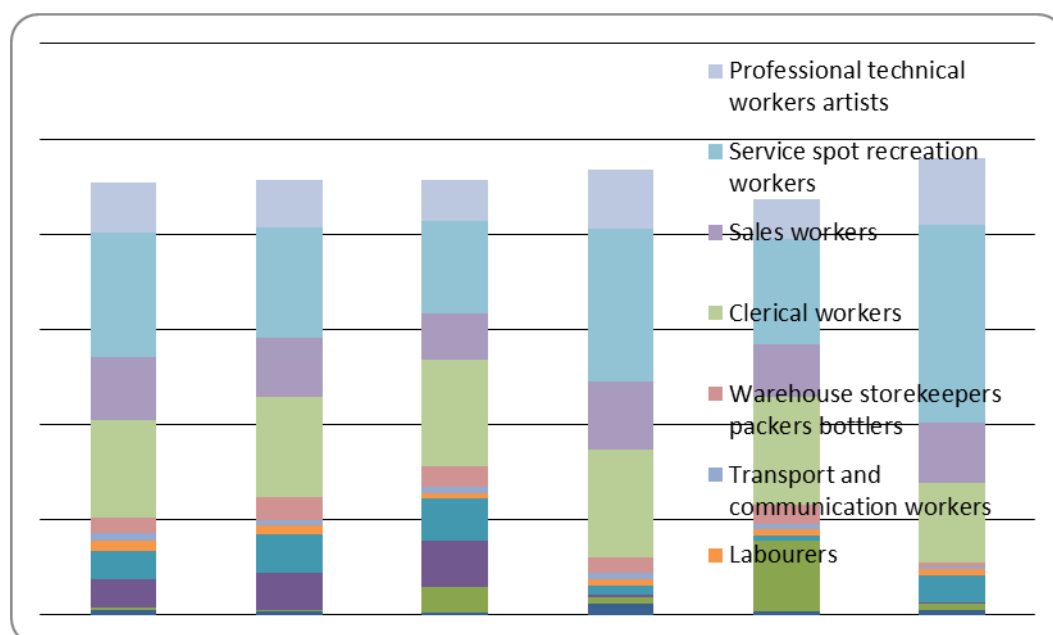


Table 4b Percentage of married females in employment by occupation in East Midlands counties expressed as a % of total female employment, adapted from *Census 1971: England and Wales, Economic Activity County Leaflets, Table 1 Occupation and status by area of usual residence and sex* (London: HMSO, 1971)

Looking at the types of occupation in which women and married women were employed in Midland counties, as recorded in the 1971 census, Tables 3a and 3b show the six most important occupational groups for women in employment. Tables 4a and 4b show the six most important occupational groups for married women. Thus the bar charts show the percentage of women employed in these six most populated categories and do not add up to 100 per cent. Inadequately described occupations were excluded from this analysis to provide clarity, but the relatively high percentage of women working in 'inadequately described occupations' perhaps suggests a difficulty for either women themselves when asked to describe their work or for census enumerators to accurately categorise it. The statistics are remarkable for their consistency across Midland counties and marital status. The three occupational groups returning the highest percentages of women in employment were consistently clerical workers, sales workers and service workers. Service workers included charwomen and office cleaners, showing how mid-twentieth century forms of domestic service remained important forms of employment for women. The only counties which deviated from this pattern were Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire. In Northamptonshire the prominence of women in the boot and shoe industry meant it replaced sales work as the third most important form of female employment. In Lincolnshire women working in professional positions (largely school teachers and nurses) were more common than women working in sales work.

The fourth, fifth and sixth most important categories of female employment, again largely consistent across marital status are more revealing in terms of counties' distinctive industrial characteristics. For example a relatively high number of women were recorded in agricultural work in Herefordshire and Shropshire, and trades allied to engineering were significant in Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire. In

Staffordshire work in ceramics also maintained a strong position accounting for around 5 per cent of female and married female employment, the sixth most important occupational category. Textiles and clothing remained important for women's employment across the east midland counties. There were slight variations in the six most important occupational categories for women and married women in Shropshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Rutland. In Shropshire the fifth and sixth most important categories of employment was as 'clothing workers' followed closely by agricultural work. For married women in the county the fifth most important occupational category was agriculture followed by work in the trades allied to engineering. In Lincolnshire agricultural work was more common for married women, whereas work in packing and bottling was more significant for women overall. In Northamptonshire work in the clothing industry was more important for women overall, but work as packers and bottles was more common for married women. In Rutland work in agriculture was important to women overall but employment in the manufacture of leather goods was more important for married women.

It has been suggested that on a national level women's full-time earnings had risen from approximately two-thirds of the male rate to around three-quarters by the end of the 1970s.¹⁰ Whether part of this rise can be attributed to the Equal Pay Act (1970), which came into force in 1975, is a much debated point. Local evidence suggests that increases in women's wages did allow them greater autonomy in some situations. Commenting on women pottery workers in Staffordshire Jacqueline Sarsby has suggested: 'By the 1970s it was possible for these women to discard brutal or feckless

¹⁰ Glynn and Booth, *Modern Britain*, p. 293.

husbands, to live on their own wages'.¹¹ The statistical evidence suggests that combining paid and domestic work reflected the experience of an increasing number of Midland women in the 1950s and 1960s. Not only was working in this bi-modal pattern more uniform, but the type of work women were doing was becoming less differentiated by county. Chapters five to seven will discuss whether the participation of Midland women in the regional television news at this time reveals an acknowledgment of, or demonstrates any relationship to this trend.

Establishing ITV in the Midlands

The Midlands was the first area outside London to receive Independent Television. The television companies identified it as a region with an affluent working class. Although the Midlands contained only half the total population of the London area, the anticipated audience for commercial television amounted to three quarters of the London audience. A greater number of adults in the average family made the Midlands very attractive to advertisers, and thus to commercial television companies.¹² The unique status of television as the consumer durable that was used to sell other consumer durables marks its place at the centre of the consumer boom. For example, the rivalry between Proctor & Gamble, and Unilever for washing powder market share meant that detergent accounted for one quarter of ITV's advertising revenue in the late 1950s.¹³ Self-styled as 'the people's television', the launching of ITV has at times been understood as the primary motivating factor in the acquisition of television sets by the working class. However recent research by Chris Hand has contested this. The BBC

¹¹ Jacqueline Sarsby, *Missuses & Mouldrunners: An Oral History of Women Pottery Workers at Work and at Home* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988), p. 108.

¹² Mark Abrams, 'Commercial TV audiences', *The Financial Times* (31 January 1956).

¹³ A Crissell, *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting* (London: Routledge, 2002).

had launched its Midland service in 1949. Contemporary studies from the BBC's Audience Research Department, which analysed the distribution of licence holders according to socio-economic status, suggested that 'television sets appeared first in higher income households but lower income households began to close the gap prior to the launch of ITV.'¹⁴ Taking these factors into account, Hand's empirical study, based on a sample of the National Readership Survey for 1957 suggests that the dissemination of television sets to lower economic groups was less about the effect on ITV on broadcasting than simply the development of television itself. The launch of ITV opened up a choice of television channels, which it has been suggested was more important to working-class viewers than the appeal of ITV alone. Thus Hand concludes that the relationship between the launch of ITV and the acquisition of television sets by the working class was one of correlation rather than causation.¹⁵

In 1955 ATV won the weekday contract for the Midlands and the weekend contract for London. Renewed in 1964, this contract remained in place until 1968, where ATV took over the weekday and weekend broadcasts in the Midlands, until it was taken over by Central in 1981. Regional television news was produced by the individual companies on the ITV network, rather than by ITN. ABC Television provided the weekend broadcasts for the Midlands between 1956 and 1964; this did not include a regional television news programme. The contracts awarded to companies on the ITV network were governed by the stipulations set out in the 1954 Television Act and enforced by the ITA. As well as adhering to the standards of propriety (judged in terms of the potential for television material to offend viewers) and impartiality, the Act also

¹⁴ Chris Hand, 'The advent of ITV and television ownership in lower income households: correlation or causation?', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, 4:1 (2007), p. 70.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

stipulated that companies on the network should broadcast programmes that contained: 'a suitable proportion of material calculated to appeal to regional tastes and outlook'.¹⁶ Although the terms of 'propriety' and 'impartiality' could also be understood as unattainable in the practice of television production, the reference to the 'taste and outlook' or the region is especially significant in the context of this study. The regional focus of the ITV network was supposed to provide a means to differentiate it from the metropolitan-centric BBC.¹⁷ Natasha Vall's research on Tyne Tees in the North East revealed the difficulties producers had in putting this stipulation into practice, quoting Malcolm Morris, Tyne Tees programme controller in the 1960s:

It wasn't easy to give the area a definable image... the Scots could spray a few kilts and pipers around the studio...But what's the quick recipe for creating a comparable entity out of a region...especially at a time when everybody is trying to forget about the cloth cap anyway.¹⁸

Morris' dilemma reflected the desire for a set of familiar visual references to regional identity, but also the need to reflect a 'modern' region. An article by Leonard Mathews, Midlands Controller at ATV, written for the staff newspaper in July 1965 indicates how the company dealt with this issue. Mathews referred to the Midlands as 'a large and complex area' and made explicit reference to ATV's news programmes and the daily serial *Crossroads* to demonstrate the company's approach to regional programming:

¹⁶ Independent Television Authority, *Annual Reports and Accounts 1955-56*, (London, 1955-56), p. 12.

¹⁷ Vall, *Cultural Region*, p. 40.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

This nine-minute regional news service [*Midlands News*] was the first bulletin of its kind ever to appear on British television screens and, in addition to the permanent staff working on this programme, more than 100 reporters throughout the Midlands Region are constantly on call and make regular contributions to the programme.

The programme which follows this every day is *ATV Today*, a new magazine programme, 20 minutes in length, which highlights topical events and introduces interesting people who are in the limelight of the day...

Crossroads leapt into the top ratings in the Midlands almost as soon as it had begun, and immediately caught the imagination of other independent television companies, and before many episodes had been transmitted, other regions were joining in, until, at the moment, it is fully networked, with the exception of Granada and Tyne Tees.¹⁹

Thus faced with the task of representing the Midlands region ATV relied upon a mixture of a network of casual staff in the areas remote from its Birmingham offices, putting the audience on screen, and high-rating shows that were regionally produced, but were popular enough to be networked. In this way ATV could demonstrate to the ITA that it was maintaining popularity, measured in ratings, and representativeness,

¹⁹ Leonard Mathews, 'Serving an audience of eight millions...this is Midlands ATV', *ATV Newsheet*, 5:7 (July 1965), p. 7.

measured in the appearances of local faces on screen from counties beyond Birmingham.

Underlying these efforts was the fact that the televisual definition of the Midlands did not map precisely onto the administrative definition of the Midlands, nor the boundaries culturally defined by Midlanders. Instead, it was defined in practical terms by the reach of its television transmitters. This eventually ranged from Macclesfield in the north, Gloucester in the south, Grantham in the east and Oswestry in the west. This was provided by the specially constructed Lichfield transmitter, which provided a regular programme service from February 1956, but until August 1956 operated on a reduced power of 60 kW erp, around half strength. This meant that initially only audiences living within a thirty mile radius of Birmingham received a good picture. This included Coventry, Derby and Burton-on-Trent, and as far as Evesham in Worcestershire and Rugby in Warwickshire. However, reception in Leicester and Nottingham was patchy and was particularly compromised in the south west of the region towards Hereford, Cheltenham and Gloucester.²⁰ This was rectified in autumn 1956, but Wallace has argued it had a longer lasting effect on people's perceptions of their ability to receive ITV.²¹ Despite the lack of a uniform availability of television viewing experience in the period 1956-1968 the (ITV) television audience expanded rapidly.

By the end of March 1955 400,000 homes were able to receive ITV programmes in the Midlands.²² The highest density of television sets in the Midlands was found around

²⁰ John Wallace, "'A sense of region?' Independent Television in the Midlands, 1950-2000' Ph.D. thesis (University of Leicester, 2004), pp. 104-5; Independent Television Authority, *Annual Reports and Accounts 1955-56* (London, 1955-56), p. 5; Independent Television Authority, *Annual Reports and Accounts 1958-1959*, (London, 1959-60), p. 6.

²¹ Wallace, 'A sense of region', p. 105.

²² Independent Television Authority, *Annual report and accounts 1955-56* (London, 1955-56), p. 2.

Tamworth, Coventry and Nuneaton. BP Emmett, in his report based on research by the BBC's Audience Measurement department, suggested this was based on a combination of signal strength, economic factors and the importance of 'keeping up with the Joneses' in certain communities.²³ The Annual Report and Accounts of ITV returned in 1961-1962 suggested that by the end of 1961 10 ½ million homes across the UK were able to view ITV compared with 9 ¾ million the previous year.²⁴

It has been suggested that by 1964 the market for television was approaching saturation, with 12, 885, 000 television licences issued.²⁵ Looking to the end of the period covered in this thesis, the ITA annual report for 1968-69 states that in 1967-68: 'In homes which could receive both BBC and Independent Television, the set was switched on for an average of 4.4 hours a day during the year ended 31st March 1968; for an average of 2.6 hours it was tuned to Independent Television and for 1.8 hours to BBC.'²⁶ During the same year regional audiences were reported for news and current affairs programmes. In the Midlands the largest audiences were recorded for *World in Action*, which was viewed by 38 per cent (950, 000) of Midlands homes and *ITN News at Ten* viewed by with 36 per cent (900, 000) homes. However the early evening regional news programmes attracted more viewers than the national news programmes in their time slot, with *ATV Today* returning 33 per cent of the viewing audience (830,

²³ BP Emmett, 'The television audience in the United Kingdom', *Journal of the Royal Statistics Society*, 119:3 (1956), pp. 284-306.

²⁴ Independent Television Authority, *Annual reports and Accounts 1960-1961* (London, 1961-62), p. 2.

²⁵ Hand, 'The advent of ITV and television ownership', p. 75.

²⁶ Independent Television Authority, *Annual Reports and Accounts 1967-1968* (London, 1968-69), p. 29.

000 homes) and *Midland News* 32 per cent (800, 000) homes. This is compared to the *ITN News* being viewed by 30 per cent (750, 000) of the Midland homes.²⁷

The regional television news programmes *Midlands News* and *ATV Today* were clearly an important part of nightly viewing schedules. This study focuses on an analysis of the regional news collection, but Frances Eames' comparative study of regional and national Midlands news has highlighted the instability of news text as a historical record. Her article on the news coverage of the Ugandan Asian crisis reveals how differently the regional news reported the crisis compared with the ITN news programmes and thus the necessity not to assume knowledge of how stories were reported.²⁸ The development of television news coverage has been described by Jackie Harrison as the emergence of a 'theatre of news'. She describes the 'distrust of the televisual at BBC news, which was associated with cinema and music halls and the Movietone reels that had provided newsreels to cinemas since the 1920s.'²⁹ The tensions between the companies on the ITV network, which needed to secure advertising revenue and maintain regional sales remits, and the public service ethos of ITN meant at times that there were calls by ITV companies for shorter news bulletins.³⁰ Alongside television adverts the ITA felt that ITN news bulletins came under the 'closest scrutiny' of ITV output.³¹ The regional news did not receive the same scrutiny in the national press, but evidence from the *TV Times* (Midland Edition) suggests that

²⁷ Ibid., p. 32.

²⁸ Eames, 'ITV and the 1972 Ugandan migration', pp. 453-469.

²⁹ Jackie Harrison, 'From newsreels to a theatre of news: the growth and development of independent television news', in Catherine Johnson and Rob Turnock (eds.), *ITV Cultures: Independent Television Over Fifty Years* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005), p. 121.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 124.

³¹ Independent Television Authority, *Annual report and accounts 1955-56* (London, 1955-56), p. 2.

ATV were conscious of the importance of a regional news audience, both in terms of providing a reliable hook into the evening schedule and of the need to maintain enough regional output in their schedules. The *TV Times* articles detail how the programmes were constructed to appeal to the audience as ordinary Midlanders:

The Midlands for the Midlanders might well be the slogan. This week will see the beginning of a daily Midland news programme operated locally for the Midlands. It is indicative of what I mean, as is the start, also this week, of our new weekly programme *Midlands Affairs*. Other Midland programmes will follow.

I intend to see the establishment of an Independent Television Service which provides *entertainment* for the family: Mr and Mrs Everybody, but which will please the individual, even though, taking a leaf out of the BBC's own book, it will sometimes instruct them.³²

This point will be elaborated on more extensively in the next chapter, but for the present, this comment demonstrates that for television producers regional news programmes were significant aspect in establishing commercial television in the Midlands, there is some evidence to suggest that the audience thought likewise.

Independent Television News (ITN) was established to provide an impartial national news service for the ITV network. However the regional news was left to the individual companies on the ITV network. By 1957 ATV were broadcasting 25minutes of

³² Philip Dorte, 'My side of the Midlands ITV Story by Philip Dorte Associated Television Midlands Controller', *TV Times* [Midlands Edition] (4 May 1965), p. 34.

regional news per week, within an overall ITV output of over 210 minutes news for Midlands viewers.³³ An Independent Television Authority (ITA) survey of viewers' attitudes to television programmes reported that 90 per cent of viewers surveyed thought news programmes were 'good', compared to 61 per cent for current affairs and 58 per cent for local interest.³⁴ For two weeks in March 1965 the ITA measured audiences on the ITV network. In TV homes with a choice of service it measured which 'serious programmes' attracted the largest audiences. The returns for the Midlands stated that 54 per cent of homes, with a choice of BBC and ITV watched the 'Main News (Weekdays)' and 43 per cent of homes with the same choice watched *ATV Today*.³⁵

Summary

The quantitative analysis presented here provides several points to take forward into the visual analysis of the regional news collection provided in chapter's four to seven. The census data suggests that the numbers of women in paid employment and the type of employment they were engaged in was becoming more uniform across all Midland counties. This provides an interesting counterpoint to the suggestion that the mass media and especially television was responsible for the erosion of distinctive regional culture and suggests that the impact of television on the region must be contextualised in terms of changing patterns of production and consumption. The quantitative analysis of the Midlands television audience showed the rapid establishment of television in the

³³ Independent Television Authority, *Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 1957*, (London, 1957-58), p. 15.

³⁴ Independent Television Authority, *ITA Notes* (London, September 1964), p. 4.

³⁵ Independent Television Authority, *ITA Notes* (London, July 1965), p. 6.

region and the importance of news programming to ATV's early evening schedule. It also revealed the tension built into the structure of the ITV network which required this commercial enterprise not only to operate as a public service, but to produce material that identified the 'taste and outlook' of the region.

Drawing upon the evidence presented from the census material, the challenge of representing the Midlands lay not only in the lack of coherent identity, as discussed by contemporary television producers, but in presenting the increasing uniformity of life in the Midlands as a distinct regional experience. The representational strategy adopted by the regional television news teams was to present popular stories, but to frame them as regional by using local faces. In the absence of being able or willing to present distinctive regional news the use of local people was a convenient and much used device by ATV news programmes. The extent to which the news teams realised this creeping uniformity is unclear, but the practice they adopted provides an oblique insight into social and cultural changes, because of the high visibility of ordinary people. This analysis confirms the argument made in chapter two, that it is best not to approach the collection as a complete record of the time, as on those terms it only provides a selective index. What the news collection does provide is insight into the 'structure of feeling' of the Midlands in the 1950s and 1960s.

In comparison with the statistical data, the regional news collection does not provide a direct point of access to survey changing patterns of women's work. As a form of visual journalism news teams were primarily concerned with capturing 'good pictures' and encouraging a loyal audience. For example, the necessity for movement in these pictures meant that they favoured workers who displayed deft movements, or could be interviewed in large groups, thus female factory workers were favoured rather than office workers, despite the latter being more representative of the realities of women's

work in the second half of the twentieth century in empirical terms. Likewise, although locating a characteristic Midlands experience was practically impossible, the news teams attempted to demonstrate their commitment to the region by filming its remaining distinctive industries. Thus women and men working in these industries are ‘over represented’ in the regional collection. However, as will be discussed in chapter six in particular, this blending of the regional with the popular, even though a misrepresentation of work in the Midlands in empirical terms provides valuable insight into the participation of ordinary women on regional television screens, and the affective aesthetic qualities of their performances.

Having established a basic outline of news production at ATV in quantitative terms, the next chapter will provide a qualitative analysis of gender, class and the production of ATV’s regional television news programmes. As well as providing an insight into the production contexts of the moving images analysed in chapter five to seven, it discusses the extent to which the television industry was providing ‘new’ kinds of work for women in the Midlands. It also contributes to the central themes of the thesis by discussing the ordinariness of the female workers at Midlands ATV and how working in television was presented as a transformative opportunity. In addition it extends the discussion of how the popular and the vernacular were synthesised in ATV’s midlands news programmes, but using visual analysis.

Chapter Four

Women's employment during the establishment of Midlands ATV, 1956-1968

The focus of this thesis is the participation of ordinary woman on screen and their work in the cultural production of ATV's Midland news programmes. There were women employed at a variety of levels by the company and this chapter looks at their work at Midlands ATV, with particular attention paid to the women who worked on the regional news programmes. As part of this discussion it is vital to consider to what extent the dynamics of news production were gendered and the ways in which this affected how women were framed on screen. Detailed archival research into women at the BBC and individual programmes on the ITV network, recently published and forthcoming, has added considerable depth and nuance to historical understandings of women's role in television production in the 1950s.¹ This discussion had previously been confined to a handful of publications produced by feminist practitioners of media studies in the 1980s.² It has come to be defined as a time of relative opportunity for women in television, as exemplified by the testimony of BBC producer Mary Dickinson: 'the only thing they wouldn't let us do was read the news'.³ In the 1960s and 1970s it became apparent that although broadcasters communicated stories of social change to their audiences, institutionally they were slow to alter employment practices.⁴ However, at

¹Thumim, *Inventing Television Culture*; Irwin, 'What Women Want on Television'; Holland, *The Angry Buzz*; Franks, 'Attitudes to women in the BBC'; Victoria Wegg-Prosser, 'This Week in 1956: The introduction of current affairs on ITV', in Janet Thumim (ed.), *Small Screens, Big Ideas: Television in the 1950s* (London: I B Tauris, 2002), pp. 195-206

² Baehr and Dyer, *Boxed In*.

³ Thumim, *Inventing Television Culture*, p. 172.

⁴ Franks, 'Attitudes to women in the BBC', p. 129.

times, it appears that knowledge of women's precarious status in the industry has overly influenced interpretations of their experience of working in television. Commenting, for example, on the career of Lynne Reid Banks, one of the first female reporters to work for ITN, Patricia Holland interpreted her subsequent move into novel writing as a retreat into an acceptably feminine occupation.⁵ In contrast, recent comments by Reid Banks focused on the excitement of her involvement in ground-breaking television: 'it was revolutionary in those days for women to be seen onscreen in news programmes, and we "girl reporters" –there were just two of us –became minor celebrities'.⁶ Reid Banks' comments suggest that an historical analysis should begin to delineate women's contribution to television production beyond the dichotomy of opportunity and exploitation, to consider women's aspirations and achievements in their contemporary context.

ATV's position as a commercial television company under the influence of cinema, theatre and music hall impresario Lew Grade, networking star-spangled shows such as *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*, has led to it being associated with contemporary ideas of glamour and fears of Americanisation.⁷ Ideas of glamour had a specific resonance in the 1950s, which has been described as the last decade in which 'glamour could be celebrated...without self consciousness or irony'.⁸ There were signs

⁵ Holland, 'When a woman reads the news', p 134.

⁶ Lynne Reid Banks, 'TV news in the 50s was more thrilling than The Hour', *Guardian* (14 August 2011), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv-and-radio/2011/aug/14/tv-news-50s-the-hour> [accessed 4 May 2013].

⁷ Jonathan Bignell, 'And the rest is history: Lew Grade, creation narratives and television historiography', in Catherine Johnson and Rob Turnock (eds.), *ITV Cultures: Independent Television Over Fifty Years* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005), pp. 57-63.

⁸ Holland, *The Angry Buzz*, p. 18.

that glamour was increasingly out of fashion in the 1960s, and not only in clothing.⁹ Criticisms of glamorous televisual aesthetics were evident in the context of British television in the Pilkington report (1962). The relationship between ATV and the Americanisation of television has been discussed elsewhere,¹⁰ instead this chapter focuses on the changing use of glamour in television production as this had a significant impact on the employment of women at ATV, especially for women with on-screen roles. Glamour, however, is a difficult concept to define. In her investigation of glamour Carol Dyhouse used the following definition:

Glamour was often linked to a dream of transformation, a desire for something out of the ordinary, a form of aspiration, a fiction of female becoming.¹¹

This definition provides traction for this investigation into the aspirational qualities of women's work in 1950s television, and particularly in establishing the 'new' medium of commercial television in the Midlands. It is therefore necessary to understand the glamorous excesses of television in the 1950s not as an aberration in the development of 'quality' television, but as a central part of establishing the medium.

Glamour is perhaps most usually associated with quiz shows and soap opera, but this chapter looks at how it permeated the regional television news. In British broadcasting history, the advent of commercial television has been associated with the development of a televisual news style, which the BBC had previously refrained from engaging with. In *Pioneering Television News*, Geoffrey Cox cited three ways in which ITN established a televisual news style: the use of a newscaster, a lack of deference to

⁹ Dyhouse, *Glamour: Women, History, Feminism*, pp. 114-124.

¹⁰ Bignell, 'And the rest is history', pp. 57-70.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

public figures, and putting the audience on screen. In the years 1956-1968 ATV's regional news teams also experimented with a televisual news style. These included some of the methods used by ITN, but also departed from the national news in significant ways, inflected, I will argue by class and gender. In addition I will also consider how the archived film inserts can provide insight into ATV's interaction with its audience and how this shaped the company's understanding of its audience's expectations of television. In the first part of this chapter I analyse how glamour and class affected the career trajectories of women's work off screen. In the second section, I analyse the same themes in the context of women's work on screen. I also consider how women's contribution to television production should be understood historically.

Women's work off screen: From 'telly-bird' to Production Assistant?

Starry-eyed girls who write to ATV Network's staff relations department for production jobs receive notification that the job demands the... 'ability to work under pressure and with people of varying occupations, temperament and of different levels of responsibility.' The note means exactly what it says. No concessions. But for those who have made it television gives more to and demands more from its telly-birds than any other range of jobs in the country.¹²

The above statement, printed in *ATV Newsheet* in May 1968, succinctly delineates how ATV perceived its female employees, as 'starry-eyed girls' lured to the bright lights of television, who must fit into the 'range of jobs' available to women if they want to make it as a 'telly-bird'. 'Telly-bird' is not precisely defined in *Newsheet*, but is

¹² 'The talented sex: A special report on women in TV', *ATV Newsheet*, 8:5 (May 1968), p. 7.

indicative of how women in the company were defined by their gender first and their skills second. Secretarial and clerical roles remain overlooked in television history since work took place off screen in offices removed from the television studio floor. These jobs were perceived as important entry points for women into the industry: for example, in Granada staff lists from the 1950s and 1960s all recorded ‘personal staff’ were female.¹³ Their experience is comparable to the increasing numbers of women working in secretarial roles across the twentieth century, but also conditioned by the culture of the television company.

In the later 1950s and early 1960s an increasing female presence in the office coincided with the, so-called, Sexual Revolution. This concurrence is exemplified by the publications of Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) and *Sex and the Office* (1965). Starting as a secretary Gurley Brown had built a career in advertising before turning to writing. Following her publishing success she became editor of *Cosmopolitan* magazine in 1965.¹⁴ Gurley Brown’s publications were memoirs to her life as a single woman in the 1950s and were by no means at the radical edge of gender politics in the 1960s, but they significantly updated women’s advice literature which had been republishing the same guidance since the 1930s. Her suggestion that women should make their femininity conspicuous was highly provocative and marked a considerable change from earlier advice, which had recommended making yourself ‘as inconspicuous as possible’.¹⁵ They also provided a significant celebration of the ‘working girl’:

¹³ Thumim, *Inventing Television Cultur*, pp. 176-7.

¹⁴ Berebitsky, ‘The joy of work’, p. 92.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Gregg Gibbon, *Manners in Business* (1936), quoted in Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Office* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004, first printed 1964), p. 22.

...the single woman, far from being a creature to be pitied and patronised, is emerging as the newest glamour girl of our times.¹⁶

She turned the narrative of the submissive secretary on its head with comments such as: 'If you're a top secretary but working for a dullard, consider abandoning him for somebody shinier.'¹⁷ Overturning the accepted power relationship in the office, she also discussed how it was important for secretaries to *hire* the right boss.¹⁸ This discursive shift from 'office wife' to 'sexy secretary' has also been discussed by Rosemary Pringle in *Secretaries Talk*, a change she locates in the 1950s and 1960s as more working-class women entered the office. She suggests that this discourse coexisted and competed with the established discourse of the 'office wife' and the newer discourse of 'career woman'.¹⁹ Pringle does not discuss the link herself, but in cultural representations working-class women were frequently portrayed as more sexually available than middle-class women.²⁰ For Gurley Brown glamour was a tool that women could use in the heterosexual space of the office to advance their career. However, Pringle's connection between the 'sexy secretary' and class suggests the relationship was more complex.

This shift in the cultural representation of female clerical worker provides insight into the series of photographic portraits taken of female employees for the ATV staff

¹⁶ Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl* (London: Four Square, 1963), p. 11.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁸ Helen Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Office*.

¹⁹ Rosemary, *Secretaries Talk*, pp. 5-21.

²⁰ For an extended discussion of this and the implications for middle-class women's sexuality see: Stephen Brooke, "'Slumming' in swinging London?: class, gender and the post-war city in Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction* (1963)", *Cultural and Social History*, 9:3 (2012), pp. 429-449.

newspaper. Every edition of *Newsheet* featured such a portrait, which became increasingly elaborate in the mid- to late-1960s. In the June 1961 edition seventeen year old Dawn Aurelius was featured on the cover (see Figure 3). She was dressed in an ankle length skirt and polo shirt, conceivably what she wore to work in the photographic department. She sat side on with her face turned towards the camera. She wore a demure smile, no teeth showing and a short, neat haircut. The descriptive paragraph beneath the portrait is revealing of the position of workers removed from roles immediate to television production:

Dawn lives at Hackney, London. She enjoys sketching, watching TV and pop songs.

Dawn's favourite singer is Cliff Richard –and she's still hoping for an opportunity to meet him.²¹

The opportunity to meet celebrities was often described as a perk of the job for off-screen staff. The following examples appeared in *Newsheet* in May and June 1966 (see Figure 4): 'The four attractive young ladies who man the reception desk at the Alpha Television Studios have the distinction of meeting more famous people than probably any other girls of their age in the Midlands.'²² Commenting on the possibility of women moving jobs from the sales office closer to television production, a manager reported: 'Over the years we've lost three good secretaries to the "glamorous" side of television'.²³ These examples indicate how off-screen staff members were situated as television fans rather than media insiders, discussed as part of ATV fan culture

²¹ *ATV Newsheet*, 1:6 (June 1961), cover page

²² 'Meet the girls at Alpha', *ATV Newsheet*, 6:5 (May 1966), p. 6.

²³ 'Meet the best sellers', *ATV Newsheet*, 6: 6 (June 1966), p. 6.

investing in the glamour of the company as the television audience would. Like fans they are also situated outside programme production, but they did essential work in the cultural production of television. Certain aspects of this investment were not particularly gendered. A cameraman may have been just as likely to carry an autograph book as a woman working on the reception desk. However, when cameramen were featured in the staff newspaper they were usually posed at work behind the camera; there was no equivalent of the 'cover girl' images for male employees, which removed women from their desks and typewriters as can be seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4. The 'cover girl' portraits suggest a specific form of female employee fandom, which used certain elements of glamour associated with television production to 'picture' the female employees.



Figure 3 Cover page of *ATV Newsheet*, featuring Dawn Aurelius as 'cover girl', June 1961



Figure 4 Women employed on the reception desk at Alpha studios pictured in *ATV Newsheet*, May 1966

Returning to the cover-girl portraits, the March 1964 edition of *Newsheet* featured the winner of third prize at the Miss ATV beauty contest, Annmarie (see Figure 5).²⁴ She strikes a more glamorous pose than previous cover girls. In a little black dress and bouffant hairstyle, the full-length portrait foregrounds her legs and she grasps the sides of her stool pushing forward her bust. In echo of this pose the text below provides her vital statistics: '36-24-38'. Rather than a shot caught while she was at work, as earlier portraits had been,²⁵ this image has been taken specifically to showcase her beauty contestant credentials. Links with modelling and participation in beauty contests were a common feature in the career history of female staff as discussed in the staff

²⁴ *ATV Newsheet*, 4:3 (March 1964), p. 3.

²⁵ *ATV Newsheet*, 3:1 (January 1963), cover page

newspaper: '21-year-old Irene Faulkner of Tipton, West Bromwich, who was trained as a model, now acts as receptionist for the daily programme 'ATV Today'. Her job entails meeting people at the Alpha Television studios as they arrive from mid-afternoon onwards. 'It's a very interesting job', says Irene 'apart from people in ordinary walks of life, I've enjoyed meeting such personalities as Oscar Peterson, Tony Britton and Edmund Hockridge'.²⁶ The potential for beauty, glamour and celebrity meant these young women identified the television company as an aspirational destination, even if they did not get their big break on the TV screen. Kerry Neal the winner of Miss ATV 1963, an annual beauty contest for female employees, made full use of her accolade: 'having been extremely lucky in winning the Miss ATV contest, this has given me the extra bit of confidence I needed to fulfil an old ambition, to become a photographic model.'²⁷ Joanne Meyerowitz has described how women sent in pictures of themselves to Playboy.²⁸ For some women participating in this kind of photography was an aspirational route into public culture and potentially wealth where they were framed as the epitome of feminine glamour and beauty. However, as even the provocateur Gurley Brown suggested, women's dress and appearance had to be carefully managed in terms of how and when she revealed her sexuality:

Have a 'joy dress' in your wardrobe but remember, you can only get away with it if you've been a lady for about 150 days running.²⁹

²⁶ 'Meet the Best Sellers', *ATV Newsheet*, 6:6 (June 1966), p. 6.

²⁷ *ATV Newsheet*, 3: 11 (November 1963), p. 8.

²⁸ Meyerowitz, 'Women, cheesecake, and borderline material', p. 22.

²⁹ Gurley Brown, *Sex and the Office*, p. 32.



Figure 5 Portrait of Annmarie Austin in *ATV Newsheet*, March 1964

Women from ATV's London and Birmingham offices participated in the cover girls portraits. Perhaps the most provocative image of a female employee was printed in September 1965; the caption, 'Who says Birmingham can't provide pin-ups?'

identifying Jane Boulton the Midlands Press Office secretary (see Figure 6).³⁰ Described by Richard Hoggart as 'the most striking feature of mid-century mass art', the pin-up

³⁰ Portrait of Jane Boulton, *ATV Newsheet*, 4:9 (September 1964), p. 6.

was defined not by the exposure of the female body but by suggestion.³¹ In this case a look back over a bare shoulder. The framing of Boulton as a pin-up in *Newsheet* shows how widely practised this representational strategy was in popular visual culture and how it was part of ATV's institutional culture. Jane Boulton was the subject of a second elaborately framed portrait in May 1967 leaning over an antique film camera in a silver lamé mini dress and sleek bobbed haircut (See Figure 7).³² The presence of the camera and the silver lamé, a favoured material of glamorous quiz show assistants, conceivably suggests that this shot memorialises Jane's time in the television industry. The text supports this:

A charming farewell picture of Jane Boulton, who has been Press Secretary in Birmingham for three years. She left the Midlands at the end of April to work in southern Spain. Lucky Jane, lucky Spain!

Her pose is confident as she leans over the camera concealing her breasts with her left arm, focusing the viewers' gaze on her legs. Her position as ATV's Birmingham Press Secretary gave licence to this transformation of Boulton as a TV glamour girl, the resulting image exemplifies the construction of women's work *as* being glamorous.

³¹ Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments* (Penguin: Middlesex, 1958), pp. 213-214.

³² Portrait of Jane Boulton, *ATV Newsheet*, 7:5 (May 1967), p. 5.

A comparison of the *ATV Newsheet* with the BBC's *Ariel* suggests that the content of the latter is representative of the Corporation's status as an established international broadcaster. There is, in contrast to *ATV's Newsheet*, no systematic use of the female employees as cover girls, although women were glamorously framed in advertisements throughout the magazine, and photographs of female staff who had won beauty contests were included.³³ As Mary Irwin and Suzanne Franks have established, the BBC's reputation as a progressive employer of women in the interwar period was increasingly eroded in the 1960s and 1970s.³⁴ Evidence from *Ariel* suggests this was due to a failure by the Corporation to adapt to the social and cultural changes brought on by the expansion of the number of women in the labour market in post-war Britain. Questions were being raised in the mid-1960s both in the staff magazine and the press, as is clear from a letter to the editor by *Woman's Hour* producer Mollie Lee in 1962, where she asked for clarification of figures reported by *The Times* in 1959 and how they compared with women's current position in the BBC.³⁵

The BBC launched a major recruitment campaign for secretarial staff between 1964 and 1966. The expansion appeared to cause some disruption in the BBC offices. An article discussing relations between secretaries and bosses, *Reflections on Being a Boss*, provoked a series of responses in *Letters to the Editor*. Elements of the debate suggest that class was part of the issue with reports of bad spelling and etiquette:

³³ Adverts for autocues featured glamorously dressed women, *Ariel*, 5: 4 (April 1960), p. 18; eighteen year old wins beauty competition, 'Here, There and Everywhere', *Ariel*, 7:7 (July 1962), p. 20; a woman was also featured in a bunny girl costume, 'Bristol Bunny' in 'Here, There and Everywhere', *Ariel*, 8:8 (August 1963), p. 19.

³⁴ Mary Irwin, 'What Women Want on Television'; Suzanne Franks, 'Attitudes to women in the BBC'.

³⁵ Mollie Lee, 'Women in the BBC' in 'Letters to the Editor', *Ariel*, 7:4 (April 1962), p. 16.

Where are the BBC trained secretaries that are tidy and plan, arrange, order, adjust, check up, remind, advise, and fetch other than in the 'Compact' editors office?³⁶

The launch of a Miss BBC competition in 1968 is also suggestive of the impact this new group of working-class women had on the Corporation. In contrast a Miss ATV competition had been running since 1963. These practices have been discussed as contradictory, sexist anachronisms amid the awakening female consciousness in the 1960s.³⁷ However, their presence is perhaps better understood as a reaction to the growing visibility of working-class women in the workforce and a working through of the accommodation of a new social group.

Practices such as the beauty contest also reveal how women working in the field of cultural production were frequently turned into the range of images it sold, revealing the complex nature of women's agency when employed in such workplaces. This is further revealed by comparing the internal staff magazines with external publications. The glamorous 'telly-bird' image did essential work in generating television's cultural status and was an important part of the popularly received image of women working in television companies. The 'cover-girl' portraits, especially those printed in the mid- to late-1960s, present 'ordinary' women, working in low-status desk jobs, as glamorous visions of female beauty. These portraits were used as messages to all ATV staff to invest in the transformative power of the television company. Cartoons in the popular press never failed to depict them in skin tight dresses with gravity-defying breasts.³⁸

³⁶ FW Dennis, 'Reflections on Being a Boss' in 'Letters to the Editor', *Ariel*, 10:3, (March 1965), p. 18.

³⁷ Suzanne Franks, 'Attitudes to women in the BBC'.

³⁸ *Daily Mirror* (12 July 1962), p. 5; this cartoon is especially telling, since it depicts women in this way, even though women's sexuality is not part of the cartoon's commentary.

The *TV Times* (*Midlands Edition*) encouraged TV fans to think that they could be part of television production.³⁹ Articles, such as ‘The Misses Anonymous’ (April 1956), discussed working in television commercials. An item describing ‘What’s it like to be an ITV quiz girl’ (July 1956) and ‘The human story of a TV glamour girl’ (December 1956) depicted these women’s jobs as the embodiment of television’s glamour.⁴⁰

Annette Kuhn’s work on cinema going and cultural memory in the 1930s has identified how fans described a desire to be ‘inside’ the picture just as often as they identified the cinema-going as a form of escape.⁴¹ Thus the glamorous representation of the ‘telly-bird’ was promoted outwardly as a form of female aspiration and to provoke the interest of the television audience in the television industry. In so doing, female workers were also framed as the focal points of heterosexual desire. Inwardly, it was used to promote clerical jobs at ATV as the first step towards their big break. This is evident in *Newsheet* with articles such as: ‘So you want to be a writer... LESLIE HARRIS TELLS YOU HOW’ (June 1962), ‘Big Chance For Budding Writers’ (April 1964) and ‘How To Succeed As A Script Writer Without Really Trying’ (August 1964).⁴² Alongside the ‘telly-bird’ portraits and articles featuring the achievements of fellow employees, the company promoted itself as a venue of aspiration and opportunity.

³⁹ ‘So you want to write for TV?’, *TV Times* [Midlands Edition] (8 June 1956), p. 8.

⁴⁰ ‘The Misses Anonymous of ITV’, *TV Times* [Midlands Edition] (20 April 1956), pp. 28-29; Ann Gage, ‘What’s it like to be an ITV quiz girl’, *TV Times* [Midlands Edition] (27 July 1956), p. 11; ‘The human story of a TV glamour girl’, *TV Times* [Midlands Edition] (14 December 1956), p. 6.

⁴¹ Annette Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (London: IB Tauris, 2002), p. 216.

⁴² ‘So you want to be a writer...LESLIE HARRIS TELLS YOU HOW’, *ATV Newsheet*, 2:6 (June 1962), p. 7; ‘How to succeed as a script writer without really trying’, *ATV Newsheet*, 4:8 (August 1964) p. 3.

Glamour was therefore promoted as women's tool to success, but other evidence shows that in reality it did little to enhance women's chances of promotion. Women who did work in production roles did not appear as 'cover girls' or compete in the Miss ATV beauty competition. Class was a far greater factor in defining women's chances for promotion to production jobs. An Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians (ACTT) union report discussed some of the complaints from women on their lack of opportunities for promotion:

[M]anagement always chose 'nice young country ladies' for PA's their social class and appearance being more important than their technical skills.⁴³

The discursive construction of the Production Assistant (PA) was comparable to the 'office wife', rather than the 'sexy secretary. The *Newsheet* collection provides two accounts of life as a PA written by women working at ATV, the first in April 1962 and later in September 1965. They provide insight into how the PA presented herself and her work to the company newspaper. Paula Burdon's was a typical 'personal revelation' account of how she made it from TV fan to production insider, a narrative prevalent in contemporary magazines as validations of women's 'true' life experiences.⁴⁴ She begins by describing her journey from her first day as a secretary, with visions of a glamorous new life in television, to successful PA. Her job satisfaction was derived from the mastering of the multiple tasks required to keep a programme on schedule:

⁴³ Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians, *Patterns of Discrimination Against Women in the Film and Television Industries* (London, 1975), p. 11.

⁴⁴ Winship, *Inside Women's Magazines*, p. 71.

A Production Assistant then left and I replaced her. Days in the control room were just as terrifying, and I found that as well as actually timing the programme, a PA has to take down hundreds of notes during camera rehearsals, cue the cameras for each shot, stand-by any music or film inserts, pacify nervous artists, get tea for the Producers, never get hungry or tired, never complain, and still be expected to give an intelligent answer when asked what she thinks of a certain shot –as if one had time to look at the show anyway!⁴⁵

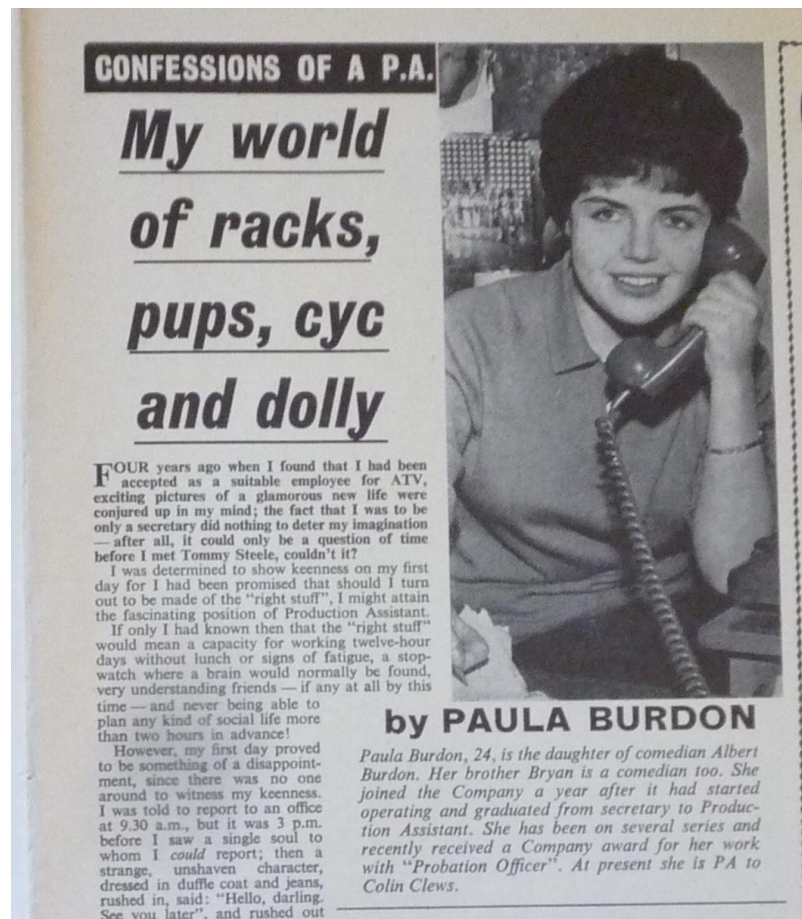


Figure 8 Paula Burdon writing in *ATV Newsheet*, April 1962

⁴⁵ Paula Burdon, 'confessions of a PA: my world of racks, pups, cyc and dolly', *ATV Newsheet*, 2:4 (April 1962), p. 7.

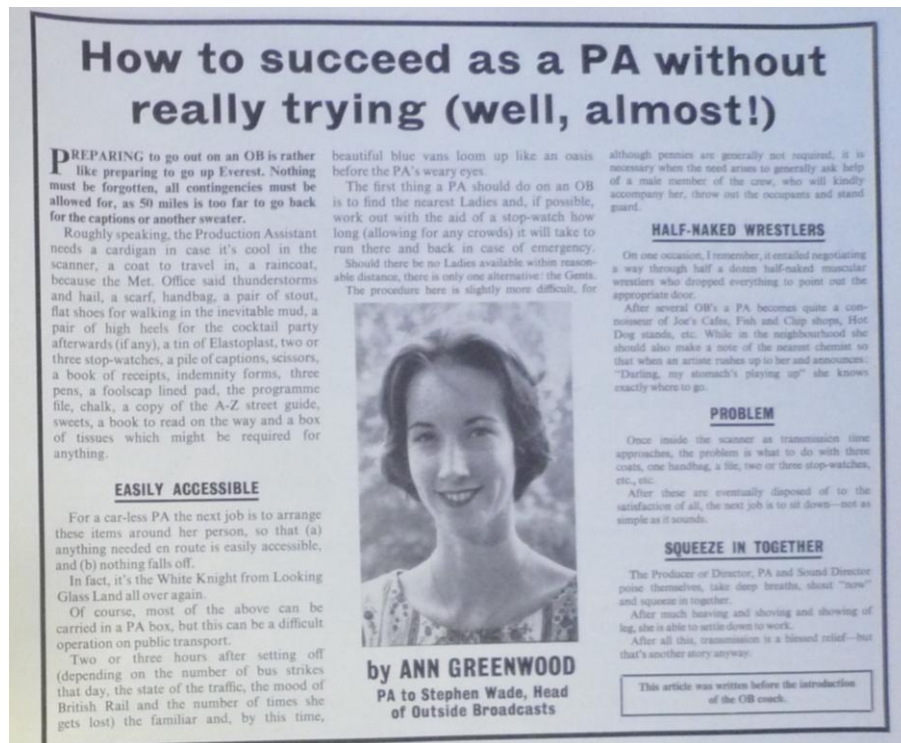


Figure 9 Ann Greenwood writing in *ATV Newsheet*, September 1965

In September 1965 Ann Greenwood gave a very physical account of life as a PA to the head of Outside Broadcasts. Like supportive secretarial roles the PA was required to carry much more than the equipment necessary for her job and 'look after' the whole crew. However, as the only woman in the production team, the PA was rarely catered for. For instance, while on outside broadcasts there were rarely designated female bathrooms, so the PA was obliged to use the (predominantly male) bathroom:

On one occasion, I remember, it [going to the bathroom] entailed negotiating my way through half a dozen half-naked muscular wrestlers who dropped everything to point out the appropriate door.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Ann Greenwood, 'How to succeed as a PA without really trying (well, almost!)', *ATV Newsheet*, 5:9 (September, 1965), p. 3.

Greenwood's account reveals the precarious management of the sexual double standard that the PA had to accomplish. In presenting themselves as the epitome of the 'office wife' women such as Greenwood reveal how they maintained their positions as PAs. The success of the PA was dependent on respectability and restraint, eschewing opportunities for glamour, rather than the highly visible but low status, glamour-embracing telly-bird. In the period 1956 to 1968 clerical roles defined women's work off screen. The evidence surveyed in this chapter suggests that women working off screen at Midlands ATV did the same as the jobs as women in ATV's London offices, indeed there were women who moved between the two locations. The cultural representation of these women was a significant, both in London and the Midlands. Presenting a glamorous image of television and cultivating interest in the industry, was done through a combination of national and regional publications. Images of the women working off screen at Midlands ATV were used to promote the company in the Midlands edition of the *TV Times* and local print media.⁴⁷

Unlike male employees there are a variety of accounts of female employees travelling the world on working holidays. These women were usually PAs, the highest level of employment relatively accessible to women, suggesting that women may have used these trips as a way of creating variety in their careers when promotion appeared unlikely. This represents an interesting negotiation of unequal opportunities in the workplace. The October 1964 edition of *Newsheet* summarises the fourteen month travels of Vivien Clements, 'From Snowy Montana to Sweltering Las Vegas':

On landing in Los Angeles with just a few dollars in her purse she managed, with the help of the local secretarial agency, to

⁴⁷ 'Look at the lovelies behind the news', *TV Times* [Midland Edition], 2:38 (16 September 1965), p. 19.

get a job as a Production – Assistant – Secretary with American International Films. A company which specialised in horror films.

...To name a highlight of such a memorable 14 months would be difficult for any of us, but one that perhaps gave her the biggest thrill was a telephone call from the actor Richard Widmark.⁴⁸

Clement describes the American cities in terms of how they looked in ‘real life’ compared to ‘reel life’, which perhaps suggest why she chose North America for her adventure. Her work coalesced with an opportunity to meet her screen idol. Travel stories were also provided by Diana Kirk, working in New York and Ann Greenwood in February 1965, who later that year wrote an account of her experiences as a PA. Kirk had clearly made a lifestyle choice. The money she earned in New York was comparable to her low wages in London, but she valued this physical mobility. This form of mobility was also apparent in Greenwood’s career, she was described in *Newsheet* as ‘Ten-town Ann, the girl who has lived in 32 houses’ The accompanying portraits of the women show Greenwood displaying a far more middle-class image than Kirk’s fashionable pop culture style, which required more hairspray and make-up.⁴⁹

To begin to draw some conclusions about the contradictory forces at play in women’s employment in television I will consider, the cover page of the August 1966 edition of *Newsheet*. This placed two very different female success stories side by side. The

⁴⁸ ‘From snowy Montana to sweltering Las Vegas: the adventures of Vivien in America...’, *ATV Newsheet*, 4:10 (October, 1964), p. 3.

⁴⁹ ‘The travellers’, *ATV Newsheet*, 5:2 (February 1965), p.2.

largest space was given to an image of a young woman in a bunny girl costume. She didn't work for the company, but her father did and this appears to have been a close enough link to legitimise putting a woman in bunny girl corset on the front cover. The accompanying text describes the rigid rules and difficult working conditions of a bunny girl. There is no quote from Gloria herself, but her father reported how proud he was of his daughter. Interestingly he reports that the club is very well run so he is reassured that his daughter won't be 'led astray', rather than being concerned that she may be subject to sexual harassment.⁵⁰ The parallel cover story is of two women who are planning to drive to Thailand in a Land Rover. It described how they had taken courses in vehicle mechanics and their strategies to use their £500 savings as economically as possible.⁵¹ These two cover stories exemplify the central vehicles for transformative experience offered to the ordinary female worker through the television company, by either using glamour in a physical transformation, or relocating themselves through travel. Central to both these expressions of female aspiration was a blending of women's work with pleasure and leisure, which is comparable to the experience of women in the workplace more generally, but delineates the boundaries of female workers agency in the television company.

Women's work on screen, 1956-1964: femininity and frivolity?

Local news deals in a completely different range of topics and imagery and includes many items on social problems and everyday life. Indeed, where the national news discusses policy and interviews policy makers, the local news of necessity looks

⁵⁰ 'Now Len's become a bunny daddy', *ATV Newsheet*, 6:8 (August, 1966), cover page.

⁵¹ 'Two girls hit the trail –to Thailand', *ATV Newsheet*, 6:8 (August, 1966), cover page.

at the effects of policies and speaks to those who must carry them out and those who suffer them, often predominantly women.⁵²

Women's experience on screen both resembled and departed from their colleagues' experiences off-screen. As well as gender politics in the workplace their experience was shaped by the politics of representation on screen. Evidence derived from the BBC and research into ITV networked programmes such as *This Week* shows that in the 1950s a number of women made valuable contributions to news and magazine programmes. At ATV, women were also involved in programmes that were central to the establishment of the Midlands franchise and ATV's construction of female glamour as an institutional strategy. Noele Gordon, originally came to ATV to work on *Admags*, but became a catch-all presenter most notably working on *Lunch Box* (renamed *Hi-T* in 1964). Julia James also had a productive career at ATV in the late 1950s and early 1960s as director of the *Midlands News* and news magazine programmes *Midlands Montage* and *Look Around*. Jenny Martin was a reporter for the weekly news magazine programme *Midlands Montage*. Pat Cox was the first newsreader employed by ATV to read the *Midlands News* bulletin from its initial broadcasts in 1956. Cox's career at ATV disturbs the pattern identified within national television news production, where a position of authority was identified with the role of a male news reader. Paradoxically, however, the accommodation of a female news reader confirms other areas of historiographical commentary which have associated the 1950s with a televisual style which favoured femininity and frivolity.

⁵² Holland, 'When a woman reads the news', p. 142.

The evidence on how Cox came to ATV is contradictory. The *TV Times* suggests that ATV were looking specifically for a female newsreader: 'Patricia, who is 25, was auditioned, with scores of other girls for Midlands newscaster at the beginning of May'.⁵³ However *The Birmingham Mail* reported: 'Miss Cox applied for the job only last Thursday and was selected immediately after a camera test in preference to a number of men who had been tested.'⁵⁴ The difference in address may be indicative of the difference in expected readership. Looking at the production context of the regional news bulletin, a female newsreader was initially desirable because of the position of the *Midlands News* bulletin in the television schedule. In 1956 Midlands ATV broadcast between 3pm and 6pm in the afternoon, closed down between 6pm-7pm and reopened at 7pm for the evening schedule until closedown at 11pm. The regional news was broadcast for five minutes before the 6pm closedown. Since the afternoon schedule was heavily feminised a female newsreader was perhaps thought appropriate in this case.

From the mid- 1950s there are a few examples of women making brief appearances as newscasters. Barbara Mandell read the lunch time news bulletin for ITV in 1955. In 1960 Nan Winton read the 9 o'clock news on a Sunday evening for the BBC.⁵⁵ She was sacked and reinstated three times.⁵⁶ Evidence of the framing and scheduling of these appearances has been used to analyse this erratic history from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s when women became regular newsreaders, namely Angela Rippon (1975) and Anna Ford (1978).⁵⁷ Holland also notes that press attention given to Rippon and

⁵³ 'Girl behind the news', *TV Times* (3 August 1956), p. 33.

⁵⁴ 'Patricia's in the news', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (8 May 1956), p. 7.

⁵⁵ Thumim, 'Women at work', p. 97.

⁵⁶ Holland, 'When a woman reads the news', p. 134.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

Ford treated them as a complete novelty and an opportunity for jokes and comment on their dress and bodies, suggesting that a certain amount of amnesia surrounding the appearances of female newscasters in the 1950s and 60s may have been a contributing factor in the difficulty of women maintaining the position of newsreader.⁵⁸

What is most striking about the footage of their news reading is that Barbara Mandell and Pat Cox were framed very differently. When Barbara Mandell read the lunch-time bulletin for ITN she was framed against a painted set picturing a domestic kitchen.⁵⁹ Since day time TV was produced for a predominantly female audience in the 1950s, Mandell's gender, like that of her perceived audience, identified her with the space of the kitchen. This can be understood as an experiment in making the television news 'woman friendly'. Neither the painted background, nor Mandell's position as newscaster survived the experiment. A documentary style film, *A Midlands News Day* (1963) provides insight into Cox's presentation style and framing. It also shows how she read to camera, against a plain background, but maintained a neat and feminine appearance herself; wearing a printed dress, gold chain and a perm.⁶⁰ Off-screen a male colleague provided the voiceovers to the filmed inserts in the bulletin. It is unknown whether the use of a female newscaster was a conscious decision in order to set the regional news apart from the national news, but it could conceivably be part of early experimentation in the development of a televisual news style.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 134-135.

⁵⁹ *Barbara Mandell Dies* [online video, ID:], (ITN Source, 26 August 1998), <http://www.itnsource.com/shotlist/ITN/1998/08/26/BSP260898033/?s=%22Barbara+Mandell%22&st=0&pn=1> [accessed 2 May 2013]

⁶⁰ *A Midlands News Day* [Online video, ID: 786], (ATV, 1963), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/a-midlands-news-day/MediaEntry/786.html> [accessed 28 May 2013]

Cox had studied at the Birmingham School of Speech Training and the Birmingham Theatre School, which indicates that cultivating the correct appearance and manners, was a route into this work for women, since they did not have ready access to training as journalists. In the early stages of her career Cox prudently maintained another job as a sales assistant in a suburban gown shop.⁶¹ Only as her career developed did she take on more interviewing and reporting responsibilities. She was praised for her friendliness and reliability and was popular with the television audience.⁶² Cox's ability to present herself as friendly and feminine (perhaps thought an appropriate tone for the regional news), but within a gender neutral mise en scene appears to have provided her with relative career longevity compared to her contemporary counterparts on national television news programmes.

While ITN has been credited with providing innovative and televisual news,⁶³ the regional companies were also experimenting with presentation styles in the later 1950s. As Patricia Holland has suggested the regional news dealt with a completely different range of topics and imagery from the national news programmes.⁶⁴ Analysing the extant news inserts of the news stories covered by Cox, Banks and Mandell can provide insight into how these 'topics and imagery' were gendered. The national news did provide more investigative commentary on social problems than the regional news in this era. Within this area of commentary Lynne Reid Banks reported on stories which she described as: 'Mother-of-ten-in-a-council-house'.⁶⁵ This was one of the subjects

⁶¹ 'Girl behind the news', *TV Times* [Midlands edition], (3 August 1956), p. 33.

⁶² 'These people make the Midlands News', *TV Times* [Midlands edition], (25 May 1958), pp. 8-9.

⁶³ Harrison, 'From newsreels to a theatre of news', p. 126.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁶⁵ Lynne Reid Banks, 'TV news in the 50s was more thrilling than The Hour'.

identified as suitable for the 'girl reporter' because it lent itself to feminised imagery. Reid Banks was featured in one such item with her microphone in one hand and a baby in the other.⁶⁶ A report on the fashion for the 'sack back dress' conducted by Lynne Reid Bank's shows how television news at times borrowed from film practices established by cinema newsreels.⁶⁷ In the news item, two models walked through a market place. In a cinema newsreel the voiceover provided the reaction to the scene and interpreted the images for the audience, but in the television news item the reporter, in this case Reid Banks, gathered immediate reactions to the models and their clothing from the men and women at the market. This provides an example of how television news teams experimented with how to use the vox pop in television news. In two strikingly similar pieces Barbara Mandell visited a furniture exhibition and Pat Cox the Ideal Home Exhibition.⁶⁸ Both women negotiated mocked up versions of the latest in kitchen design, pictured as discerning housewives inspecting drawers, cupboards and furnishings. Thus certain types of female topicality transcended the national/regional production divide.

At ATV, rather than reports on female social issues, Pat Cox was far more often filmed at local events or exhibitions. While these also may be considered 'soft' or feminised

⁶⁶ *Poland: Woman back in England after returning to Poland to collect her children* [online video, ID: VS290157066], (ITN Source, first broadcast 29 January 1957), http://www.itnsource.com/shotlist//BHC_ITN/1957/01/29/VS290157066/?s=%22Lynne+Reid+Banks%22&st=0&pn=4 [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁶⁷ *Sack dress fashion* [online video, ID: FS010957003], (ITN Source, first broadcast 1 September 1957), <http://www.itnsource.com/en/shotlist//ITN/1957/09/01/FS010957003/?s=lynne+reid+banks%27sack+back+dress%27&st=0&pn=2> [accessed 11 May 2013].

⁶⁸ *Furniture Exhibition* [online video, ID: FS240156001], (ITN Source, 24 January 1956), <http://www.itnsource.com/shotlist/ITN/1956/01/24/FS240156001/?s=%22Barbara+Mandell%22&st=0&pn=1&v=0&a=0> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Pat Cox at the Ideal Homes Exhibition in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 29031960], (ATV, first broadcast 29 March 1960), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-29031960-pat-cox-at-the-ideal-homes-exhibition/MediaEntry/3649.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

news stories, footage of regional events which allowed the television audience to see themselves on screen were in high demand. In 1957, Cox filmed a piece addressing a complaint from a Nuneaton resident, Albert Jebbett, that the local Charter Celebrations had not been covered by the regional news team, despite, he claimed, one in five residents owning a television set (see Figure 10).⁶⁹ Jebbett was emphatic that: ‘television ought to do as it promised’, which he summarised as: ‘it ought to take the people to see the people.’ This suggests that Cox’s large number of filmed pieces that showed her at local events were doing important work in participating in the regional events calendar.

Public appearances by ATV’s reporters and presenters were in high demand at regional events. One *Newsheet* article printed in June 1961 discussed ‘How the Midlands see our stars’. The article boasted:

During the last three and a half years or so, our stars have become the most effective way of drawing a crowd anywhere in the Midlands. The local lady of the manor or civic leader just doesn’t compare.⁷⁰

The feminine glamour of the female stars was particularly important to these appearances, as the article continues:

⁶⁹ *Nuneaton Interviews in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 09101957], (ATV, first broadcast 9 October 1957), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-09101957-nuneaton-interviews/MediaEntry/787.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]

⁷⁰ ‘How the Midlands see our stars’, *ATV Newsheet*, 1:6 (June, 1961), p. 7.

The girls always dress up to the nines and try to produce something stunning in the way of a hat or hairdo.⁷¹



Figure 10 *Midlands News* still, Pat Cox interviews Albert Jebbett, Nuneaton, October 1957



Figure 11 *Midlands News* still, Pat Cox attends a cocktail party on a Viscount aircraft, February 1958

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 7.



Figure 12 *Midlands News* still, Pat Cox's wedding day, March 1959



Figure 13 *Midlands News* still, Pat Cox interviews Mrs Butley on the Midland Red bus strike, July 1957

This suggest that the female reporters' ability to dress in more visually elaborate styles added to these public appearances, providing a glamorous association for the television company and by building the reporters as a point of celebrity interest that could be displayed within the pictures. The film collection also illustrates how the female news reporter was useful for injecting glamour into local events. In one insert from October 1958 Pat Cox appears crowning the carnival queen at Brierley Hill.⁷² She is also featured in a most glamorous event, a cocktail party aboard a Viscount aircraft (see Figure 11).⁷³ Even her wedding was filmed and broadcast in March 1959 as part of the *Midlands News* (see Figure 12).⁷⁴ Thus her participation as a celebrity at local events, as well as the establishment of her as a glamorous persona, was important to ATV's relationship with the emergent regional television audience in the late 1950s. The parties and shows that Pat Cox attended, followed by the television cameras, fulfilled their function of putting the regional calendar on-screen. These items were simply shot with long panning shots of the events, usually without interviews or any dramatic intervention made by the news teams and their cameras. However they were central to engaging the regional television audience. Since the popular glamour of the 1950s was dominantly feminine, a female reporter and presenter was an important part of ATV at this point.

⁷² *Pat Cox crowning carnival queen* [online video, ID: 11101958], (ATV, first broadcast 11 October 1958), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-11101958-pat-cox-crowning-carnival-queen/MediaEntry/2743.html> [accessed 11 May 2013].

⁷³ *Cocktail party on a Viscount aircraft* [online video, ID: 19021958], (ATV, first broadcast 19 February 1958), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-19021958-cocktail-party-on-a-viscount-aircraft/MediaEntry/2388.html> [accessed 11 May 2013].

⁷⁴ *Wedding of Pat Cox at Pershore Road* [online video, ID: 21031959], (ATV, first broadcast 21 March 1959), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-21031959-wedding-of-pat-cox-at-pershore-road/MediaEntry/2977.html> [accessed 11 May 2013].

The regional companies were also experimenting with their form and function in the late 1950s, attempting to distinguish themselves from cinema newsreels and the local print media. One good example of this televisual experimentation is a filmed insert on a planned bus strike by workers Midland Red.⁷⁵ The item opened with male reporter, Kit Plant, interviewing the union representative filmed in the depot with the buses in view in the background. While this represented standard practices and imagery, the piece then cut to Pat Cox interviewing the wife of a striking bus driver on her doorstep (see Figure 13). She introduces the interview: 'Of course there is another side to this story and that is of the bus man's wife'. Cutting from the interview with the shop steward to the interview with Pat Cox and the housewife, Mrs Butley, makes a strong feature of the domestic impact of the strike within the news story. This is one of the few clips in the collection which splits the news story between a male and female perspective using two interviews and a male and a female reporter respectively. Cox could therefore be a useful part of drawing out a female perspective in the news, but like the women who worked off screen, she too could be sold as the embodiment of television's glamour.

The influence of the regular, daily presence of a newscaster, even though they may have appeared on screen for a relatively short period of time, was significant. In an article in the *TV Times* Lynne Reid Banks suggested that the audience perceived her role in television as one of far greater authority than a 'girl reporter'.⁷⁶ This suggests something about Pat Cox's visibility in the Midlands and the significance of her

⁷⁵ *Bus Strike Interviews in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 22071957], (ATV, first broadcast 22 July 1957), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-22071957-bus-strike-interviews/MediaEntry/2080.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]

⁷⁶ Lynne Reid Banks, 'I AM JUST A COG says LYNNE REID BANKS', *TV Times* [Midland edition], (18 May 1956), p. 31.

position to the television audience, even if it was not shared by the production company. This period of experimentation with ‘soft’ news and putting the audience on screen played a significant part in shaping televisual form within early regional television: women’s ‘feminine’ contribution was therefore essential in the establishment of Midlands ATV. However, since the items they participated in have been identified as generic rather than innovative, the historical significance of their contribution has not been previously recognised.

1964-1968: The masculine turn?

The 1960s have been discussed as a period where television production was ‘masculinized’. Holland defines the ‘masculine turn’ within the context of gendered understandings of the visual.⁷⁷ The feminine and the frivolous had been an important aspect of establishing television and television audiences in the 1950s, but increasingly came under criticism in the 1960s:

Once television was fully established, as it was by the mid-sixties –the 1962 Pilkington Report and the advent of the third channel, BBC2, in 1964 being evidence of this –it seems that it must also, by virtue of its public centrality, be masculinized.⁷⁸

Janet Thumim has discussed how this had consequences for ‘feminine’ programme content as well as implications for women working behind the screen and in vision on screen.⁷⁹ This was also apparent in ATV’s regional television news programming. In 1964 ATV went through a major scheduling overhaul that had serious implications for

⁷⁷ Holland, *The Angry Buzz*, p. 3.

⁷⁸ Thumim, *Inventing Television Culture*, p. 79.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81.

its regional programming output and the women who had been employed in on-screen roles. Following a scheduling shift in 1964 only two of the women previously employed in news and regional magazine programmes remained at ATV. Noele Gordon returned to an acting role in *Crossroads*, playing Meg Richardson the soap's central character. Jean Morton managed to maintain her position as 'Auntie Jean' with the successful children's show *Tingha and Tucker*. In the wake of the Suez Crisis and the abandonment of the Fourteen Day Rule television news was allowed to deal with news stories far more directly. Thumim argues that this had an important effect on the masculinisation of the news.⁸⁰ These changes were also partly due to television companies' responses to the Pilkington Report (1962), which criticised ITV companies for 'pandering to the popular taste'.⁸¹

Women lost out when stylistic changes across the television news industry in the mid-1960s favoured those with formal journalistic qualifications. Following Pat Cox there was no female reporter with her central position, or comparable longevity of career, until Sue Jay joined the company in 1968. Cox was replaced by Peter Wilson, prompting one audience member to write into the *TV Times*: 'If we must be without Patricia Cox's pleasant and smiling face reading our news, would it be too much to ask Peter Wilson to smile? He always looks so sad. N. Winfield'. The reply was telling of a new approach to the delivery of the regional news:

A shivering Peter Wilson, born and bred in sunny Rhodesia,
says: 'Maybe I'll cheer up when it gets warmer. News is a

⁸⁰ Janet Thumim, "'Mrs Knight must be balanced": Methodological problems in researching early British television', in Cynthia Carter, Gill Branston and Stuart Allan (eds.), *News, Gender and Power* (London: Routledge, 1998) p. 96.

⁸¹ John Corner, 'General Introduction: Television and British Society in the 1950s', *Popular Television in Britain: Studies in Cultural History* (London: BFI, 1991), pp. 1-21.

serious business, but I'll try to look on the bright side in future'.⁸²

This letter provides evidence that although production companies were fearful that women lacked authority as newsreaders the audience did not always share their concerns. The period of ATV providing regional news by covering regional events as a bystander, changed to an increasingly interventionist form of reportage in the mid-1960s. The late afternoon schedule began with *Crossroads* followed by a *Midlands News* bulletin and regional news programme, *ATV Today*. *ATV Today* was billed as: 'It's topical, controversial, bright and often breezy –it's 'ATV Today''.⁸³ There was a commitment to journalistic rigour, but the publicity phrasing also suggests ATV were wary of abandoning a 'soft' or feminised address entirely. *ATV Today* was based on a team of male journalists intervening in local events and debates. A weekly slot, 'Police Five', was introduced by Shaw Taylor aimed to assist local constabularies 'with their fight against crime'.⁸⁴ Lionel Hampden, Reg Harcourt, Barri Haynes, David Lloyd and John Swallow were described as: 'the programme's presenters by night and the investigators by day'.⁸⁵ Women's contribution to the news in the mid-1960s was positioned as supportive and behind the camera in both *Newsheet* and the *TV Times*. In an article 'Look At The Lovelies Behind The News': 'Andrew Gardner [explains] "It's just too easy to be distracted when reading the news –there's so much glamour behind the camera."...The news would never get to your screens at all if it wasn't for this beautiful bevy of ambitious and talented girls...they look decorative, but they're a hard-

⁸² 'Your View', *TV Times* [Midland edition], 12:13 (27 March 1965), p. 22.

⁸³ *ATV Newsheet*, 6:8 (August 1966), p. 6.

⁸⁴ *ATV Newsheet*, 5:7 (July 1965), p. 7.

⁸⁵ *ATV Newsheet*, 6:8 (August 1966), p. 6.

working lot too!’⁸⁶ In conforming more closely to the televisual style adopted by the national news programmes, ATV not only constricted the contributions from their female staff, but also arrested the development of a distinct regional televisual address. This is perhaps ironic considering how members of the Pilkington Committee, like Richard Hoggart, were concerned that television eroded regional culture.

Summary

The analysis provided in this chapter opened up a numerous lines of enquiry that may be productively expanded in future research. The significance of women’s off screen office work for understanding women’s experience of working in the media was examined here for the first time. This initial analysis suggests that these low status clerical roles were vital in shaping women’s position in the industry at large and require more thorough historical investigation. Their experience was part of the history of women in the office, but shaped by the culture of the television company.

Focusing on the finding of particular interest to this thesis, this chapter found some similar contours in the employment of women in television companies across the public service/commercial and regional/national divides. Women’s work off screen was not regionally specific, but women working in these roles were visible in staff and television magazines and were essential to engaging local public interest in the television industry. This was a device used to promote television as a transformative space for ordinary people. Although working in television was imbued with aspirational qualities in the print media, those working at a distance from television production roles remained situated as television fans, viewers with back-stage passes, rather than real

⁸⁶ ‘Look At The Lovelies Behind The News’, *TV Times* [Midland edition], 2:38 (16 September 1965), p. 19.

media insiders. Compared to the women working in offices who will be discussed in the next chapter, sexuality was far more in view in the visualisation of the young, working-class women who worked at ATV and to some extent at the BBC. This suggests that while the young, independent and sexually active office worker was present in this work culture, it was still a precarious balance for young women to strike. Further investigation into the use of beauty contests by companies like ATV would provide further understanding of how issues of sex in the office in the 1950s and 1960s were being worked through. Contrary to advice manuals and staff newspapers, however, glamour was not a tool women could use to secure a successful career. Class and educational background was a far greater factor in defining women's career opportunities, which meant that women were largely recruited to and remained in clerical roles. If television was transformative, it was in the opportunities it gave women to work and travel abroad, usually in the US, but travelling up the career ladder remained difficult and very few women broke out of feminised roles.

In ATV's Midlands news programmes in the mid-1950s to mid-1960s a feminine address and aesthetic predominated, which supported experimentation in televisual news styles and opportunities for women. Women working in on screen roles were also recruited to Midlands ATV in the 1950s for their ability to engage the public, making glamorous appearances at regional events. Their role in developing a regional address was significant and could at times overturn entrenched gendered practices, as was the case in the use of a female newsreader. The television audience did not seem to share some of the preoccupations of television producers, embracing Pat Cox as their daily newscaster. Rather than the frivolous edge of regional broadcasting the 'soft' news items featuring female reporters were the pieces the audiences tuned in to see.

However, as schedule changes were made across the ITV network in 1964, gaining an

influential position in television news programming was increasingly based on formal journalistic qualification, which few women, who had been trained to cultivate charm and poise, possessed.

The status of the women working in this field of cultural production was therefore precarious. In the 1950s the value of the glamorous, feminine image of the women working (off screen and on screen) was relatively high. The depreciation of this image in the mid 1960s severely limited women's agency to perform paid roles in cultural production. However, as chapter three made clear, ATV were still required to act as a public service and provide material that referenced the taste and outlook of the region. This ensured that even though women working in on screen roles at ATV were squeezed out between 1964 and 1968, the ordinary woman of the Midlands remained a visible part of news programmes. Thus, looking ahead, chapters five to seven analyse the diverse forms of ordinary women's participation in the cultural production of the regional television news. In the next chapter, in particular, the commercial value of the ordinary Midlands woman as a housewife and consumer will be considered in terms of maintaining a visible address to her and the purchasing power she embodied in the regional news.

Chapter Five

The newsworthy ‘housewife’ in ATV’s regional news programmes

As discussed in chapter one, the ‘housewife’ has been a central focus in women’s media history. Maggie Andrews has recently argued that since the broadcast media audience was home-based, radio and television tended to domesticate its subjects.¹ As discussed in chapter four, certain aspects of the regional news were ‘masculinised’ through the use of male reporters and attempts to include ‘investigative’ news report in the mid-1960s. This chapter will therefore analyse how the tension between the televisual processes of domestication and the demands to produce a newsworthy early evening bulletin for *Midlands News* impacted upon the figure of the ‘housewife’ in ATV’s news programmes. As mentioned in chapter two, the framing of women as ‘housewives’ was by no means a straightforward or unambiguous process.

Practitioners’ of women’s history have recognised that although the ‘stay-at-home housewife’ was a stock figure for 1940s and 1950s ‘advertisers and other image makers’, the realities of women’s lives were rarely as neat as her apron, lipstick and gleaming kitchen.² Although this disparity has been acknowledged the ways in which women were contesting domesticity and the role of ‘image makers’ within this process have not yet been fully explored.

¹ Andrews, *Domesticating the Airwaves*.

² Judy Giles, ‘Good Housekeeping: Professionalising the Housewife, 1920-50’, in Krista Cowman and Louise A Jackson (eds.), *Women and Work Culture: Britain c.1850-1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 71.

In beginning to examine this, my discussion focuses on how the ‘housewife’, her femininity, and civic interests were framed as newsworthy in ATV’s news programmes and the ways this intersected with three ideal types of mid-twentieth century womanhood; namely, ‘Mrs Consumer’, the ‘professional housewife’ and the ‘good working mother’. These ideal-types have proved productive in women’s history in debates on women’s changing relationship with production and consumption, and the implications of these changes for the status of the housewife and her domestic labour within the household and public culture. By looking in turn at the representations of women in the regional news collection grouped around the identities of ‘Mrs Consumer’, the ‘professional housewife’ and the ‘good working mother’, it is possible to identify changes in the relationship between television and the housewife. In particular this study elucidates the changing emphasis on women’s responsibilities to the household as increasing numbers of women entered and returned to the workplace and, in particular, the office.

All three of these discursive constructions provided a defence against criticisms of women as ‘superfluous’ or ‘bad (working) mothers’, but this was particularly true of the ‘good working mother’. In this sense there are elements of crossover between them; Mrs Consumer and the professional housewife, as addressed within popular (visual) culture were both linked to the expansion of the mass media and consumer culture in Britain from the 1880s. The establishment of the *Daily Mail*’s Ideal Home Exhibition from 1908 is evidence of the development of the public visibility of the housewife through her consumption.³ Likewise, the professional housewife was visible through women’s organisations, which in the 1930s adopted the rhetoric of ‘active citizenship’ to promote the rights of women and to campaign for better housing conditions for

³ Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb*, p. 109.

working class housewives.⁴ These campaigns continued into the 1950s, notably publicised by the films of Kay Mander *Homes for the People* (1945) and Jill Craigie, *To Be a Woman* (1951).⁵ The other dimension to the identity of the professional housewife was the application of theories of scientific management to the space of the home and domestic labour. This invested domestic labour with the rhetoric of efficiency and modernity that was also influencing the organisation of factories and offices and was circulated to women in magazines.⁶ Visually the ‘good working mother’ coalesced with many of the qualities of the ‘office wife’ and a comparison of the two forms part of the analysis in this chapter. By combining visual and discursive analysis, this chapter traces how ordinary Midland women were made visible as newsworthy housewives.

This chapter does this by examining how a commercial television company defined and addressed housewives in the regional television news. I question to what extent the imperatives of advertising revenue for commercial television companies meant that the housewife was situated as a consumer in the regional news coverage and conversely, whether the function of the *Midlands News* as a public service offered alternative perspectives on the housewife compared to television commercials and television drama.⁷ Analysis of the circumstances that rendered the housewife and her domestic labour newsworthy can make a productive contribution to existing debates in women’s history that have contested the definition of 1950s domesticity.

⁴ Beaumont, ‘Citizens not feminists’, pp. 411-429.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 411-429; for a contemporary perspective, see Margery Spring Rice, *Working Class Wives: Their Health and Conditions* (London, Virago: 1981, first published 1939).

⁶ Giles, ‘Good housekeeping’, p. 73.

⁷ For an analysis of representations of female workers in television drama see, Janet Thumim, ‘Women at Work’, pp. 207-222.

Definitions of newsworthiness contained a degree of elasticity, but generally the daily routine of women's domestic labour was not part of the regional news agenda. In fact the only images of domestic labour broadcast during this period appeared in an item titled *Bromsgrove Couple Swap Jobs* (1961).⁸ The insert included images of the husband washing up after his wife had left for work. The newsworthiness was based on the novelty of this reversal of gender roles. Thus the news collection does not provide insight into debates about the time women spent on domestic labour and changing regimes of housework. However, this chapter does address issues of class and status affecting the housewife in the 1950s and 1960s.

'Mrs Consumer'

The aspirations of the 1930s were apparent in the iconic image of the 1950s housewife situated in a clean and healthful 'home of her own' complete with a range of domestic appliances.⁹ Statistical records suggest that in 1963, 82 per cent of all private households had a television set, 72 per cent had a vacuum cleaner, 45 per cent a washing machine and 30 per cent a refrigerator. By 1966, 47 per cent of all houses in England and Wales were owner-occupied.¹⁰ However, while the acquisition of consumer durables was relatively widespread, so was the inadequacy of basic facilities in the competitive postwar housing market. For example the census returns for 1951 show that 40 per cent of single dwelling households in the Midland region had no access to a fixed bath. This figure was reduced to 35 per cent for households in shared

⁸ *Bromsgrove Couple Swap Jobs* in *Midland Montage* [online video, ID: 15121960], (ATV, first broadcast 15 December 1960), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midland-montage-15121960-bromsgrove-couple-swap-jobs/MediaEntry/642.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁹ Langhamer, 'The meanings of home in postwar Britain', pp. 239-253.

¹⁰ John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1985*, second edition (London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 282-283.

dwellings.¹¹ Moreover, it was arguably access to basic amenities that had the most potential to make women's domestic work easier and homes more comfortable. It would therefore be inaccurate to identify the 1950s and 1960s as the moment when all women's dreams of 'modern living' were realised. Social trends indicating rising living standards have concealed a number of paradoxes that have exercised debates on: the amount of time women spent on domestic labour in relation to paid work and leisure, the extent to which class continued to define women's experience of domestic labour, and the status of women in the family.

Television, as a domestic leisure technology and mass marketing tool, occupies a crucial place in these discussions. References to the influence of television on 'the housewife' reflect the simultaneous celebration and criticism of television in the 1950s. On the one hand television was associated with opening up topics of interest to women still considered taboo for many women's magazines.¹² On the other hand, television has been accused of provoking dissatisfaction with contemporary housing conditions.¹³ However, these comments often appear to be assumed rather than supported by evidence. Where television does appear in historical research it has often been in comparison to other domestic technologies. Bowden and Offer's research suggests that acquiring radios and televisions was given priority over, so called, labour-saving devices. This leads them to conclude that consumers prioritised improving the quality of their leisure time, rather than reducing the load of housework.¹⁴ These decisions

¹¹ General Register Office, *Census 1951: England and Wales, Housing Report, Table AZ –Fixed Bath, Regions of England and Wales Aggregates Summary* (London: HMSO, 1951), cix.

¹² White, *Women's Magazines* (London: Michael Joseph, 1970), p. 166.

¹³ Ken Coates and Richard Silburn, *Poverty: the Forgotten Englishmen* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1970), p. 79.

¹⁴ Bowden and Offer, 'Household appliances and the use of time', p. 732.

could be interpreted as indicative of the superiority of male spending power in the household and a prevailing male perspective of the home as a place of leisure rather than work. However, this view is complicated by evidence from Mass Observation directives discussing memories of television in the 1950s and 1960s. Testimonies described how women and their husbands often bought (or rented) a television to coincide with the birth of their first baby and an increased amount of time spent at home for the new mother during the daytime.¹⁵ This testimony suggests that rather than a symbol of the home as a venue of leisure, acquiring a television could also be understood as an acknowledgement of how child care changed patterns of women's work, as well as patterns of leisure for both partners.

The value of television as a tool to communicate with women in their role as consumers was central to television as a commercial enterprise. Analysis of the advertising industry in the twentieth century has discussed the influence of 'depth' techniques increasingly used by agencies in post-war Britain and North America, which exploited 'people's emotional responses and drives'.¹⁶ An influential US study 'The Psychology of Housekeeping', compiled in 1945 to assist companies to convert from war contracts to the marketing of consumer goods and cited by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique*, exemplified this approach to advertising in relation to household products:

[A] woman's attitude towards housekeeping appliances cannot be separated from her attitude towards homemaking in general.¹⁷

¹⁵ M-OA: Television and Images of the 1950s and 1960s, W571, W632 & W1923, 2003.

¹⁶ White, *Women's Magazines*, p. 157.

¹⁷ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (Penguin: London, 1963), pp. 167-168.

As a result, the dominant approach to advertisements for labour-saving devices and household goods emphasised the fact that they took the drudgery out of domestic labour, without denigrating the value of the work done by housewives. This was apparent in a Heinz television commercial produced for the ITV network in 1966, which was staged around a modern kitchen hob. A conversation between two housewives discussed how Heinz Baked Beans could be added to a variety of dishes rather than replacing the need for home cooking.¹⁸ This advert was situated in a ‘modern kitchen’ and presented as an ‘everyday’, ‘chance’ conversation between two housewives, providing an example of how ‘[t]he traditional nurturing role of women was not challenged but was recast for modern times’.¹⁹ It has been argued that the novelty of television commercials for those first viewing ITV in the 1950s and 1960s made a distinct impression on the television audience compared to other forms of advertising. For Asa Briggs:

It was not only the volume but its content and style, however, which captured public attention –the slogans, the jingles, the packs, the images, the straight caption, ‘as advertised on TV’, familiar outside the home. This was ‘marketing’ as distinct from ‘selling’, and it involved trying to have on hand and to make available ‘what the consumer wants’.²⁰

¹⁸ *Housewife -Housewives chat about bean recipes* [TV commercial, HAT Tape Number: H110097], (Young & Rubicam for H J Heinz Ltd, 1965-67).

¹⁹ Barbara Usherwood, “‘Mrs Housewife and Her Grocer’: the advent of self-service food shopping in Britain’, in Maggie Andrews and Mary M Talbot (eds.), *All the World and her Husband: Women in Twentieth-Century Consumer Culture* (London: Cassell, 2000), p. 128.

²⁰ Asa Briggs, ‘TV advertising and the social revolution’, in Brian Henry (ed.), *British Television Advertising The First 30 Years* (London: Century Benham, 1986), pp. 350-351.

Mass Observation responses do suggest that television adverts were widely memorable and discussed.²¹ Reflecting on the first thirty years of television advertising, company chairman David Bernstein maintained that television changed advertising in ways that surprised industry practitioners, making the practice of selling far more visible than anticipated.²² He also revealed that although IBA regulations regarding the association of ITV personalities with advertised products were strictly monitored: ‘advertisers could associate with ITV programmes by advertising at fixed times. For example, Max Factor was a permanent fixture in the long-running *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*.’²³ Thus it is possible to clearly connect the address to Mrs Consumer between television commercials and programmes. Barbara Usherwood has argued that shopping was becoming an increasingly visual experience, where the advent of self-service shopping meant ‘[t]he visual replaced the verbal’.²⁴ The connection between *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* and Max Factor suggests, advertisers hoped that women’s viewing would also encourage them into the project of feminine self-fashioning. For household durables and products this meant presentation of domestic labour as ‘not quite work’ had to be carefully balanced with the value that the housewife added to the household; the status of housewife had to maintain an aspirational quality. This balance allowed advertisements to be aesthetically pleasurable, by presenting a relaxed image of housework, rather than one which demanded physical labour. Indeed marketing journals suggest that television commercials should: ‘turn the relaxed viewer of yesterday evening into this morning’s

²¹ M-OA: Television and Images of the 1950s and 1960s, B1771, 2003.

²² Briggs, ‘TV Advertising and the Social Revolution’, p. 253.

²³ David Bernstein, ‘The Television Commercial: An Essay’, in Brian Henry (ed.), *British Television Advertising the First 20 Years* (London: Century Benham, 1986), p. 262.

²⁴ Usherwood, ‘Mrs Housewife and Her Grocer’, p. 127.

purposeful and brand-conscious customer'.²⁵ This relaxed vision of domestic work was achieved by the housewives ability to acquire the goods, products and dress advertised.

While it is difficult to find evidence of how women received television commercials, analysing a set of four television commercials made for Hoover by D'Arcy Masius MacManus between 1959 and 1962 reveal a changing trajectory in their address to women and the picturing of the housewife. The earliest advert in the sample was produced in 1958 and also used in 1959 and 1961 for a Hoover brand iron.²⁶ The following passage is a transcription from the original advertisement. The opening shot showed washing drying on a line, a male voice asked: 'Had a hard day with the washing? Then you'll be tired and there's the ironing, week after week.' The shot then moved into a close up of clothes in waiting to be ironed in a basket, followed by an iron upright on an ironing board. The voiceover continued: 'But Hoover have designed a clever iron for you, it makes ironing easier.' A woman's torso then came into view, she raised her hand filling the iron with water: 'Hoover steam or dry iron. Your week's wash is less work with this iron, it'll iron dry but for your main wash steam', an image of a small girls dress was shown, followed by a cut to the woman ironing this dress: 'and for your daintiest things, it's not only safer but gives a crisper finish, faster. On heavy clothes too, steam presses easily and evenly through these unique Hoover channels'. An image of the iron appeared centre screen against a white surface and background: 'This Hoover iron turns tiny beads of water into steam and only on the Hoover can you switch to dry or steam instantly.' An arrow pointed out this action on the iron, the white background then dissolved and a women's hand appeared holding

²⁵ *Sales Appeal* (1955), p. 26 quoted in Usherwood, 'Mrs Housewife and Her Grocer', p. 127.

²⁶ *Lady demos dry steam iron* [TV commercial, HAT Tape Number: H26372], (D'Arcy Masius MacManus for Hoover plc, 1958-61).

the handle of the iron: 'See one for yourself before next washday without fail, go with your husband, he'll be impressed.' A caption appeared on the screen 'The steam or dry iron, Hoover'. This advert is largely descriptive with a strong visual focus on the product, only the hands of the woman demonstrating the iron were visible, her face was never shown. This representational strategy was demonstrative of advertising agencies claims that they were guiding the audience through consumer culture, rather than manipulating their 'will to want'.²⁷ The posing of the purchase of the iron as a decision made by husbands and wives together, promoted the idea that for 'modern' couples the purchase of consumer durables involved joint decision making.

An advert for Hoover Constellation Vacuum cleaner (1961-1964) featured a women visiting a shop and receiving a full demonstration of how the Hoover and its appliances could help clean a set of stairs.²⁸ The commercial is structured around a woman's visit to a Hoover showroom and her initiation into the 'modern' world of domestic appliances by a helpful, (male) professional who explained and demonstrated the technology. The voiceover on the television commercial described the female character as: 'today's smart modern woman' who desired 'the newest, the latest, the smartest' in all aspects of consumption from clothing to domestic appliances, thus leading the advert to conclude: 'Every woman with young ideas wants the exciting new Hoover Constellation.' The linking of products with a feminine modernity was a technique

²⁷ Sean Nixon, "'Salesmen of the will to want': advertising and its critics in Britain 1951-1967", in *Contemporary British History*, 24:2 (2010), p. 221.

²⁸ *New modern woman needs latest modern equipment* [TV commercial, HAT Tape Number: H26372], (D'Arcy Masius MacManus for Hoover plc, 1961/64).

prevalent in interwar and post-war advertising.²⁹ This advert provided a more vivid representation of what the ‘modern’ housewife looked like compared to the Hoover iron advert in terms of dress and taste and showed the woman’s face, but stopped short of providing the ‘housewife’ with a speaking part in the commercial.

The 1961 advert for the Hoovermatic washing machine (used periodically up until 1965) opened with a woman in an apron washing clothes in a top-loading electric washing machine. It provides a useful example of how the voice of a male expert led the discussion in this realm of women’s expertise.³⁰ This is carried out to such an extent that the woman in the advert was mute. The commercial is transcribed here in full. The male voiceover asked: ‘Got washing problems, eh?’ the woman replied mutely with a vigorous nod: ‘Hey, your machine’s not doing any work at all. It must take hours to do your washing’ the woman looked sullenly into the machine: ‘And what’s the matter? Oh I see, that lazy wishy-washy paddle action doesn’t really get anywhere. Why, the clothes in the corners are barely moving, just dangling in water. Heard about Hoover?’ The woman again responded with a silent but vigorous nod: ‘Ever seen it in action?’ She pouted and shook her head: ‘No, well then, have a look!’ The shot then cut to a view of the Hoovermatic full of bubbling soapy water: ‘Here’s real washing action, pulsator, boiling action, that gets clothes thoroughly clean, gently and quickly and Hoover not only washes, but rinses and spin dries the whole family wash in just half an hour, convinced?’ A close up of the woman’s face showed her smiling and nodding in agreement: ‘More and more women are, so if you judge your wash by cleanness, it’s

²⁹ Penny Tinkler and Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, ‘Feminine modernity in interwar Britain and North America: corsets, cars and cigarettes’, *Journal of Women’s History*, 20: 3 (2008), pp. 113-143.

³⁰ *Woman with old-fashioned washing methods* [TV commercial, HAT Tape Number: H26372], (D’Arcy Masius MacManus for Hoover plc, 1958-65).

got to be Hoover the superior Hoovermatic.’ This is an example of the kind of advert criticised by contemporaries for linking happiness with acquiring a specific product. The face of the woman is visible but she remained mute suggesting a changing address to the housewife, at times, combining descriptive product demonstration with emotive and lifestyle driven messages.

When Hoover advertised their latest washing machine on ITV in 1962 (again used up until 1965) it departed from all previous adverts in the use of female actors and kitchen mise-en-scène.³¹ The advert featured the Hoover Keymatic and was highly visually elaborate, with minimal reference to how the product functioned. Instead it focused on how the product could dramatically reduce the amount of time women spent on washing. The opening shot showed women in fashionable haircuts whispering into each other’s ears, a blonde woman turned to face the camera with a look of joy and surprise at the revelation that had been whispered to her. A jingle was sung in accompaniment to a piano: ‘Have you heard the news, its going round, that Hoover Hoover have gone and found, the washing machine that means the end, the end of washday!’ This was followed a shot of a woman walking out of a door, the music paused and she turned to face the camera, she exclaimed: ‘Washday? Just Forget it!’ The shot then showed a close up of a woman’s well manicured finger with a wedding ring on her left hand pressing the buttons on the Keymatic. The male voiceover and the jingle continued: ‘Hoover Keymatic is the name, it’s automated and that’s the same as saying never ever will you think again about washday.’ Another woman walked down to centre screen holding a little boys hand and repeated to the camera: ‘Washday? Just forget it!’ The

³¹ *The end of washday: Glamorous women forget about washing* [TV commercial, HAT Tape Number: H26372], (D’Arcy Masius MacManus for Hoover plc, 1962-65).

lyrics of the jungle then instructed 'choose your programme' a close-up visual demonstration was given using a woman's hand: 'any one of eight, choose the fabric on the Hoover keyplate, press so, press to go, that's the end, the end of washday'. A woman in a hat said to camera: 'Washday? Just forget it!' An image of a modern kitchen was then shown, the Hoover Keymatic glided from the corner to the centre of the kitchen floor, which was also the centre of the television frame. This commercial really promoted the idea that the washing machine increasing women's leisure, by visually showing women leaving the house after they had pushed the start button on the Hoover Keymatic.

These four Hoover adverts provide evidence of how rapidly television advertising innovated on its address to women engaged in domestic labour, increasingly pushing an emotive ideal, focusing on the happiness of women who reduced the time she spent on domestic labour. In the Hoover adverts analysed here, the elements of product demonstration diminished between 1959 and 1962. However they were very much present in January 1963, when the Hoovermatic washing machine featured in a *Midlands News* bulletin that reported on 'free washing services by Hoover Ltd. for housewives frozen up at home' in Great Barr'.³² The opening shot showed a woman with pram walking up to a church hall in a checked coat and fur hat, a sign read 'Free Emergency Washing Service'. The woman handed a bag of washing over to a man dressed in a suit and then took a seat to the right of the shot, one of the men handed her a cup of tea on a saucer. Two men in suits took the washing and demonstrated a top-loading Hoovermatic washing machine. Close up shots of washing machine in action, were followed by a wide shot of another woman looking on as her washing was done.

³² *Free washing facilities provided by Hoover Ltd in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 28011963], (ATV, first broadcast 28 January 1963), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-28011963-free-washing-facilities-provided-by-hoover-ltd/MediaEntry/5786.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

The first woman finished her tea, her clean laundry was handed back to her and she left the building with a smile. The item was presumably newsworthy, because the company was offering a benevolent service for the community in a time of need, but it had all the hallmarks of a promotional stunt. Although the lack of written documentation makes this difficult to confirm, a visual analysis suggests several points of convergence between the framing of the Hoover products in the regional news story and the television commercials.

Comparing the visual narrative of the news story with an advert for the Hoover Constellation Vacuum cleaner broadcast in 1961 reveals several points of convergence. The dress and age of the woman featured in the television news was similar to the model used in the commercial advertisement. Likewise the element of (male) professional demonstration of the Hoover product and opportunity for relaxation for the 'housewife' were features of both films. However the news item did not use music, nor energetically delivered slogans that were apparent in 1962 Keymatic advert. Thus while the element of product demonstration led by a male expert had diminished in television advertising it was revived in the 1963 news item to legitimise the film as consumer information.



Figure 14 *Midlands News* still, free washing facilities at Great Barr, January 1963



Figure 15 *Midlands News* still, free washing facilities at Great Barr, January 1963

Such elements of ‘actuality’ in television commercials were criticised in the Pilkington Report. Members of the committee were concerned by the ‘ones which try to be nearly real’ rather than adverts which made use of fantasy.³³ Janet Thumim has suggested that this was a major reason behind the outlawing of admags in 1963. Admags, or shopping magazines, were interpreted as problematic because they too closely resembled the format of magazine programming borrowed from print and radio broadcasting:

The problem with the format seems to have been the supposed difficulty, for the audience, of distinguishing between information or opinion disseminated by partisan advertisers and that offered by the (presumed non-partisan) presenters of magazine programmes.³⁴

There was an interesting contradiction at work, which suggests that it was acceptable to stage a product demonstration for the regional television news audience, but that this same visual narrative was potentially damaging if viewed in an advertisement.

Aesthetically, the *Midlands News* legitimated a style of commercial promotion that was under criticism. Thus the guise of consumer information meant that the visual style used in television advertising remained within the repertoire of representational strategies used by the regional television news. Extending this survey allows further discussion of how regional news programmes oscillated between providing news reports that Mrs Consumer could identify as useful customer information and to what extent these also constituted entertainment and the potential to fuel consumer aspirations.

³³ Nixon, ‘Salesmen of the will to want’, p. 222.

³⁴ Thumim, ‘Women at work’, p. 211.

Items on supermarkets reveal how stories that endorsed particular brands or companies were at times presented with a journalistic angle, but on other occasions allowed overt promotion. Cinema newsreels had featured stories on the developments of self-service shopping since the late 1940s. The first items were shown in 1948 and 1948 and showed the new self-service style shopping.³⁵ They continued to do so into the 1960s, such as a reel marking the opening of a Tesco supermarket in Leicester in 1961.³⁶ The Pathé item, *Drive In And Buy* focused on the novelty of the multi-storey car park that was located in the same building as the supermarket. The visual narrative followed a young couple as they drove up to the car park, the man driving, parked and then browsed the shop. The woman carried the shopping basket and chose the goods from the shelves. The piece ended with a porter delivering their shopping into the boot of their car. In items such as these the boundaries between commercial interests and women's civic interests as consumers were blurred. However, there was an element of escapism to the way Pathé presented this item showing a harmonious companionate marriage, where the partners had time and money to browse the supermarket.

The *Midlands News* also covered this story. Reg Harcourt was filmed conducting Vox Pops with shoppers in Leicester following the opening of a Tesco in 1961 discussing the likely effects on local grocers.³⁷ Out of the seven responses featured six were from

³⁵ *Self-Service Shop* [online video, ID: 1261.37], (British Pathé, first broadcast 1948), <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/self-service-shop/query/supermarket> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Self Service At Wholesale Co-Op Society Shop*, [online video, ID: 2493.11], (British Pathé, first broadcast 1949), <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/self-service-at-london-wholesale-co-op-society-sho/query/supermarket> [accessed 2 May 2013].

³⁶ *Drive In And Buy* [online video, ID: 1744.12], (British Pathé, first broadcast 1961), <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/drive-in-and-buy/query/supermarket> [accessed 2 May 2013].

³⁷ *New Tesco Supermarket in Midland Montage* [online video, ID: 14121961], (ATV, first broadcast 14 December 1961), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midland-montage-14121961-new-tesco-supermarket/MediaEntry/42564.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

women. The response from an elderly man was the only one that suggested he would continue to use his local shops rather than paying for the bus to get into town. The women featured emphasise the savings they would make, one woman suggested around thirty shillings a week. Another response featured in the item was a comment on the convenience of being able to do all your shopping under one roof, whereas the last response prophesised that the supermarket would mean 'death to the small man'.

Barbara Usherwood's study of the introduction of self-service supermarkets suggests that trade journal articles, lectures and films available to retailers was very positive on the question of converting to self-service, but that commentary available to consumers in the print media was far more critical.³⁸ Harcourt's angle on the story attempts to provide a journalistic rather than a promotional edge to the supermarket opening, especially in comparison to the British Pathé item. The 'housewives' responses included in the broadcast tend to welcome the opening of the Tesco supermarket but with an emphasis on the duty to seek out cheap prices, rather than the pleasures this shopping experience might offer.

However other items in the regional news appeared to have a more overtly promotional edge. A report from May 1969 titled 'Housewife wins £70 of groceries' filmed a woman as she completed a trolley dash around the supermarket to claim her prize.³⁹ In the case of department stores, the first day of the sales was often filmed for broadcast.⁴⁰

³⁸ Usherwood, 'Mrs Housewife and Her Grocer', p. 116.

³⁹ *Housewife wins £70 of groceries* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 20051969], (ATV, first broadcast 20 May 1969), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-20051969-housewife-wins-70-of-groceries/MediaEntry/13243.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁴⁰ *Sale at Birmingham Shop* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 01021962], (ATV, first broadcast 1 February 1962), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-01021962-sale-at-birmingham-shop/MediaEntry/4886.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Summer Sales* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 19061962], (ATV, first broadcast 19 June 1962), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-19061962-summer->

An item featuring a fastest typist competition held in Lewis's store in Birmingham (October 1959) also reveals how stores used the regional television news as a promotional tool.⁴¹

Other celebrations of consumption broadcast by the regional television news included annual reports from the *Daily Mail* Ideal Home Exhibition. Giles has suggested these were aimed at a lower-middle class audience: 'those for whom home ownership was becoming a very real possibility and who, it was believed, required guidance in the purchase of labour-saving domestic appliances and the creation of home.'⁴² In ATV's report from the 1960 Ideal Home Exhibition, rather than filming a demonstration made by a company representative, reporter Pat Cox was pictured as a discerning housewife, making an inspection of a modern kitchen.⁴³ Although working-class women were not strictly the target audience of the Ideal Home Exhibition, oral history evidence also suggests ritual inspections and appreciations of the modern kitchen was part of their experience of new housing. A woman entering her new council house recalled: 'I made my way down the stairs once more and into the kitchen. I opened drawers and cupboards, making little squeals of delight at the discovery of all the light and various

[sales/MediaEntry/5232.html](http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-03071963-queuing-for-sale-at-rackhams/MediaEntry/5232.html) [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Queuing for Sales at Rackhams* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 03071963], (ATV, first broadcast 3 July 1963) <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-03071963-queuing-for-sale-at-rackhams/MediaEntry/1073.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *New Year Sales* in *ATV Today* [online video, ID:33710], (ATV first broadcast 28 December 1967), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-28121967-new-year-sales/MediaEntry/33710.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁴¹ *Fastest typist competition held in Lewis's store* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 29101059], (ATV, first broadcast 29 October 1959), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-29101959-fastest-typist-competition-held-in-lewiss-store/MediaEntry/3381.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁴² Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb*, pp. 109-110.

⁴³ *Pat Cox at the Ideal Homes Exhibition* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID:29031960], (ATV, first broadcast 29 March 1960), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-29031960-pat-cox-at-the-ideal-homes-exhibition/MediaEntry/3649.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

up-to-date drawer space.’⁴⁴ The representational strategies apparent in the regional news and television commercials for domestic appliances amplified women’s opportunities for looking. Janice Winship has argued that advertisements for domestic appliances made up part of the visual pleasure women experienced in reading and looking at magazines during breaks from domestic labour: ‘These visuals acknowledged those labours while simultaneously enabling the reader to avoid doing them.’⁴⁵ Thus identifying the context of the reception of commercial images reframes their possible meanings for women. The use of the television news however, ultimately functioned better as a consumer information service than an opportunity for Mrs Consumer to engage in visual shopping and self-fashioning. The news items which included vox pops from women tended to broadcast the dutiful aspects of their work, and the more overtly promotional items perhaps opened up the opportunity to criticise and scrutinise the female consumer, suggesting this form of visibility could interrupt the project of self-fashioning. Thus the ‘actuality’ aesthetic of the regional news displayed women’s domestic work as part of social commentary, rather than the visual pleasure more evident in television commercials. The elements of aesthetic crossover however suggest that the work of the modern housewife was framed in aspirational terms, which will be explored further in the next section of the chapter.

The ‘Professional Housewife’

Moving on to examine the ‘professional housewife’, Judy Giles has suggested that following the First World War the role of the housewife was increasingly professionalised as the rhetoric of scientific management was applied to the home. This

⁴⁴ Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb*, p. 49.

⁴⁵ Winship, *Inside Women’s Magazines*, p. 65.

granted the role of expert to the housewife on the regulation of the home as a 'safe hygienic and ordered space'.⁴⁶ Giles has argued that although far more easily achievable for the middle class housewife, this identity also resonated with working-class women able to acquire a 'home of their own'.⁴⁷ The emergence of the professional housewife can also be traced through women's organisations, which in the 1930s adopted the rhetoric of 'active citizenship' to promote the rights of women and campaign against the impoverished living conditions of working-class homes. These societies were lead by predominantly middle-class women and (conservative) middle-class women continued to be visible advocates of efficiency in the household as a key to women's emancipation from drudgery. This is evident in Margaret Thatcher's often quoted newspaper articles in the 1950s and, from a commercial perspective, in the work of the Electrical Association for Women.⁴⁸

What is most interesting about the appearances of the professional housewife is that in contrast to Mrs Consumer, her appearances reveal the uneasy address of issues of poverty by ATV. The use of the ordinary housewife as central to leading the cameras through different aspects of the housing problems in the 1950s and 1960s, was at first purely visual, but in the mid-1960s women were also given the opportunity to participate in interviews. The reporting of such issues was not high on the regional news agenda in the 1950s and 1960s. It was more common for the regional news team to present narratives on Midlanders escape from 'Victorian-style' poverty to 'modern' affluence. These were usually addressed in short documentary-style programmes in the

⁴⁶ Giles, 'Good housekeeping', p. 73.

⁴⁷ Giles, 'A Home of One's Own', pp. 239-253.

⁴⁸ Smith Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker', p. 219; Carol Pursell, 'Domesticating modernity: the electrical association for women, 1924-86', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 32:1 (1999), pp. 47-67.

series *Look Around the Midlands*, for example: ‘Edgbaston’ (1960) looked at redevelopment in the area, as did ‘Coventry Modern Buildings’ (1961) and ‘The Potteries’ (1964). The Edgbaston piece emphasised the proximity of affluence and poverty in the area, describing the living conditions of the different demographic groups through their housing.⁴⁹ The item on the potteries tended to balance the ‘progress’ made towards clean, modern housing with nostalgia for ‘traditional’ working class community life.⁵⁰

Like the television advertisements discussed above there was an aesthetic element to the development of these discussions, and distinctions made between the spaces where housewives were visualised as glamorous, and the times where they were presented as ordinary. There is evidence to suggest that this was not only a strategy used in television, but was also apparent in the changing editorial practices of women’s magazines, which were becoming more reliant on stories from ‘real’ women accompanied by photographs of them in their kitchens or receiving a visit from the health visitor. For Mary Grieve, editor of *Woman*, the inclusion of ‘readers own stories’ marked a significant change in policy rejecting the approach of ‘the wonder paper which “led” readers in the friendliest possible way, towards one in which it became a partner in an exchange of ideas and experiences’.⁵¹ In the regional television news, stories on housing conditions and the persistence of poverty in the region, were often marked as part of women’s ‘civic interest’ through the use of a female reporter, or

⁴⁹ *Edgbaston in Look Around the Midlands* [online video, ID:16121960], (ATV, first broadcast 16 December 1960), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/look-around-16121960-edgbaston/MediaEntry/115.html> [accessed 28 May 2013].

⁵⁰ *The Potteries in Look Around the Midlands* [online video, ID: 23091964], (ATV, first broadcast 20 September 1964), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/look-around-23091964-the-potteries/MediaEntry/1080.html> [accessed 28 May 2013].

⁵¹ White, *Women’s Magazines*, p. 159.

ordinary women to lead the visual narrative. Together they suggest that women bore the brunt of the persistence of poverty in the midst of the so called 'affluent' society, and also led challenges to local authorities when conditions did not meet their expectations.

Aspects of this are evident in two items from the *Midlands News* in the 1950s. The first broadcast in November 1957 featured Pat Cox interviewing MP John Cordeaux about poor quality rented accommodation in Nottingham.⁵² The second reported on subsidence in new housing in Dudley in February 1958.⁵³ The tone of the John Cordeaux interview was unusually investigative for the regional news at this time and visually elaborate. Images overlaid the interview, with an address to camera by Cordeaux at the end of the piece on how residents could take action against rent racketeers. The opening shot showed Pat Cox, microphone in hand, sitting with Cordeaux. The use of a female reporter for this interview acknowledged this as a 'women's issue' as it was for the 'professional housewives' of the interwar period. A portrait just visible on the wall behind suggests the interview may have taken place in Cordeaux's offices. Cox asked: 'Colonel Cordeaux, you recently raised in the House of Commons details of a furnished accommodation racket which is being practiced here in Nottingham, can you tell us something about it?' Cordeaux's responded by describing the racket going on in Nottingham and other towns, buying up of 'derelict slum houses' and 'frightful junk which they would describe as furniture'. As Cordeaux talked images of terraced street were shown, presumably the kind of 'slum' he was discussing, the film then cut to an interior and showed a bedroom focusing on the assorted items that

⁵² *John Cordeaux Interview in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 16111957], (ATV, first broadcast 16 November 1957), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-16111957-john-cordeaux-interview/MediaEntry/2244.html> [accessed 27 May 2013].

⁵³ *New Houses Subsiding in Dudley in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 23011958], (ATV, first broadcast 23 January 1958), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-23011958-new-houses-subsiding-in-dudley/MediaEntry/2341.html> [accessed 27 May 2013].

stood on a set of shelves. The camera panned down to a small child in woolly hat and outdoor coat sucking on a dummy while sitting on the floor on a rug by a bed. A young woman, also wearing her outdoor coat, picked up a chair to show the disrepair of the furniture; its legs were held together with twisted wire. She then pulled back some muslin curtains to reveal a makeshift wardrobe with coats hung up inside, the camera panned down to an electric socket visible underneath the coats then cuts back to the interview.

Cordeaux claimed that landlords spent around thirty shillings on furniture which they could repay with one weeks rent; thereby ensuring a significant profit. He also stated that most of the houses were hardly fit for human habitation in the first place. Cox then asked: 'is there anything that people living in these conditions can do to help break the racket?' Cordeaux replied directly to camera: 'The rent tribunal. Residents are too frightened to go to tribunal because landlords can turn them out at one months notice, but tribunal will offer them security, accommodation for at least 3 months. If anyone you know is living in such conditions, tell them to take courage and go to rent tribunal, if they don't know the procedure then ask their MP'. He ended the item with a smile to the camera. The item was a clear attempt to highlight a local problem, and is comparable to contemporary commentary that was described as the 'rediscovery of poverty' in 'affluent' society; a Midland example being Ken Coats and Richard Silburn's study *Poverty: The Forgotten Englishmen* (first published in 1970). The *Midlands News* piece featured a local woman whose living conditions illustrated the interview with the Cordeaux, but stopped short of including her testimony. The female voice heard is that of the reporter Pat Cox, and is therefore reminiscent of the middle-class 'professional housewife' speaking on behalf of the working-class housewife. Despite describing itself as the television 'of the people', this was framed as a story

about the persistence of poverty outside the knowledge of the average television viewer. As Cordeaux talked to Cox he described the conditions seen in the report as: 'not the kind of furnished letting that you or I would normally understand'. This suggests that ATV understood its public service obligations to report these issues, but was also aware that, in 1957 at least, the television audience might not include those who could benefit most from this information.

Returning to the participation of the ordinary housewife in the television news, the Dudley item provides another example of how ordinary women collaborated with the news teams in reports discussing unacceptable living conditions. The opening shot revealed a street sign reading Copse Road, followed by a view of a snowy winter street, one truck was parked in the street but no other vehicles were visible. The camera then turned to one house and cut to an interior shot. The cameras followed a woman in an apron as she walked up the stairs. At the top of the stairs a hallway window was shown with a large crack in the wall beneath the window. The woman ran her hand over the crack then looked up to the roof, the camera followed her gaze another crack was visible running from the top left hand corner of the window to the ceiling. The camera then turned back to the woman. She looked worried and cast her gaze downwards bringing her hand to her mouth as if chewing her nails, the item then faded out. The short item had been neatly constructed using the actions of the housewife to visually demonstrate the problems with her new council house.

The presence of the housewife rather than the reporter may have been because this was an item lower down the news hierarchy, therefore not warranting a reporter to accompany the film crew and necessitating the housewife to step into her role of demonstrator. This may have been filmed by a professional Birmingham Film company who ATV used in the first years of their contract. However by 1959 Kit Plant was

reporting a fully operational Midlands Film crew in the *TV Times*.⁵⁴ Comparing the item with the home interiors promoted in the news stories filmed at the Ideal Home Exhibition, mentioned above, very similar shots and gestures were used in both pieces of film. However, where the female reporter was the demonstrator of ‘affluent living’, the working-class housewife was used in the uneasy address of the persistence of poverty.

Later items included interviews with ordinary housewives. Although the phrase ‘problem families’ was prevalent in other media it was not used until the 1970s in the *Midlands News*. However some of the social issues of life in new council flats were discussed. *Noise in Council Flats* (July 1965) is of interest in particular, because of what it suggests about changing relationships between generations at this time.⁵⁵ The opening shot showed children playing, some on bikes and washing hanging out in a yard outside the block of flats. The camera panned up to the reporter standing on the first storey balcony: ‘The problem of noise is always cropping up these days and here in these council flats in Smethwick the trouble is the natural hubbub of high spirits of children...in the late afternoon and in the evenings children dashing around shouting, playing, crying generally having a jolly good time, is an acute problem indeed for people who want a bit of peace and quiet’. He then went on to explain how some tenants of the Smethwick flats had written to the housing manager and committee with the suggestion that the flats be zoned into quiet zones for families without children ‘to live in peace and quiet’, while families would all be zoned together. It was hoped this might cut down on complaints about noise.

⁵⁴ ‘Midland Montage’, *TV Times* [Midland Edition], (30 Aug 1959), pp. 14-15.

⁵⁵ *Noise in Council Flats* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 19071965], (ATV, first broadcast 19 July 1965), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-19071965-noise-in-council-flats/MediaEntry/1585.html> [accessed 27 May 2013].

The reporter then walked away from the balcony and knocked on a door a woman answered: ‘Morning Mrs Hayes, what do you think of this idea of segregating the flats into childless zones and people with children?’ She replied: ‘Well I agree really, because you know most people have children it’s only natural and the older people they’ve worked all their lives for some peace and comfort and it’s only fair that they have that.’ Mrs Hayes went on to explain that there was a playground for children but it was not large enough, because, in her opinion, the flats had not been planned properly. She suggested ‘They should have had one in the centre where the parents could watch from the windows what they’re doing.’ The council estate, unlike the suburb moved a more complex demographic of people into new forms of housing. Therefore while the retired residents now expected to escape the noise of the city, they were presented with the same inter-generational activities as the old city-centre terraces. As Roberts’ oral histories have suggested, Richard Hoggart’s view of the ‘young’ grandmother of the 1950s as ‘the pivot of the home’ was contested by a new model of grandmothering, a generation who expected to retire in peace, and not to look after their grandchildren.⁵⁶ This news story provides an insight into how the expectations of the housewife were differentiated by generation. Not just daughters expecting to live different lives from their mothers, but mothers expecting a different kind of retirement.

Thus the housewife was also at times used to uneasily acknowledge the barriers to affluent living that persisted for working-class Midlanders. The role of responsible consumer has been described by some historians as a model of citizenship for women in post-war Britain. However older models of housewifely citizenship were also apparent in the guise of the housewife as protector of the interests of children. The regional news recorded ten items featuring protests by housewives, largely focused on

⁵⁶ Roberts, *Women and Families*, p. 136.

the building of new roads and their proximity to schools. While it is difficult to identify exactly the class dynamics in these items they are comparable to earlier examples of the housewives protest led by middle class women. However, two items in January 1967 reported on a protest by a group of women at the closure of their hostel, rendering them and their children homeless. The items appeared mid-way in the news hierarchy and did not include interviews.

The first item showed the mothers with their children protesting outside the Birmingham council offices at Bush House.⁵⁷ Their placards referenced the Ken Loach film *Cathy Come Home*, reading: ‘Cathy Come Home. Why is dad not with me and my mum. Why? Why? Why?’ The second news item on the subject broadcast one night later showed three mothers camped outside Bush House overnight. These women were using the role of the housewife as protector of the home and children to build their protest at being made homeless. Although the placards they carried referenced their partners and fathers of their children, the men did not appear on screen; the housewife, who had lost her home was in this case the central agent of protest. These tentative appearances of working-class housewives assisted in the development of the relationship between working-class housewives and the local television news. The brevity of appearances of working-class housewives experiencing poverty rather than affluence reflect the difficulty of a commercial television service had dealing with these issues; they were reported but not in a sustained and engaged manner. The centrality of working class women to these news items, however brief, shows the potential for

⁵⁷ *Protests again closure of Birmingham hostel in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 24011967], (ATV, first broadcast 24 January 1967), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-24011967-protests-again-closure-of-birmingham-hostel/MediaEntry/10055.html>.

television to engage with a broad social demographic when discussing these issues, while maintaining the ‘women’s interest’ focus.

‘The good working mother’

Dolly Smith Wilson identified the construction of the ‘good working mother’ as a response to criticisms of working mothers in the context of child deprivation theory and assumed connections between increasing numbers of married women in the workforce and rates of juvenile delinquency.⁵⁸ There were no stories in the regional television news collection that covered juvenile delinquents or latch key children. Although there was no active promotion of women’s rights issues either, the lack of negative stories on working women and mothers is notable. What was considered newsworthy were stories of mothers leaving the home for education or work, such as *34 year old mother taking degree* (May 1964).⁵⁹ The catalogue information states that she was taking a BA at Keele University, but as the item is mute in its archived form no further details have been recovered. This suggests that what made this item newsworthy was a mother leaving the house. The images in the item support this. Filmed entirely at the front door of her house three boys in school uniform emerge and start their journey down the street, the mother, carrying a leather satchel follows with a small girl. The mother then stops to fasten the girls coat before seeing her off at the front gate. The mother then turns, but instead of going back into the house continues past the front door and down the street in the opposite direction, presumably to signify that she too was off to ‘school’.

⁵⁸ Smith Wilson, ‘A New Look at the Affluent Worker’, pp. 206-229.

⁵⁹ *34 year old mother taking degree* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 17051965], (ATV, first broadcast 17 May 1965), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-17051965-34-year-old-mother-taking-degree/MediaEntry/8176.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

This theme was also apparent elsewhere in the collection. The regional news featured a number of recruitment drives, which aimed to attract mothers back to work as nurses and teachers. These are very revealing of contemporary perspectives on working mothers. The earliest example of recruitment drives promoted on the regional television news showed nurses handing out flyers at a local cinema in 1958. The promotion also featured images of two nurses caring for a patient in a mocked-up ward.⁶⁰ The recruitment drive was broadcast two months before the hugely successful *South Pacific* was released, and therefore does not appear to be connected with a specific film where nurses played central characters. The connection appeared to be that the cinema, as a popular venue for respectable female leisure, could be used as a recruiting ground. A later example broadcast in October 1963 was much more explicitly focused on married women and was filmed in a hospital featuring nurses attending a ‘refresher course’.⁶¹ It is not possible to know whether the voiceover distinguished between mothers with young children and mothers with grown up children, who tended to be regarded as ‘free’ to go back to work. This is the only item which specifically addressed and featured returning nurses in uniform. Two other items in the collection reported a nurse shortage in Birmingham in 1965 and fashion shows for nurses.⁶² Thus the framing of

⁶⁰ *Nurses at the Gaumont cinema* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 17021958], (ATV, first broadcast 17 February 1958), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-17021958-nurses-at-the-gaumont-cinema/MediaEntry/2382.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁶¹ *Nurses attending refresher courses* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 16101963], (ATV, first broadcast 16 October 1963), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-16101963-nurses-attending-refresher-courses/MediaEntry/6515.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁶² *Nurse shortage in Birmingham* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 08011965], (ATV, first broadcast 8 January 1965), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-08011965-nurse-shortage-in-birmingham/MediaEntry/7772.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Fashion parade for nurses* in *ATV Today* [online video, ID: 23121965], (ATV, first broadcast 23 December 1965), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-23121965-fashion-parade-for-nurses/MediaEntry/29099.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

nurses by ATV oscillated between presenting nursing as a duty for women and an opportunity to express their femininity through their choice of career.

Encouraging married women to train as teachers was also featured in the regional news. An ATV Today report from February 1967 was indicative of the rhetoric used to encourage mothers back to the workplace.⁶³ The item begins with an establishing shot of the North Berkshire Further Education College, followed by an interior shot of the backs of women sitting in rows of individual desks facing the blackboard. They were addressed by a woman at the front of the class, who gave the following speech:

Well now, we've had a lot of lively talk about the role of the twentieth century woman and what her position ought to be. But let's try and look at this the way a social psychologist looks at it. Let's imagine this is the central focal position of twentieth century woman (she drew a small circle on the black board). Now she has lots of different sectors in her role, let's imagine it's like this (she drew a larger circle around the smaller one and divided it into sections like a pie chart). As a wife her role is defined for her by her husband. As a mother her role is defined for her by her children, but what if she wants to have another role outside in the world, what if she ought to have another role outside in the world, who defines this for her? Well she has to look to various elements in society to tell her what she ought to be and how she ought to be behaving in the outside world. One

⁶³ *Teacher training* in *ATV Today* [online video, ID:23121965], (ATV, first broadcast 7 February 1967), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-23121965-fashion-parade-for-nurses/MediaEntry/29099.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

of the new things that helps to define for a woman a new kind of role in modern life and where she's needed is the demand and the need for woman power.⁶⁴

The report then cut to an interview with David Lloyd and a (male) representative from the college. They discussed some of the challenges of women taking up teacher training in their thirties. They focused on the difficulties of women coming from 'the kitchen sink' back into study, and balancing work with their responsibilities to their husbands and children. The college representative assured Lloyd that the women had enjoyed the course and there had been no complaints from their husbands. The item closed by returning to the teacher training classroom with the message from the tutor: 'You're becoming something that society needs and as we've just been saying you're answering a need for yourselves as well because you're becoming something more than you were before.'⁶⁵

Comparing the nursing items with those of the returning teachers, it is possible to identify a change in the discursive strategies surrounding female recruitment drives. In the ATV regional news collection they moved from requiring women to enter the labour force out of a sense of duty to a more psychologically informed discussion of creating a fulfilled modern woman, by adding paid employment to her list of roles. The presentation of the married working women, and her promotion as the picture of twentieth century woman, is most visible in the news items featuring female private secretaries. As Rosemary Pringle has demonstrated it has been easier to define the

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

secretary by 'what she *is*', rather than 'what she *does*'.⁶⁶ It is perhaps the regional news items featuring secretaries that resonate most with the discourse surrounding the good working mother and offered the most potential for self-fashioning for the female viewer.

Previously excluded from the role of private secretary, women began to be recruited to this position in the 1930s.⁶⁷ It became an important marker of differentiation between the working-class typist and the middle-class secretary and also positioned the personal secretary as the ultimate in female ambition and achievement in the workplace. An item from *Pathetone Weekly* (1932) featured Katherine Kramer discussing her accolade as *The Perfect Secretary*:

I think the ideal secretary should take pride in her work and her appearance. She must be efficient, cheerful and sympathetic but not excessively so. She must remind her employer of the many details that come up during the day and be able to take care of most of them herself. If her boss has an attack of the blues she must cheer him up, but this does not mean she must peck him on the cheek or holding his hand. Friendship is necessary but familiarity is taboo. I'm not in favour of dates with my employer such as lunch and dinner, but I'm not opposed to dates in general, I think three or four dates a week help to break the monotony. A secretary's life after working hours should be

⁶⁶ Pringle, *Secretaries Talk*, p. 2.

⁶⁷ Delphine Gardey, 'Mechanizing writing and photographing the word: tuopias, office work, and histories of gender and technology', *History and Technology: An International Journal*, 17:4 (2001), p. 331.

like that of any other well bred girl. As for necking I do not approve, but sometimes there comes a time, a place and a boy.⁶⁸

The role of secretary became increasingly important for women in the 1950s and 1960s, replacing domestic labour and factory work as the most important occupation for women by the early 1970s.⁶⁹ What is noticeable in Kramer's description of her work in the 1930s is the prominence of the secretary's emotional labour in relation to her boss. The secretary was required to be a proficient emotional labourer; to be able to understand the work of her boss, and support his creative work by removing the mundane details from his schedule. She had to anticipate his moods while remaining ultimately subordinate to his authority. This resonates with ideas of companionate marriage and the increasing emphasis on the housewife's emotional labour; her responsibility to her children and husbands emotional well being in the 1950s. Thus the formations of feminine ideals in the workplace and their dialogic relationship with the construction of the housewife, can perhaps add nuance to understandings of women's changing status in the home beyond women's identity as consumers.

Models of emotional labour have been analysed from the perspective of the nurse, teacher, air hostess, but the ideas shaping 'the perfect secretary' link the emotional labour of the good working mother with trends in women's employment. What has been defined as *The Rise of Professional Society* meant that 'professional management' became increasingly influential in post-war businesses. In his comparison of images of wives and secretaries Roper notes that:

⁶⁸ *The Perfect Secretary* [online video, ID: 1044.25], (British Pathé, first broadcast 1932), <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/the-perfect-secretary/query/perfect+secretary> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁶⁹ Joseph, *Women at Work*.

It was the work of wives in keeping house and taking the main responsibility for child-rearing that enabled men to devote themselves whole-heartedly to career. Similarly, as C W Mills noted, the organization man expected his secretary to do ‘the house work of his business’, leaving him free to immerse himself in the creative work of management. The secondary nature of the tasks done by wives and secretaries, and their limited control over when and where that work was done, reflect their lack of social power. However, this picture of inequality defined in terms of the different tasks that women and men perform does not tell the whole story. It ignores the ‘emotional work done by secretaries and [wives]. The social subordination of such women is linked to the emotional character of their relations with men. In a study of flight attendants called *The Managed Heart*, Arlie Hochschild defines emotional labour as the manipulation of one’s own and others’ emotions in order to create an atmosphere of contentment.⁷⁰

The emotional labour of the secretary was a topic of discussion visible in the regional news. In an item from 1959 promoting a new training course for private secretaries at the Mid Warwickshire College in Leamington Spa, Leslie Dunn described the personal secretary as a ‘luxury’ of the executive.⁷¹ He posed the question: ‘You are all experienced secretaries or short hand typist so what additional things do you learn in

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 161-2.

⁷¹ *The perfect secretary in Midland Montage* [online video, ID:17091959], (ATV, first broadcast 17 September 1959), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midland-montage-17091959-the-perfect-secretary/MediaEntry/36545.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

this private secretaries courses?’ to a group of women attending the course. The first woman responded: ‘Well of course as a private secretary you do undertake work at a different level, you must be able to take full control of the office and the admin of your employer, deal with personal as well as business matters and in fact be his right hand man’. This response that reflected the ideals of companionate marriage as discussed in the British Medical Associations guide to *Getting Married* (1967), where one male doctor wrote:

A good wife will comfort him and help him to sort out the priorities of the predicament. She will give him backbone and spirit again. She will steel him and give him backbone and spirit again. She will steel him and give him back his confidence and help him to reach a right and proper decision. One of the aims of marriage should be to create and develop a relationship which a situation like this needs and demands.⁷²

Thus the parallels between the companionate wife and private secretary are in evidence in the contemporary discursive constructions of their roles. While the influence of domestic ideology on the secretary has been considered in terms of her position as ‘office wife’, it has not been considered to what extent the increasing participation of women in office work may have influenced the growing emphasis on their emotional labour at home and the infringement on their authority as ‘boss of the house’. The regional television news material suggests that the erosion of separate spheres of authority for women and men, based on home and work respectively, was shaped not only by moves to suburbia and a home-centred leisure time, but also women’s changing

⁷² Dr Robert Simpson, ‘Wife and comforter’, *Getting Married* (A Family Doctor Publication by The British Medical Association, 1967), p. 91.

roles in the workplace. The nurse, teacher and secretary were increasingly framed as a means for women to fashion themselves with a modern femininity that would equally efficiently serve them well in the home and the workplace.

This is perhaps most evident in the news item *Fastest Typist Competition Held in Lewis's Store* (1959), where a department store hosted a competition to win a typewriter.⁷³ A broad age range of women were seen, with multiple close-up shots of their fingers moving speedily and efficiently over the typewriter keys. As oral testimony from women working as secretaries has suggested, typing was increasingly associated with feminine skills in the mid-twentieth century, as described by one secretary interviewed by Pringle: 'typing is seen as something every woman can do-like washing up.'⁷⁴ This was perhaps particularly potent for women who had worked in typing pools, the lowest rung of office hierarchy. The staging of this event in a department store where men and women purchased personal items for themselves and their homes also connects the skill of typing with feminine expression. The idea that women may have wanted to own a typewriter, not only for work, but so that they could efficiently administer their homes, further blurs the boundaries between home and work for women.

The age of the women featured in the news item was also significant. Although it is not possible to know their exact age and marital status, none of the women were recent school leavers and given the low age of first marriage at this time it is quite conceivable that at least some of them were married and had children. In her work on women's

⁷³ The title is repeated here as it appears in the MACE catalogue, *Fastest typist competition held in Lewis's store* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 29101959], (ATV, first broadcast 29 October 1959), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-29101959-fastest-typist-competition-held-in-lewiss-store/MediaEntry/3381.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁷⁴ Pringle, *Secretaries Talk*, p. 3.

secretarial and clerical work Rosemary Crompton has argued that young women were recruited to carry out routine and low skilled desk work, while older women have been increasingly employed to do lower- level administration and ‘people work’.⁷⁵ The age of the women also allowed them to firmly reject any over familiar relationship between the secretary and her boss, the second women interview simply stated: ‘if one’s attitude is quite plain it never occurs.’ As Micheal Roper has suggested, in his interviews with British executives the discourse of ‘office wife’ as a maternal and nurturing figure was far more prevalent than that of the sexy secretary, which was perhaps more dominant in cultural representations and, as suggested in the previous chapter, within the media industry itself.

In a news item based on the *Secretaries conference at PERA* (1964) the private secretary was discussed as a progressive role for women in the modern office.⁷⁶ The reporter asked the male manager: ‘Mr Morgan why has the private secretary’s job become so vital over the last few years?’ Mr Morgan replied: ‘Well here we serve about 1800 factories, we try to, in every possible way to raise efficiency and we’ve become perfectly well aware therefore that in industry the executive is under continually growing pressures it is essential therefore that he should receive all the help he possibly can in raising his own efficiency and excluding from his work the time consuming minutiae which can absorb so much of his energy.’⁷⁷ While accounts of women’s emotional labour usually recognised their invisibility, this statement was perhaps a brief acknowledgement of these skills. While these reports were not based in the home they

⁷⁵ Crompton, ‘The feminisation of the clerical labour force’, p. 132.

⁷⁶ *Secretaries conference at PERA* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 10061964], (ATV, first broadcast 10 June 1964), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-10061964-secretaries-conference-at-pera/MediaEntry/7175.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁷⁷ Ibid.

reveal an feminine ideal that made use of technology, dress and emotional intelligence to support a husband/boss so that he was free to make strategic decisions about the household/workplace. The emotional labour of the secretary was again a frequent reference point in the interview with the women attending the conference, one suggested: 'I think a secretary should be cool and helpful and not get ruffled when the boss sometimes gets a bit het up over his problems and I think it helps him then.'⁷⁸

The news teams at times based their discussion of secretaries and their bosses purely around Vox Pops rather than a specific event. In the 1967 item *Secretaries and their bosses* women were asked if they liked their bosses to be domineering.⁷⁹ While one woman responded that she liked her domineering boss, most of the Vox Pop respondents appeared confused by the question, suggesting that it did not really address something that resonated with women working in Midland offices. In this case the discussion of secretaries and their bosses can be understood as a discussion of the relationships between men and women more generally, but in a framework that rendered the item newsworthy because of its connection to the workplace rather than the home. Television's role as a medium responsive to immediate and episodic contemporary concerns means that it can be used to identify emerging undercurrents within contemporary social commentary which have given shape to social change. Thus the construction of the 'good working mother' may well have been influenced by the changing relationships between men and women in the office. Further research into women's emotional labour across the home and workplace and in particular how the

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ *Secretaries and their bosses* in *ATV Today* [online video, ID: 19041967], (ATV, first broadcast 19 April 1967), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-19041967-secretaries-and-their-bosses/MediaEntry/33214.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

femininity of the housewife was shaped by her paid employment as well as her domestic role would productively illuminate these issues.

Summary

The diverse appearances of the 'housewife', across the regional news collection provide an insight into the changing significance of domesticity in women's lives during the 1950s and 1960s. The housewife did not appear as a distinctly regional character, instead she appeared as local examples of national trends, such as the rise of supermarkets, the persistence of housing problems and the recruitment of women into nursing and teaching. By looking at, as well as through, the three ideal-types of mid-century domesticity, a picture of a far less acquiescent '1950s housewife' is revealed compared to existing portrayals in women's history. Previous debates have tended to focus on the effects of consumer culture and how the 'ordinary' housewife expressed agency through her modern home, but this study shows how modern domesticity and femininity were visible in the social commentary of the regional television news.

Commercial elements of the housewife's role were certainly present in the evidence presented here from the ATV regional news collection, 'Mrs Consumer' was visualised in the regional news in comparable terms to her counterparts in television advertising, although this was limited to instructional rather than emotive forms of promotion. These kinds of news stories resonate with the status of ATV as a commercial television company, but they represent only one aspect of the housewife's participation in the regional news programmes. The civic-minded 'professional housewife' of the interwar period was uneasily translated into the television age. Issues surrounding housing shortages and the poor quality of available housing were clearly presented as a realm of 'women's interest' but issues of poverty relevant to working-class women were

uneasily addressed, especially in the 1950s material. The news teams were far more comfortable in commenting on Midlanders' escape from poverty, rather than its persistence. Future research would seek to compare this with BBC material, to establish whether the public service ethos of the BBC was better equipped to address the civic aspect of the 'professional housewives'' identity and whether working-class housewives were addressed as citizens on equal terms with middle-class housewives.

The 'good working mother' was the type of 'housewife' given the most prominent space in the news agenda and was the most likely to be interviewed. The regional news was used as a recruitment tool and focused on feminised areas of employment, particularly nursing and teaching. These long-standing areas of female professionalism were repackaged to fit a modern femininity, to allow women to be 'more' than housewives and mothers, while also remaining both. The collection also provides insight into the reconfiguring of the clerical labour force in the 1950s and 1960s. This suggests that rather than the home as women's sphere of work, 'women's work' was more generally being assigned as doing the emotional labour, providing practical and psychological support and doing administrative duties for others in both the home and the workplace, leaving men (and children) free to do their 'real' work.

Drawing these facets together provides a view not only of contested domesticity, but renders visible a more rapid pace of change in women's lives than has hitherto been recognised. The evidence of oral histories has stressed historical continuity in women's lives through the authority of the male breadwinner and home-centeredness, however, this chapter shows significant signs of departure from this view of mid-century life. 'Housewives' were productively engaged in the challenges of combining home and work, inviting television cameras into their homes, and taking to the streets to make visible their social concerns in public. They were pushing the boundaries of domesticity

and engaging in protest in ways that are more usually attributed to a later generation. In addition, the material in the regional news collection provides a new perspective on the older housewife of the 1950s and 1960s, who was actualising a distinct set of aspirations for her later years in terms of paid work and a child-free home.

The fashioning of a femininity that could transcend the home and workplace appeared important to women who were attempting to combine roles as wives, mothers and workers. This insight is carried forward into the next chapter which focuses on news stories where women were filmed in uniform and/or at their workplaces. The ambiguity surrounding the place of domesticity and paid employment in these women's lives remains in view, however the female worker is far more regionally located than the housewife, visualised in a complex blending of popular and vernacular visual references.

Chapter Six

Women's dual role: the cultural production of the 'working woman'

Chapter five discussed how the 'housewife', her femininity and civic interests were framed as newsworthy and made visible in the regional television news. This chapter moves on to examine the participation of the 'working woman' on screen. In describing the subject of this chapter as the 'working woman', I refer to women who were filmed in uniform or at their place of employment. However, in doing so I do not intend to imply that chapters five and six provide an analysis of two distinct groups of mid-twentieth century women, especially when combining paid work with domestic work was becoming increasingly common for women in the region. Rather, the division of the material into the respective chapters is based upon how women were made visible in the regional news programmes, indeed even though the women featured in this chapter were in uniform or at work their -potential- domestic responsibilities remained very much in the frame. Therefore the focus of this chapter is women's dual role. I use this term firstly, to describe how ATV sought the participation of women who were in paid employment on screen, but often addressed them in the arising vox pops and interviews as consumers rather than workers. It also reflects the contemporary definition of the term as posited by sociologists Myrdal and Klein who promoted the dual role as an *opportunity* for women to 'fuse' their two interests in 'Home and Work', in their words, 'into one harmonious whole'¹.

The dual role was a discursive strategy that was not only used by sociologists and in government policy documents, but appeared in women's memories of their working

¹ Myrdal and Klein, *Women's Two Roles*, xvi-xvii.

lives. Penny Summerfield identified the dual role as a discursive strategy amongst a specific group of her interviewees:

The possibility of combining a traditional feminine domestic role with paid work, couched discursively in the 1950s in the positive terms of the dual role rather than the negative ones of the double burden, was a reference point for all those who recalled their work histories in terms of opportunity.²

Summerfield goes on to state that an element of companionate marriage was necessary to women fulfilling a dual role, whether this meant the ‘passive acceptance’ or ‘active assistance’ of their husbands. However, Summerfield also noted the instability of the dual role. Without the positive reinforcement that accompanied the discourse in the 1950s and 1960s it easily descended into the ‘double burden’ and the discourse of marginalisation.³ Summerfield’s oral history research has revealed that the dual role had significance beyond the confines of scholarly discussion, appearing in the memories of her interviewees. Likewise, this chapter examines the extent to which the dual role as an opportunity featured in the visualisation of the working-class women featured in the regional television news.

The issue of class was often side stepped in the 1950s and 1960s by suggestions that going ‘out to work’ part-time was an opportunity for women to socialise and leave their domestic work for a few hours.⁴ Thus the sacrifice of leisure and relaxation time at home was compensated for by attributing elements of pleasure to women’s paid work.

² Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives: Discourses and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 237.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 237-238.

⁴ Bruley, *Women in Britain*, pp. 123-125.

This was not only apparent in the promotion of the dual role for married women, but also the young (potentially married) woman. As Stephanie Spencer's work has demonstrated, career novels for girls in the 1950s provided: 'a space where a schoolgirl could transform herself into a poised, well-coiffeured, self confident woman'.⁵ Spencer's work also points to the visual dynamic that was implicit in the dual role discourse. The effects of work on a women's ability to maintain a feminine appearance continued to be a point of discussion and even anxiety in some areas of social commentary in the twentieth century. Thus the extent to which the working woman was not only visible, but framed as ordinary in the regional television news provides the starting point for the analysis of this chapter.

In adding the visual dynamic to historical analysis of the dual role by using television news film the status of the female body as the 'primary public symbol of eroticism' in the twentieth century must also be considered.⁶ Female workers had a far more fluid participation across the news hierarchy than their male counterparts. Working women did appear in 'hard' news stories on industrial action (as will be examined in chapter seven), but unlike their male counterparts they also appeared in 'soft' news items. In contrast, when men appeared in 'soft' news items they were clearly at leisure, rather than at work.⁷ This framed her as an equivocal character across the news agenda,

⁵ Spencer, 'Women's dilemmas in postwar Britain', p. 342.

⁶ Meyerowitz, 'Women, cheesecake, and borderline material', p. 9.

⁷ *Little Men in Midland Montage* [online video, ID: 04061959], (ATV, first broadcast 4 June 1959), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midland-montage-04061959-little-men/MediaEntry/36334.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Model Crane in Midland Montage* [online video, ID: 01101959], (ATV, first broadcast 1 October 1959), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midland-montage-01101959-model-crane/MediaEntry/36553.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Model Steam Engine at Wednesfield in Midlands News* [online video, ID:03061965], (ATV, first broadcast 3 June 1965), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-03061965-model-steam-engine-at-wednesfield/MediaEntry/8222.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

especially in the guise of the female factory worker, the working woman was a readily identifiable and available source of 'female opinion'. I argue that this ultimately provided a route into social commentary for working-class women that was not apparent in national news programmes or 'women's interest' media. The appearances of working women in the regional television news were also distinct from the BBC's programming for women, which were led by professional middle class women with the involvement of working class women limited to receiving instruction.⁸

The fascination with the female worker on screen and the media at large was by no means a new or solely televisual phenomenon. Deborah Valenze's study *The First Industrial Woman* demonstrates how the visibility of the factory girl led to a wealth of commentary on her moral welfare and her potential to disturb the social order.⁹ She has commented that '[t]hough not all working women were factory workers, factory workers influenced all working women', since their visibility in public, on the streets and in social commentary, meant they were of central importance to the shaping of public opinion of working women.¹⁰

Valenze's comments are based on her analysis of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the 'factory age', but the idea of the female factory worker as representation of 'every woman worker' can be traced into the twentieth century. Likewise Arthur Marwick has argued that the large amounts of news film and propaganda dedicated to the working woman was revealing of women's novelty status in many workplaces.¹¹ In the regional television news the female factory worker

⁸ Irwin, 'What Women Want on Television'.

⁹ Deborah Valenze, *The First Industrial Woman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 98-97.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.98.

¹¹ Marwick, *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century*, p. 160.

remained highly visible. She was not presented as a threat to social order, but remained at the centre of social commentary. Neither was she a novelty as such, but the ‘present tense’ value of the television news meant that she was usually elaborately framed to provide her with newsworthiness. A limited iconography of the female worker meant that frames, poses and gestures were borrowed from elsewhere in popular visual culture. This chapter begins by analysing how the representational framework of the ‘woman pioneer’ used in fin de siècle print media and cinema newsreel was also apparent in the regional television news, long after women ceased to be a novelty in the workplace. The second section of the chapter moves to analyse how imagery of the woman at work, primarily the female factory worker, was fused with popular visual culture in news stories featuring women in paid employment in the regional television news. The third and final section of this chapter considers the extent to which the regional television news provided an opportunity for white working-class woman to participate as social commentators, in contrast to middle-class and ethnic minority women.

The woman pioneer

The woman pioneer was a form of representation that pertained to document female firsts. It has been suggested that this originated out of a desire to see what the ‘New Woman’ of the fin de siècle looked like.¹² Despina Stratigakos’ analysis of German print media suggests that although ‘women pioneers’ were praised for their adventurous undertakings this was often tempered with criticism that highlighted the risks that their unfeminine professions posed to the female body. These women also tended to be

¹² Despina Stratigakos, ‘Female firsts: media representations of pioneering and adventurous women in early twentieth century’, in Elizabeth Otto and Vanessa Rocco (eds.), *The New Woman International: Representations in Photography and Film From the 1870s Through the 1960s* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2011), p. 64.

described as exceptional, or in more derogatory terms ‘unnatural’, rather than being promoted as female role models. Stratigakos argues that the text that accompanied the images of the female pioneer often did not quite fit, since the text tended to point out the dangers facing the woman pioneer, while the image showed the woman comfortable with her work.¹³ This form of presentation was also present in the cinemagazine *Eve’s Film Review* produced by Pathé between 1921 and 1933. The magazine showed a combination of ‘ordinary women doing ordinary jobs’ and reels titled *Odd Jobs for Eve*. Although *Odd Jobs for Eve* showed women as fire-fighters and aviators it ended with a sequence that advocated the greatest job for women was to be a mother.¹⁴ This representational framework indicates the difficulty of visualising the female body at work in visual culture, because of the challenge it presented to the feminine pose.

The longevity of the woman pioneer as a representational strategy for the female worker is evident in the frequency with which it was present in the regional television news collection. Five inserts broadcast between 1956 and 1968 can be identified distinctly within the category of woman pioneer with a further twelve broadcast in the 1970s. They were *Female Level Crossing Keeper* (1957), *Woman demolition worker* (1962), *Female Barber* (1968), *First Female air Traffic Controller* (1968) and *First all Woman Police Patrol* (1967). There were also items which did not feature the career of a particular woman but questioned the entry of women into certain industries, such as a vox pop item from 1965 which asked ‘should women be bus drivers?’¹⁵ The dates of

¹³ Ibid., pp. 64-64.

¹⁴ Hammerton, *For Ladies Only?*, pp. 92-95.

¹⁵ *Vox pops: female bus drivers* in *ATV Today* [online video, ID: 12071965], (ATV, first broadcast 12 July 1965), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-12071965-vox-pops-female-bus-drivers/MediaEntry/1400.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

these items show how the woman pioneer format remained useful to the television production teams even though they did not document world firsts. The need to generate stories with an element of newness and novelty, meant any women working in industries which were not female dominated could have pioneering qualities applied to them.

Female Level Crossing Keeper was broadcast as part of the *Midlands News* bulletin in 1957 and featured a woman from Hixton, Staffordshire.¹⁶ The establishing shot showed the level crossing keeper in her patterned apron hanging washing on the line. The following shot showed her opening the crossing gates and changing the signal to allow the train through. The final shot showed her closing the gates. The representational strategy moved from ‘typical’ shot of a women doing to domestic work, to the ‘novelty’ of a woman operating the level crossing. Wearing her apron throughout, this provided an example of a women pioneer who was domesticated in the television news, the novelty of her paid work was reconciled with her domestic work by juxtaposing images of her in her domestic uniform doing work outside domestic tasks. In the moving images the time women split between work and home and the locus of women’s skill was condensed into a few shots, or a change of camera angle. Compared to the cinema newsreels there was far less emphasis on the feminine glamour of the woman pioneers in the ATV regional television news. It is suggestive of how the regional television news tended to show how women’s paid employment fitted into the patterns of everyday life, rather than emphasising the working woman as a potential social problem.

¹⁶ *Female level crossing keeper* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 30011957], (ATV, first broadcast 30 January 1957), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-30011957-female-level-crossing-keeper/MediaEntry/1802.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

The item featuring a woman demolition worker in Nuneaton in 1962 was more typical of ATV's approach to women pioneer stories, than the female level crossing keeper (see Figure 16).¹⁷ The demolition worker, Dorothy, was framed leaning out of the back of her digger, juxtaposing the female body with masculine working environments. She appeared relaxed both in her digger and on camera. This item provided the reporter, Tim Downes, with the chance to initiate some topical commentary on women's place in society. In particular, Dorothy said that her male colleagues had no problem accepting her as a 'foreman'. In their discussion of women's employment in the construction industry Linda Clarke and Christine Wall show that that the period between World War Two and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) was one of decline for women. Only 1,066 women were working in the industry according to the census returns of 1971.¹⁸ Clarke and Wall also suggest that the small numbers of women who were employed in the industry had usually not been through apprenticeships, which caused tensions with the craft unions.¹⁹ In the same census only two single women and one married woman were recorded as working in construction in Warwickshire, although it cannot be confirmed that Dorothy was one of these three women.²⁰ Thus Dorothy's position was perhaps more controversial than her relaxed pose and calm responses reveal. For some members of the television audience this 'soft' news item could have held significant political charge. The declining numbers of women in the industry also suggests that the news

¹⁷ *Woman demolition worker in Nuneaton in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 05091962], (ATV, first broadcast 5 September 1962), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-05091962-woman-demolition-worker-nuneaton/MediaEntry/5453.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

¹⁸ Linda Clarke and Christine Wall, 'Skilled versus qualified labour: the exclusion of women from the construction industry', in Mary Davis (ed.), *Class and Gender in British Labour History: Renewing the Debate (or Starting it?)* (Pontypool: Merlin, 2011), p. 106.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

²⁰ General Register Office, *Census 1971: England and Wales, Economic Activity County Leaflet, Warwickshire, Table 1 Occupation by status by area of usual residence and sex* (London: HMSO, 1971) p. 2.

teams were not drawn to the story because it appeared to represent growing numbers of women in this type of work, but instead for the sheer novelty element.



Figure 16 *Midlands News* still, Tim Downes interviews demolition worker Dorothy, Nuneaton, September 1962

In 1967 a news item was broadcast under the title *First all Women Police Patrol*.²¹ The item was thirty seconds long and did not contain interviews with the women on patrol, instead the piece focused on the women patrolling the M25 in their police car. The film of a woman in uniform at the wheel provided the basis for the news item. A very similar item had appeared one month previously on WPC's in Staffordshire receiving

²¹ *First all Woman Police Patrol* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 13111967], (ATV, first broadcast 3 November 1967), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-13111967-first-all-women-police-patrol/MediaEntry/11142.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

police cars.²² Thus like all woman pioneer stories the piece focused on images of a female body transgressing into areas associated with masculine skill, in this case driving. This representational strategy is comparable to the picturing of police women in the local print media. In 1974 two police women from Leicester were featured in the *Marilyn Kay Writes* column in the *Leicester Mercury*. The caption above their photo read ‘Glamour on the beat’ and described the ‘new open neck blouse’ and ‘hostess style hat’ part of the new WPC uniforms.²³ Thus like the television news footage images of a woman in uniform could be ascribed news value. The television news items reveal how the police woman’s work continued to be gendered, as well as their gender being integral to the media’s interest in them, rather than the work they carried out. An item broadcast in 1972 emphasised the ‘feminine qualities’ of WPC’s and the ‘special responsibility’ of the WPC ‘the welfare of women and children’.²⁴ The competence of the women filmed and interviewed appears to diffuse the news teams attempts to mediate their screen performances for novelty value. This provides an example of how even in the most established of media formulae, filming required an exchange between the news teams and their subjects, opening up a gap between the agency of the women featured on film and the discursive frameworks used to define their work in the spoken commentary. This leaves room to evaluate the echoes of their social agency in these media set pieces.

²² Staffordshire Police Women in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 12101967], (ATV, first broadcast 12 October 1967), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-12101967-staffordshire-police-women/MediaEntry/11088.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

²³ Marilyn Kay, ‘Glamour on the beat’, *Leicester Mercury* (31 July 1974).

²⁴ *Report on the work of the police woman* in *ATV Today* [online video, ID: 03041972], (ATV, first broadcast 3 April 1972), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-03041972-report-on-the-work-of-the-police-woman/MediaEntry/17222.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

This is most apparent in the news item *Female Barber* 1968.²⁵ Throughout the news item the reporter, Barri Haynes, was having his hair cut by a female barber (her name is unknown). She discussed her background and training in women's hairdressing and how she came to work at, and subsequently became the proprietor of, Bubbles Gents Hairdressers in Bromyard. The interview was largely framed around the relationship the female barber had with her male clients, discussing whether they trusted in her ability and could engage with her socially. She replied that as well as talking to her about farming and football, she also found men confided in her about their relationships and asked her for styling tips. In line with the piece featuring Dorothy the demolition worker in Nuneaton, this item allowed a local person from an area of the region that was rarely featured in the news agenda to make an appearance on Midland television screens.

Such a well-established formula for the representation of the working woman, in one sense suggests that the female workers who were the subjects of these news items had little agency over how they appeared on camera. However, the items which featured interviews reveal that women challenged the reporter's ideas about women workers. The images of confident female workers open up a gap between the news film and the interview allowing for a variety of interpretations. As a representational strategy the 'woman pioneer' provides an example of the complex relationship between media representations and social change. Statistical evidence shows that women were entering a broader number of professions and industries in the second half of the twentieth century,²⁶ but the evidence above suggests that the representational strategies used to

²⁵ *Female barber* in *ATV Today* [online video, ID: 27021968], (ATV, first broadcast 27 February 1968), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-27021968-female-barber/MediaEntry/29112.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

²⁶ Crompton, *Women and Work in Modern Britain*, pp. 43-47.

discuss women in male dominated industries did not evolve at the same pace. The same representational strategy was also often used to frame black and Asian men working in public services.²⁷ This does not mean however that the news teams were not innovative in their approach to news making and their subjects. As mentioned in chapter four developing a televisual news style was important in the mid-1950s. The most innovative visual presentation of female workers in the regional television news collection, however, did not focus on those women who were pushing social boundaries, but can be identified in the material featuring women in feminised areas of industry.

Picturing the dual role

In her analysis of *Eve's Film Review*, Jenny Hammerton describes how images of glamorous lifestyles out of reach for most cinemagoers were juxtaposed with 'a more down-to-earth view of women's lives', which often featured women at work.²⁸ In later Pathé newsreels the emphasis was often on the product made, rather than the workers themselves. In newsreels featuring items of clothing the image of the ordinary female worker was juxtaposed with an image of the glamorous consumer. For example in *Castles In The Air* (1946) the penultimate shot showed a young factory worker examining a stocking before packaging it. The shot then cut to a well-dressed young woman in her bedroom examining the stocking in the same way.²⁹ This visual formula

²⁷ *Sikh bus conductor* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 27031963], (ATV, first broadcast 27 March 1963) <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-27031963-sikh-bus-conductor/MediaEntry/5949.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

²⁸ Jenny Hammerton, *For Ladies Only?*, p. 92.

²⁹ *Castles In The Air* [online video, ID: 1313.05], (British Pathé, first broadcast 1946), <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/castles-in-the-air/query/castles+in+the+air> [accessed 2 May 2013].

was also apparent in other Pathé items, such as *Zip Fasteners* (1950).³⁰ Hammerton discusses how even short glimpses of women at work in cinema newsreels were ‘strangely pleasing’ to watch.³¹ The present study extends Hammerton’s analysis to examine how the physicality of the female worker was visualised to present aesthetically pleasing images based on the blurring of women’s work with fun and feminine expression.

Like cinema newsreels, news stories in the ATV news collection were at times based on a visual narrative of a selected industrial process, such as *Nylon Stockings* (1961), *Ball Bearing Factory* (1962) and *Royal Doulton* (1967).³² The *Nylon Stockings* item was based on the production of Dorothy Vernon branded stockings, possibly at the Frude and Co. factory at Hinckley in Leicestershire. Cut to music to provide rhythm, the focus of the item was close-ups shots of the machinery. Where workers did feature, the men tended to be shown standing in control over their machines, whereas the women’s work was shown through a series of close ups suggesting they were part of the machinery. This was repeated in *Ball Bearing Factory* in (1962). In *Royal Doulton*, the item was based around the production of an ornamental figurine of a Native American on a horse to celebrate the centenary of Canadian independence. The aspects of work shown were largely the decorative processes, which relied less on production lines, however a

³⁰ *Zip Fasteners* [online video, ID: 1275.06], (British Pathé, first published 1950) <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/zip-fasteners/query/zip> [accessed 2 May 2013].

³¹ Hammerton, *For Ladies Only?*, p. 92.

³² *Nylon Stockings* in *Midland Montage* [online video, ID: 25051961], (ATV, first broadcast 25 May 1961), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midland-montage-25051961-nylon-stockings/MediaEntry/37455.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Ball Bearing Factory* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 13041962], (ATV, first broadcast 13 April 1962), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-13041962-ball-bearing-factory/MediaEntry/5052.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Royal Doulton* in *ATV Today* [online video, ID: 08051967], (ATV, first broadcast 8 May 1967), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-08051967-royal-doulton/MediaEntry/33236.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

sweeping establishing shot which passed through the shop floor, showed rows of women in casual dress painting small figurines with two men in white coats sitting at the front bench painting the prestigious Native American item. In the absence of machinery, shots of a neatly gender segregated workplace provided the image of order and efficiency. Comparable images were apparent in items which were based upon the visit of a local dignitary, celebrity or even news reporter to a workplace.³³ The television cameras provided the television audience with a view of the orderly interior of the workplace by following the progress of these factory tours.

As well as the type of work carried out in the factory, the social and cultural practices of the goods it produced could also influence the framing of women and men at work. In *Athletes visit Accles and Pollock Factory* (1962) a group of athletes viewing the production of javelins provided the television cameras a route into the story.³⁴ The faces of the male workers were serious as they were shown as craftsmen, using their skill and judgement as they shaped the javelins. In contrast in the item, *Donald Campbell at Bluebird Toffee Factory* (1958), the female workers were shown smiling to the camera as Donald Campbell tried the toffee (see Figure 17).³⁵ This association of

³³ *Wedgwood Pottery in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 07051958], (ATV, first broadcast 7 May 1958), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-07051958-wedgwood-pottery/MediaEntry/2497.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Donald Campbell at Bluebird Toffee Factory in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 02061958], (ATV, first broadcast 2 June 1958), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-02061958-donald-campbell-at-bluebird-toffee-factory/MediaEntry/2520.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

³⁴ *Athletes Visit Accles and Pollock Factory in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 29081962], (ATV, first broadcast 29 August 1962), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-29081962-athletes-visit-accles-and-pollock-factory/MediaEntry/5433.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Donald Campbell and Bluebird Toffee Factory in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 02061958], (ATV, first broadcast 2 June 1958), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-02061958-donald-campbell-at-bluebird-toffee-factory/MediaEntry/2520.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

³⁵ *Donald Campbell at Bluebird in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 02061958], (ATV, first broadcast 2 June 1958), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-02061958-donald-campbell-at-bluebird-toffee-factory/MediaEntry/2520.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

women's work with fun, was also visible in the news items which covered strike action at the same toffee works in 1964, and the women lamp assemblers at Lucas in 1963.³⁶

These items will be examined further in the next chapter.



Figure 17 *Midlands News* still, worker at Bluebird Toffee Factory, Hunnington, June 1958

As mentioned previously, in cinema newsreels that showed both how a product was made and how it was consumed, there was a distinction made between the woman at work and the woman consumer; a female model was used in the closing shots of the newsreel to model or display the product. In contrast, if the television news teams wanted to reference the consumer of the products featured in the news items, they did

³⁶ *Strike women at toffee works* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 01091964], (ATV, first broadcast 1 September 1964): <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-01091964-strike-women-at-toffee-works/MediaEntry/7406.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Strike by women lamp assemblers* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 25101963], (ATV, first broadcast 25 October 1963), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-25101963-strike-by-women-lamp-assemblers/MediaEntry/6546.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

not separately film a set of female models, but used the female workers as models. On tight filming and broadcast schedules filming in two different locations for the same story would have been practically impossible and required more filming in advance. This led to the conflation of the image of the female consumer with that of the female worker. Visually, this was achieved by synthesising shots of women at work with shots of women which resonated with pleasure and leisure. Since, the female worker was most usually depicted through close-ups of her hands, this framing was counterposed with images of female workers legs. Images of women's legs were synonymous with pin up girls, Hollywood glamour and advertising. A brief outline of the history of women's hands and legs on film will now be discussed to provide important context for the examination of how these elements were synthesised in the regional television news.

Artistic responses to innovations in technology and industrial processes emerged in the early twentieth century. Interest in the study of the essence of movement was exemplified in the work of artists such as Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Stair Case* (1912). This phenomenon was described by Siegfried Giedon in his 1948 publication *Mechanisation Takes Command*:

Motion is dissected into phases so as to reveal its inner structure...This characteristic is not limited to scientific management. It is deeply rooted in our epoch...From the standpoint of motion we can distinguish a close succession of two stages in contemporary art...First, movement is dissected into separate phases so that the forms appear side by side or overlapping. This occurs in 1910...The second stage makes the *form* of movement into an object of expression. Scientific

management does this for purpose of analysis. In art, calligraphic forms are endowed with the power of symbols. This occurs around 1920...The development continues into a third stage, of which we know only the beginning. During the 'thirties motion forms increasingly become a pictorial language to express psychic content.³⁷

This fascination for the capture and analysis of movement meant that even films that were made for scientific purposes had an expressive edge. Scientific management was originally pioneered by Lillian and Frank Gilbreth as a tool that could improve efficiency in the workplace by reducing the number of movements that workers took to complete a task of work. There are numerous examples of industrial film in the MACE collection, mostly from Boots factories at Beeston.³⁸ The symmetry of the production line provided an image of an orderly workplace, but also the ideal worker and the stereotyped feminine aptitudes that supported the discourse of gender segregation in the workplace. These films had multiple functions, including determining the rate of pay of workers, but they were also used in workers training. Analysing one of the films in

³⁷ Siegfried Giedon, *Mechanisation Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 106.

³⁸ *Boots soap*, Boots Pure Drugs Co Ltd [online video, ID: 13778], (unknown, c. 1954): <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/boots-soap/MediaEntry/13778.html> [accessed 19 May 2013]; *Boots glass*, Boots Pure Drugs Co Ltd [online video ID: 13779], (unknown, c. 1955): <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/boots-glass/MediaEntry/13779.html> [accessed 19 May 2013]; *Glass*, Boots Pure Drugs Co Ltd [online video ID: 13755], (unknown, c. 1955): <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/glass/MediaEntry/13755.html> [accessed 19 May 2013]; *The packeting of eye ointments*, Boots Pure Drugs Co Ltd [online video ID: 14059], (unknown, c. 1955): <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/packeting-of-eye-ointments-the/MediaEntry/14059.html> [19 May 2013]; *Boots bottling methods*, Boots Pure Drugs Co Ltd [online video ID: 13623], (unknown, c. 1959): <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/boots-bottling-methods/MediaEntry/13623.html> [accessed 19 May 2013]; *Boots filling and labelling methods*, Boots Pure Drugs Co Ltd [online video ID: 13780], (unknown, c. 1959): <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/boots-filling-and-labelling-methods/MediaEntry/13780.html> [accessed 13 May 2013].

detail, *Boots Bottling Methods* (1959), the aesthetic quality of mass synchronised motion was a feature of this film. Synchronised movements between workers and machine were a draw for the camera's lens-eye-view. The complexity of the movement that the female worker repeats to put two bottles on the conveyor belt at a time provides the visual interest (see Figures 18 and 19). It appears to confirm the contemporary view that women had a 'deft touch' appropriate for this kind of work rather than 'muscular strength'.³⁹ The rhythm and dexterity of the close-up shots of the women's hands working in time with the relentless motion of the machinery produce a movement that was aesthetically pleasing to watch. The precision of her hands amidst the mundane uniformity of the production line provides visual pleasure for the viewer. Voyeuristic fascination for the relationship between women and machines in moving image seeped into cinema newsreels and television news. The repetition of close-ups of women's hands in cinema newsreels and television news meant that images of women's nimble fingers epitomised 'women's work'. The familiarity of this visual shorthand meant its meaning could be communicated to viewers in seconds; very important in short news bulletins.

³⁹ These ideas are rehearsed in Gertrude Williams, *Women and Work* (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1945), p. 11.



Figure 18 Industrial film still, a vision of the ideal female worker on the production line at Boots, Beeston c. 1959



Figure 19 Industrial film still, Close-up of the 'deft touch' required for efficient work on the production line at Boots, Beeston c. 1959

To understand the use of women's legs in the regional television news items we must take into account images of dance troupes and the female body in advertising. As Felicia McCarren has argued in her book *Dancing Machines*, one of the effects of the contemporary fascination with mechanisation was to produce images of rows women dancing on mass in perfect harmony, as popularised by the Tiller Girls dance troupe in the 1920s.⁴⁰ The synchronisation of the dance troupe's bodies gave them a machine-like form and images of the physically fit female body were associated with the economic prosperity and social progress. Marshal McLuhan, considered to be the founder of media studies, analysed the relationship between sex and technology in advertising. He argued close-ups of women's legs used in advertising reduced women's bodies to interchangeable parts in an industrial machine. A contemporary example of this that would have been broadcast to Midlands viewers is a 30 second television commercial made for Pex, a Leicester hosiery company, with a Kodak stock date of 1959 (see Figure 20). The advertisement used a pair of woman's legs walking away from the camera as the central focus of the commercial.⁴¹ Throughout the commercial the skirts and shoes worn change, but the focus of the shot, the shapely female calves and the stockings that give them extra feminine glamour remained constant.

The blending of these pictorial strategies featuring women's hands and women's legs is exemplified in a news item broadcast in 1959 for the weekly news magazine programme *Midland Montage*. Labelled in the collection as *Nylon Stockings*, it provides an interesting example of how women's dual role was visualised in the

⁴⁰ Felicia M. McCarren, *Dancing Machines: Choreographies of the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 142.

⁴¹ Pex: *slighter seam 30 second commercial* [online video ID: 1229], (unknown, c. 1959): <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/pex-slighter-seams-30-second-commercial/MediaEntry/1229.html> [accessed 19 May 2013].

cultural production of the regional television news.⁴² The female factory worker was ideal for the news teams, because images of her at work provided good moving pictures. Shots of her nimble fingers and the rhythmical production line were staple features. In addition, the space of the factory gate, a well established site of actuality filming, was easily accessible for the news teams. Moreover, since factory workers were employed in large groups there was always plenty of footage to be gained from filming them. Nylons were a useful theme to draw upon for the regional television news in the Midlands. The industry was a significant and long-standing part of the local economy and its products were consumed widely by the female audience. Female textile workers were therefore prime targets for the TV cameras, as they embodied this local interest.



Figure 20 Television commercial still, Pex sligher seam stockings, Leicester c. 1959

⁴² *Nylon Stockings in Midland Montage* [online video, ID: 21051959], (ATV, first broadcast 21 May 1959), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midland-montage-21051959-nylon-stockings/MediaEntry/153.html> [accessed 2 May].



Figure 21 *Midland Montage* still, *Nylon Stockings*, location unknown 1959

The opening shots of *Nylon Stockings* showed a woman's hands feeding material through a sewing machine (see Figure 1). As suggested above, within the limited iconography of the female worker this was the typical and often repeated image that defined ideal women's work as 'light and clean' and requiring a 'deft touch'.⁴³ The camera then shifted to a close up of the women's legs as they left the factory, reminiscent of stocking commercials (see Figure 21). In the Midlands news item the ordinary female worker was framed as a 'living allegory' of the female body as a source of pleasure in popular visual culture.⁴⁴ By switching focus from the women's

⁴³ Williams, *Women and Work*, p. 21.

⁴⁴ Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Vintage, 1996), xix.

hands to their be-stockinged legs the focus of the news item switched away from the work done in the factory to the goods it produced. The vox pop segment with the workers followed the visual lead, not asking the women whether they were anxious over job security at a difficult time for the industry, but what kind of stockings they preferred to wear.

As a form of cultural production, this news item relied on the ability of the women featured to switch between their roles as producers and consumers, and the ambiguity surrounding definitions of women's work *as labour*, versus women's work *as expressions of femininity*. The framing of female factory workers as consumers provides evidence of how television 'domesticated', to use Maggie Andrew's term, its subjects.⁴⁵ However, what is most striking about this piece is how this local interest item, presented these 'ordinary' women in a form which resonated with popular visual culture. As Stephen Brooke's research has sought to reveal, working class women were not only objects of nostalgia representative of a supposedly lost working-class culture in the 1950s and 1960s, but also appeared in cultural representations as 'cipher[s] of the new working classes'.⁴⁶ In the regional television news the long term participation of women in the Midland textile industry and the salient images that visualised their work were fused within a single news story with their role as modern feminised consumers, synthesising the vernacular and the popular.

The image of white women's legs in stocking was a symbol of feminine desirability recognisable far beyond the Midlands, but in this item they appeared part of the everyday life of the Midland 'factory girl'. This was a demonstration of the affluence of

⁴⁵ Andrews, *Domesticating the Airwaves*.

⁴⁶ Brooke, 'Gender and working class identity', p. 781.

the working-class population of the Midlands, rather than an attempt to draw out a distinct regional character. The construction of the white female factory worker as 'ordinary' is also very important. It was deeply resonant of the dual role discourse in the 1950s and 60s, defined by Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein's *Women's Two Roles* (1956), which advocated that the modern women should now take up her *opportunity* to combine the pleasures of motherhood with paid employment.⁴⁷ In contrast to women's magazines and the popular press, there was no criticism of the 'working mother' in the regional television news, instead it is possible to interpret these images as a visual demonstration of how women were fusing their two roles together and normalising the position of the 'working wife'.

The increase of married women in the workforce following the Second World War has been in large part attributed to the advent of part-time work. The Factories (Evening Employment) Order 1950, granted licences to employers to recruit women for an evening shift which was previously illegal under the 1937 Factories Act.⁴⁸ Annual reports produced by the chief inspector of factories suggest that women were eager to take up these evening shifts as they fitted with their responsibilities in the home, but they also acknowledged that when work was scarce they were the first employees to be laid off:

Many firms are able to keep a waiting list of women anxious to spend a few hours in the evening in their employment. What seems to be a widespread attitude is perhaps summed up by a woman in the Midlands. She was employed on evening shift in

⁴⁷ Myrdal and Klein, *Women's Two Roles Home and Work*.

⁴⁸ Ministry of Labour, *Ministry of Labour Gazette, Evening Employment of Women in Factories, LVIII*, (London: HMSO, 1950) p. 410.

a factory making polishing mops, where the women were given tea during the evening spell and 'Music while you Work' was laid on. She remarked to an Inspector that 'It was as good as going to the pictures'.⁴⁹

Women's use of time and their connection to the employment market are central to these discussions. Claire Langhamer's work on women's leisure time has focused on the difficulties of distinguishing between work and leisure for women, because their work crossed the boundaries of workplace and home, concluding that it is futile to approach women's work and leisure as opposites.⁵⁰ The extract above shows how this was apparent in women's paid work as well as women's domestic work. This female respondent appears to be satisfied that she has managed to gain not only an opportunity to earn money, but some time out of the house, as revealed in her identification of the leisurely aspects of her workplace routine. The regional television news teams captured this ambiguity making it central to the cultural production of the ordinary woman; her on screen job.

Looking at the local print media for comparison, on the 20th March 1958 *The Birmingham Mail* printed a lengthy article on the increasing numbers of Midland wives working evening shifts in local factories while their husbands looked after their children. The paper presented this as 'an idea that helps both industry and the working mother'.⁵¹ Described as the 'housewife shift' the working-class women interviewed display some of the characteristics of the dual role, although sociologist Myrdal and

⁴⁹ Chief of Factories Inspection, *Annual report of the chief inspector of factories for the year 1950* [Cmd. 8445], (London: HMSO, 1951-52), p. 194.

⁵⁰ Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England*, p. 23 & p. 189.

⁵¹ 'Mother's at the factory workbench', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (20 March 1958), p. 6.

Klein had mostly outlined more middle-class feminised professions in their thesis. Elements of companionate marriage were present, although mediated by their class position. The couples described in the article were sharing child care responsibilities, but their alternate shifts in the workplace reduced their leisure time together:

‘the kiddies are too young to leave’ said 23 year old Mrs Betty Lacey, ‘I don’t mind going out to work at this time because we couldn’t go out anyway. My husband is very good with the children.’⁵²

The Birmingham Mail also reported the increasing numbers of ‘women at work’ as a social phenomenon, with an article headlined ‘840,000 more women at work’, a figure quoted from the *Ministry of Labour Gazette*.⁵³ This interest in the contemporary phenomenon of the working wife was also present in the readers’ letters section, revealing how Midland mothers were defending positions for married women in the workplace. This letter provides such rich evidence of contemporary perspectives from a working mother that it is worth quoting in full:

‘Sir –Why is there always someone complaining about married women going out to business? Last week it was the bishop. Who will it be tomorrow?

I have been married since 1942 and I have two boys ages 12 and 13. Like so any other couples, we lived with my mother until we qualified for a council house, and in that time with her my 24-year-old brother died in an iron lung with polio. My

⁵² Ibid., p. 6.

⁵³ ‘840,000 more women at work’, *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (27 March 1958), p. 11.

mother almost died through grief and I was the only daughter it fell to me to look after her, which was not at all easy with two babes to attend to.

Life was not simple, and when my mother was on her feet again I decided to act. The two boys went to the local nursery for about 12 months prior to going to school. In that period I was accepted for a post as a part-time shorthand typist.

Looking back, I have never regretted for one moment going out to business: in fact, I still do from 10am until 4.30pm, with the option of doing full time when the boys are a bit older.

In the time that I have worked my husband and I have obtained some decent furniture, a television set a new car and the boys want for nothing.

Anyone suggesting that the family is neglected in any way would be wrong. So I'll say 'Wake up you Victorian creatures, and leave us married ones alone. We like it this way.'

Hear Both Sides, Sheldon⁵⁴

In her references to the benefits of her work to the family and the acquisition of material goods, this letter could be read as evidence of a working-class Midland woman presenting herself as a 'good working mother'. However, there are further dynamics to be drawn out of this testimony, which resonate the visualisation of women's dual role

⁵⁴ 'Mothers who go out to work' [Readers letters], *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (24 March 1958), p. 8.

in the regional television news as embodied by working-class factory women discussed above. She narrates her journey from daughterly duty and drudgery to emancipation: 'We like it this way'. The role of paid work was integral to her agency in this transformation: 'I decided to act'. Importantly she links this personal testimony to the reported social trend of the working mother: 'leave us married ones alone', presenting herself and other working mothers as an accepted part of modern life and denigrating her critics as 'Victorian creatures'. Situating this testimony beyond that of the 'good working mother' by considering how working class women may have appropriated the dual role allows for greater consideration of the public dimension of women's (part-time) paid work to be considered in historical analysis. The agency of the factory women framed in the *Nylon Stockings* news item was mediated by the television news teams. However this novel and distinctly televisual framing was an innovative play upon the ambiguous position of the working woman, developed in relation to the changing realities of women's lives in the 1950s and 1960s, rather than the media conventions of the woman pioneer developed in the fin de siècle. The reader's letter from *The Birmingham Mail*, a passionate response to the criticism of working wives, suggests that women made an emotional investment in their working lives, not just for the material benefit of their families, but as an expression of their agency as modern women. This assertion is discussed further in the next and final section of this chapter.

Working class women as social commentators

The expanding and increasingly creative use of vox pop formats by television news teams meant female factory workers participated in television as 'women's interest' commentators. In an item titled *Marriage Minded Maidens* (1960) young women were

asked at what age they thought it was best to get married (see Figure 22).⁵⁵ The item was staged in the factory grounds. A group of factory girls in neat uniforms and occasionally some lipstick for the camera approached reporter Jenny Martin from left of screen. They provided a variety of answers to the question: ‘would you like to be married before you’re twenty?’ Some were already married, as was increasingly common in this era of declining age at first marriage, while others talked about how they enjoyed flirting and dating. The second part of the item was based on interviews with the young women working in the factory offices. The length of time they had spent in education was a consideration for some in delaying marriage; one described how she wanted a good job and ‘some fun first’, but others who were already married appeared to be combining their two roles. In *Kissing and Cuddling at Work* (1962) women were asked whether it was damaging for company image to kiss their boyfriends during their lunch break (see Figure 23).⁵⁶ The item opened with an interview with the male manager and closed with a comment from a male employee, but the rest of the item was an interview with a group of female factory workers, grouped together for the camera. In these items women were filmed in uniform and at their workplaces, but the questions asked them to reflect on romance and relationships. The workplace in this sense was an incidental backdrop, but also implicitly acknowledged as a venue where the news teams could locate groups of women to participate in cultural production.

⁵⁵ *Marriage Minded Maidens in Midland Montage* [online video, ID: 21011960], (ATV, first broadcast 21 January 1960), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midland-montage-21011960-marriage-minded-maidens/MediaEntry/1452.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁵⁶ *Kissing and Cuddling at Work in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 2311019], (ATV, first broadcast 31 October 1962), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-31101962-kissing-and-cuddling-at-work/MediaEntry/1089.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].



Figure 22 *Midland Montage* still, *Marriage Minded Maidens*, location unknown 1960



Figure 23 *Midlands News* still, *Kissing and Cuddling at Work*, Rugeley 1962



Figure 24 *Midlands News* still, *Vox Pops on Smoking, Players*, Nottingham 1962

In the mid 1950s it was easier to film women at the factory than on the streets, but from the mid-1960s lighter equipment meant more news items did seek the opinions of women (and men) on the streets of the Midlands. These practicalities alone do not, however, provide a full explanation of the news teams' relationship with the female worker and why they continued to seek her opinion on a variety of 'feminised' issues into the 1970s.⁵⁷ In contrast to woman's magazines or print media, which looked to 'the housewife' as their central addressee, the female worker was the on-screen

⁵⁷ *Frilly Underwear* in *ATV Today* [online video, ID: 14061978], (ATV, first broadcast 14 June 1978), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-14061978-frilly-underwear/MediaEntry/28991.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Mini skirts* in *ATV Today* [online video, ID: 08021979], (ATV, first broadcast 8 February 1979), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-08021979-mini-skirts/MediaEntry/30358.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

representative of 'women's interest' and opinion in the Midlands television news programmes.

These images could be interpreted in a number of ways. In one sense it is reasonable to understand them as evidence of how the television news teams undermined the position of these women as workers. Alternatively, it is possible to understand the Midlands news reporters' questions on shopping and relationships as a product of the ambiguities and contradictions surrounding women's status as workers and the attendant impact on their social role in the 1950s and 1960s. From this perspective the female workers' participation in the television news was a form of entitlement. It allowed female workers to participate as social commentators, rather than being discussed as a 'social problem' or pitied for their 'irksome toil', which young female workers and married women workers respectively had experienced earlier in the twentieth century.⁵⁸ In ATV's regional news programmes working class women were not a topic to *be* discussed, but were invited to discuss their points of view. The particular mediated framework constructed by ATV's news programmes provided a space for their agency and opinions. The potential for television to provide a platform for the voices of the working classes was a consideration for contemporaries at BBC Birmingham, such as Charles Parker and Philip Donnellan. However, while Parker used his radio programmes to attempt to direct the working class back to 'their traditions',⁵⁹ the ATV news teams propelled them into 'affluent' society.

⁵⁸ On young, single workers see Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work and Family*; On married women see, Clementina Black, *Married Women's Work* (London: Virago, 1983, first published 1915).

⁵⁹ Paul Long, *Only in the Common People: The Aesthetics of Class in Post-War Britain* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 141-155.

Moreover, the building of this relationship between the news teams and the female worker meant that over time she was provided with the opportunity to comment beyond the realms of 'women's interest'. This is apparent in the last news item that I will discuss in this chapter which showed the regional news team's response to reports linking smoking and lung cancer (see Figure 24).⁶⁰ The news item was filmed outside the Players cigarette factory in Nottingham, where the female workers were known locally as the 'Players dollies' and famed for their superior earning power in the city. The women of the factory are the first to be asked their opinion on the issue, the three women who were featured comment that they do not foresee any long term effects on the industry apart from maybe 'a bit of short time' for a while. One woman disputed the report entirely, suggesting that the atom bomb was the reason for high rates of lung cancer. Compared to the male commentators who were featured individually following the women's comments, the grouping together of the women on screen is revealing of how the collective identity of the female factory workers legitimised their position as commentators. Penny Tinkler's work on women and smoking has demonstrated that the discussion of smoking and lung cancer was very much constructed around the male smoker, to the extent that there is scant evidence of women participating in the debate in the press.⁶¹ This news item provides evidence of the regional television news providing space for women's participation in this debate. Class is important here as well as gender. The use of working-class women as commentators is distinct from the (earlier) domination by middle-class women who had been using their roles as wives

⁶⁰ *Vox Pops on Smoking in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 15031962], (ATV, first broadcast 15 March 1962), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-15031962-vox-pops-on-smoking/MediaEntry/1570.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁶¹ Tinkler, *Smoke Signals* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), pp. 188-189.

and mothers as a civic identity since the late nineteenth century to legitimate their entry into public debate.

It is notable that this position as commentator was largely limited to white women in this period of the Midland television news. The visibility and newsworthiness of Black and Asian Midlands communities changed according to the socio-economic and political climate in Britain. As Francis Eames observed in her thesis 'Normative Narratives', which examined the ATV news collection from a cultural studies perspective, in the 1960s 'race' (non-whiteness) 'was newsworthy for its difference, but a tone of fascination was dominant'. This changed significantly in the 1970s when 'coverage became hostile and "race" stories featured as hard news narratives, concerning crime, youth problems and the rise of the National Front'.⁶² Between 1956 and 1968 there was only one news item broadcast that was based around Asian women as workers. It was labelled as *Handsworth Factory* (1967).⁶³ The tendency to identify Asian women solely as workers rather than as women with a potential role as wives and mothers has been a feature of Wendy Webster's work.⁶⁴ This is apparent in the *Handsworth Factory* news film. The film was shot both in the factory and on the street. In the factory women were shown working productively at their sewing machines, whilst the Asian women in the street were shown shopping and referred to as 'idling' by the reporter, John Swallow. The interview section was conducted entirely between the reporter and the male manager of the factory. The owner of the factory suggests that

⁶² Frances Eames, 'Normative narratives: everyday identity in regional television news, 1960-1980', Ph. D. thesis (University of Nottingham, 2008), p. 254.

⁶³ *Handsworth Factory* in *ATV Today* [online video, ID: 16031967], (ATV, first broadcast 16 March 1967), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-16031967-handsworth-factory/MediaEntry/16248.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁶⁴ Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, 'Race' and National Identity, 1945-64* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 129-131.

he has solved a social problem by employing Asian women in the factory. He went as far as to state: 'now they are skilled and happy'. The shots of the women at work were overlaid by the men's discussion, but there is no vox pop element that might have provided the women an opportunity to discuss their work or leisure lives, unlike that provided to the white women in the 1959 *Nylon Stocking* item. Thus the dual role in the regional television news was a form of cultural production exclusive to white women.

Summary

To conclude, as in chapter five, this chapter has explored the diversity and ambiguity of women's appearances in the regional television news collection focusing on women filmed in uniform and/ or in their workplaces. The Midlands news programmes provided a very different space for the cultural production of the 'working woman' compared to other forms of media. The dual role of the working woman in the regional television news was highly visible because she embodied television's own role of mediating between the worlds of public and private. This provides an explanation for the distinct relationship developed between the 'working woman' and the regional television news teams. This was a relationship that evolved consistently through the period 1956-1968 and there is no evidence to suggest that changes in production values post-1964 or developments in technology significantly affected this relationship.

The visual analysis provided in this chapter demonstrated how representational strategies established in cinema newsreels and industrial films were used by the regional news teams. However, in contrast to their earlier incarnations in cinema newsreels, framing Midlandsers as 'woman pioneers' was an effective way for news teams to include remote parts of the region on screen, rather than to glamorise 'women's progress'. The more innovative representational strategies developed by

Midlands ATV drew from the social and cultural backdrop within which they were embedded and therefore spoke to the 'dual role' as an opportunity for women.

The ordinariness of the working women framed in a 'dual role' in the regional news reveals how this discursive strategy most usually associated with middle-class professional women was at some points appropriated by working-class women. The significance of this analysis of the dual role for women's history is that it contextualises the importance of paid employment for (married) women in the 1950s and 1960s beyond the discourse of the 'good working mother'. Even though the dual role was usually couched in terms of middle-class professional feminine identities, such as teaching and nursing, this chapter has shown how it could also be used in the visualisation of the working-class 'working wife' and offered a means for women to express the opportunity that paid work gave them, beyond providing for their children and home, but as women of the modern world.

Previously in women's history, women's entry into the labour force has been couched in terms of the expansion of higher education and the opportunity for the daughters of the 1960s to reject the domesticity of their mothers. However, this study suggests that it was their mothers, the archetypal housewives of the 1950s, who were the driving force behind the normalisation of women in the workplace. The way in which these 'working wives' were visualised was integral to the normalisation of their position in the workforce. This was based on a synthesis of their positions as modern consumers and Midland factory 'girls'. The women machinists and factory workers were a well recognised and long standing feature of Midland identity, but in the regional television news they were posed as modern rather than framed by nostalgia. As Midland firms recast themselves from family businesses to modern corporations, so too were their workers recast for the postwar world. The regional news was more sensitive to the

changing position of women within this transformation than national news programmes.

This discussion of women's agency as workers is extended in the next chapter, which looks at news stories covering industrial action in the Midlands. In these news stories women appeared as consumers affected by strike action, wives supporting their working husbands and workers taking strike action. This allows for further consideration of the impact increasing numbers of women was making on the workplace and whether they were recognised as a social force in the 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter Seven

From the bread queue to the picket line: Women in news of industrial action

In previous studies historians have suggested that the term ‘working wife’ demonstrated how women’s employment was a secondary addition to their familial identity.¹ In contrast this chapter suggests the importance of employment to Midland women, something that was powerfully evident in their presence on the picket lines pictured in the regional television news. Paid work may have competed for space in women’s lives with domestic responsibilities and child care, but even if employment was in this sense ‘subordinated’ to other priorities in women’s lives, this should not be equivocated with an image of women as subordinate or passive workers. This chapter brings into focus women’s activism on the picket line in order to challenge notions that women in the 1950s and 1960s were disinclined to engage in industrial action, because they were preoccupied by domestic duties. Indeed, involvement in strikes could become part of their domestic work. In line with the previous chapters of this study there is no straightforward means of interpreting women’s agency as workers and how their position as wives and potential wives was part of their decision to support or, at times, undermine strike action.

As in earlier historical periods, engaging public support was an important aspect of staging industrial action in the Midlands during the 1950s and 1960s. For workers and trade unions the removal of labour was a demonstration of their power and a means through which they could claim better wages and conditions, but they had to convince

¹ Webster, *Imagining Home*, pp. 129-130.

the public that their actions were justified. Media posturing, by employers and trade unions, was most evident in the lead-up to large-scale national campaigns. These contests for public opinion were not only evident in newspaper headlines but also in public notices, feature pages and readers' letters printed throughout local newspapers. Similarly television news teams would follow up reports from the picket line with vox pop items in an attempt to reveal the thoughts of the wider public on current episodes of industrial action. However the picket line remained the most visible aspect of industrial action:

Picketing was vital for trade unions both in giving economic force to their actions and also by demonstrating the wider support and solidarity for strikes of particular groups of workers. But it was also one of the aspects of trade union power most likely to cause public unease. Picketing, in some of its forms, seemed to lie right at the heart of what was acceptable and what was not in the role of trade unions. From the trade union side, it was regarded as very important to bring numbers to the picket lines.²

Thus the whole social force of an act of industrial action was visible on the picket line and as in Whiting's analysis above, has usually been interpreted as an image likely to provoke anxiety. Conflict of interest in the roles of production and consumption - symptomatic of discussions of the working class in this period more generally, were rendered visible in news reports of strike action, and which were often posed as a conflict of interest between 'producers' and 'consumers'. Women's appearances in

² Whiting, 'Affluence and industrial relations', p. 530.

these news stories reveal a more complex relationship between these two positions and provide a means to explore these tensions.

Only a small number of the strikes reported in the Midlands news during this period became national news stories. The industrial action taken in this period was often very locally defined, ensuring that the analysis in this chapter is based on a comparative examination of local print media and regional television news stories to a greater extent than the others. Seven examples of industrial action in the Midlands between 1956 and 1968 have been used to examine the appearances of women in the regional television news within these stories.

Bread queues

The effects of strike action on daily life were a central aspect of news stories for both the local print media and regional television news. In some instances the disruption caused to the public became the media story at the expense of any detail on the workers and their action. This was particularly evident in the coverage of the bakers' strike in November 1965. The two day strike, which took place on the 18th and 19th November 1965, was called by the Federation of Wholesale and Multiple Bakers as part of a national strike plan over a national pay agreement affecting 3,500 members of the Bakers Union in the Midlands. The resulting queues for bread were the focus of discussion in the print and broadcast media.

As Joe Moran has discussed the 'iconography of the queue' was a powerful site for the expression of social anxieties in the twentieth century.³ In his article 'Queuing up in Post-War Britain' he has suggested that between the 1950s and 1970s queuing was less

³ Joe Moran, 'Queuing up in post-war Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 16:3 (2005), p. 294.

overtly political compared to the post-war period, but it retained a position in social commentary as a 'significant annoyance in everyday life'.⁴ The political drama of the queue was momentarily reignited during the bakers' strike with *The Birmingham Mail* providing quotes from the queuing public describing the situation as 'just like the war years'.⁵ The regional television news reported on the bread strikes on three consecutive days. The first report on the 17th November showed a rush on supplies in preparation for the strike. The item opened with a shot of a queue outside a Birmingham bakery.⁶ The camera then provided close up images of the queuing women; the queue was composed entirely of women. The camera lens moved from the front to the back of the queue, as it did so an array of coats, hats, headscarves, hand bags and shopping bags dominated the image. The occasional pair of horn-rimmed, cat-eye spectacles dates the image to the mid-1960s. The camera then moved inside the bakery for a view from behind the bakery counter. It showed empty baskets, idle workers and a dense queue which doubled back on itself through the shop. The viewer was then given a brief shot of the counter and a discussion between a shopper and the shop assistant over the last available goods. In view at the right hand side of the screen was a sign asking 'Like to bake your own bread?' Bakeries were permitted to sell packs of flour and yeast within the terms of the industrial action.⁷ The last shot showed women talking and laughing as they queued and a small child, who looked on beyond the camera. Ironically, for all the

⁴ Ibid., p. 289-290.

⁵ 'Bread Shops Sell Out', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (18 November 1965), front page.

⁶ *Bakers strike –bread queues in Birmingham and Midlands* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 17111965], (ATV, first broadcast 17 November 1965), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-17111965-bakers-strike-bread-queues/MediaEntry/8683.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁷ Identified in a quote from Mr RS Latham, Midlands area secretary of the National Association of Master Bakers in, 'Bakers may put bread on ration', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (15 November 1965), front page.

war-time commentary and imagery, bread was not a rationed commodity during the Second World War. The highly unpopular decision to ration bread was taken in 1946 in order to maintain supplies to the occupied zone of Germany. The conflation, however inaccurate, expressed the anxiety manifest in queuing for bread.

To an extent the television footage showed ‘the housewife’ bearing the brunt of the bakers’ strike. However, the inclusion of shots of women cheerfully accepting the necessity to queue provided a reference to an alternative thread of interpretation running through the bread queue iconography; the queue as a ‘Mother’s Meeting’. This had been part of Mass Observations interpretation of the women’s war-time queuing practices and their coping strategies.⁸ The television news item broadcast on the 18th November began with a dramatic aerial shot of an empty bread van and a queue of shoppers that flowed out of the bakery door and down the street.⁹ A man carrying a tray of baked goods emerged and put the bread and buns in the back of the open van. The camera then moved inside, again behind the bread counter, and showed rapid trade as customers filled the shop waiting hopefully to be served. The departing shot showed women shuffling up the bread queue and stretching their necks to see if they were likely to reach the front while supplies lasted. This image of inconvenience was at odds with other images of shopping broadcast on regional television in the 1960s, which focused on increasing choice and convenience for female shoppers. For example, a vox pop

⁸ Moran, ‘Queuing up in Post-War Britain’, p. 285.

⁹ *Bakers strike –bread queues in Birmingham* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 18111965], (ATV, first broadcast 18 November 1965) <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-18111965-bakers-strike-bread-queues-in-birmingham/MediaEntry/8686.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

item in *Midlands Montage* (July 1961) asked women whether they preferred to visit self-service shops or those offering counter service.¹⁰

The last of the bakers' strike items, broadcast on the 19th November 1965, dispensed with the bread queue and focused on a bakery that remained in operation.¹¹ Although not identified by name, bakeries which had already signed up to the national pay agreement or were supplying hospitals, schools and old people's homes, remained in production.¹² The establishing shot showed three men kneading rolls around a large table, ending in a close up of one man as he kneaded two rolls at a time. The next shot showed a man removing the baked rolls from an industrial oven and stacking them. The following sequence focused on a woman, presumably one of the 'housewife volunteers' who kept the skeletal baking service in operation. She lifted a tray of dough and stacked it in the appropriate rack before returning to the table. As she turned away from the camera she shared a glance and a giggle with another woman at work in the bakery. This suggests that this action shot had been prompted by the camera crews which had resulted in an awkward giggle at her moment on camera. The last shot showed a man stacking the finished bread in the back of a delivery van.

The tension of the strike was therefore presented as a point of concern, which was alleviated by the good humour of the women in the bread queue and the good work of the volunteers featured in the footage. The housewife was the victim of the strike

¹⁰ *Counter or self service shopping in Midland Montage* [online video, ID: 20071961], (ATV, first broadcast 20 July 1961), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midland-montage-20071961-counter-or-self-service-shopping/MediaEntry/37177.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

¹¹ *Bakers strike in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 19111965], (ATV 19 November 1965), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-19111965-bakers-strike/MediaEntry/8694.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

¹² 'Bakers may put bread on ration', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (15 November 1965), front page.

action, but also the hero who translated her domestic skills to the industrial bakery.

Thus a closer look at the television footage of the bread queue shows that the ability of the camera to reveal coping strategies were as important as expressions of anxiety during the bread strike. The television material did not necessarily reveal the queue as an unequivocal image of anxiety. This re-evaluation of the iconography of the bread queue has implications for studying images of the picket line.

At this point it is also worth comparing the position of the housewife in other television reports of industrial action. While in the bread strike the housewife was presented as quietly dealing with the effects of industrial action, Midland housewives at times took an activist role campaigning for an end to industrial action. In such cases they positioned themselves as agents of arbitration between male managers and male workers and husbands.

During a dispute at Raleigh in Nottingham in 1964, Marion Handley, wife of a striking worker, became the leader of an anti-strike league. She claimed that many workers did not support the strike and she publically represented this opposition.¹³ The strike was called over twenty five redundancies, which resulted in four hundred and fifty workers going on strike and two thousand laid off. Consistent with contemporary union policy, the Amalgamated Engineers Union (AEU) was pushing for a policy of short-time rather than layoffs. Handley met with the local AEU and the Raleigh management in an effort to aid negotiations, she featured in two television news reports and was quoted in *The Times* discussing these meetings: ‘We were more satisfied with our visit to Raleigh. At

¹³ The strike started when 25 men were made redundant. Management found them jobs in other Nottingham firms but the AEU wanted a shorter working week to keep them employed. 450 men went on strike and around 2,000 were laid off. The strike dragged on for thirteen weeks until early April 1964.

least they did not call the police'.¹⁴ The wives' pressure group not only gained significant coverage, *The Times* attributed significant power to it in determining the course of the dispute, two weeks later reporting:

Of the 450 AEU members originally involved in the Raleigh stoppage, 150 have resumed work, many of them under pressure from their wives.¹⁵

In her first appearance on the Midlands television news, on 19th February 1964, Handley was pictured surrounded by Raleigh workers discussing how they felt about the strike.¹⁶ She then talked to the reporter about why she felt a housewife led anti-strike league was necessary. The second item, broadcast a week later, did not include an interview.¹⁷ It showed a group of four women, including Handley, outside the AEU offices and a shot of them entering the building. Broadcast between the reports featuring Handley was one that showed images of the striking workers. While *The Times* may have attributed a significant amount of power to the wives of workers in their decision to return to work, it is difficult to interpret what contemporary television audiences thought of Handley. Cultural representations of working class women in the 1950s and 1960s have been predominantly analysed through the work of the Angry Young Men and commentators such as Richard Hoggart. Handley's appearances show how similar portrayals of gender antagonism also provided a framework to allegorically

¹⁴ 'Unemployment pay hopes at Raleigh', *The Times* (27 February 1964), p. 7.

¹⁵ 'AEU to "Black" Raleigh Work', *The Times* (11 March 1964), p. 6.

¹⁶ *Raleigh strike in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 19021964], (ATV, first broadcast 19 February 1964), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-19021964-raleigh-strike/MediaEntry/6828.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

¹⁷ *Raleigh strike –wives visit AEU in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 25021964], (ATV, first broadcast 25 February 1964), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-25021964-raleigh-strike-wives-visit-aeu/MediaEntry/6846.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

present news of the conflicting interests between producers and consumers in the strike. In this representational framework women were often portrayed as ‘naturally conservative’, the framing of Mrs Handley in the 1964 anti-strike league at Raleigh, has echo’s of Mary Whitehouse’s ‘Clean-up TV’ campaign, also launched in 1964.

Gender conflict has been central to understandings of social change in the 1950s and 1960s, exemplified in debates in sociology and history surrounding embourgeoisement, consumer culture and affluent society. However, recent historical work has contested the idea of affluent society and the 1950s and 1960s as the era where the working class adopted consumer identities.¹⁸ The next two sections of analysis seek to continue this challenge by examining, firstly, the participation of workers and their wives in reports of strike action, and secondly female led industrial action.

Mr and Mrs Midlands on strike

In their quantitative evaluation of strike action in this period Duncan, McCarthy and Redman have identified the motor vehicle and transport industries as ‘strike prone’ during the years 1953-59. During this time the West Midlands is recorded as the region with the largest increase in its share of major strikes, which is connected in their analysis to the motor vehicle industry and local unemployment.¹⁹ It is in this period that the regional television news made their first extensive coverage of industrial action, the British Motor Company (BMC) strike in the summer of 1956. The strike was called following 6,000 redundancies at BMC.²⁰ The unions argued that those workers should

¹⁸ Shinobu Majima and Mike Savage, ‘Contesting affluence: an introduction’, *Contemporary British History*, 22:4 (2008), pp. 445-455.

¹⁹ Duncan, McCarthy and Redman, *Strikes in Post-War Britain*, pp. 63-81.

²⁰ The breakdown of redundancies were: Austin Motor company 3,000, Fisher & Ludlow 600, Nuffield Mechanisation 700, Tractor & Transmissions 430, SU Carburetters 90, Cowley Oxford, 880, Morris

be compensated and there should be union consultations prior to any future redundancies. The BMC management argued that compensation was a national issue and therefore refused to discuss compensation at a local level. The dispute was resolved on the 10th August 1956 with the agreement to make payments to the redundant workers if they had three years continuous service. Future redundancies were to be referred for final settlement locally.²¹

The Union perspective on the industry was expressed in a report of the BMC Shop Stewards Committee, 30th June 1956:

[T]he motor industry is not over-expanded. All motor-car factories are still continuing with their huge expansion programmes, and the opinion was that the main causes of the present crisis is due to the credit squeeze, trade restrictions, increased Purchase Tax, and extra heavy defence programme which is all part of the Government's plan to get a pool of unemployed.²²

The print media coverage, as analysed through *The Birmingham Mail*, focused on the power of the trade union leaders and their influence on the strike. This was reflected in headlines such as: 'The men who lead 28,000 strikers' and 'Car strikers were "led by the nose"'.²³ One article during the lead-up to the dispute did present a worker's

Radiators 180, Welsh Llanelly 100; Modern Records Office [hereafter MRO]: TUC Archive, MSS.202/S/J/3/3/5, 1956.

²¹ MRO: TUC Archive, MSS.202/S/J/3/3/9, 1956.

²² MRO: TUC Archive, MSS.202/S/J/3/3/8, 1956.

²³ 'The men who lead 28,00 strikers', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (25 July 1956), p. 6; 'Car strikers were "led by the nose"', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (30 July 1956), front page.

perspective under the headline ‘I don’t want to strike’. The term ‘affluent worker’ was not used within the article, but there was an attempt to distance ‘the trouble makers on big money’ from the majority of car workers. Therefore the author did not directly challenge the image of the ‘strike happy’ car worker, but attempted to reclaim a position for the majority of BMC employees as part of the ‘normal’ working class, stating: ‘I am an ordinary working man’, he also emphasised he did not earn money through piece-work: ‘My £12 average includes the bonus which is earned collectively.’ The discussion of wages was connected to comfort for his generation: ‘Yes we have a television and other luxuries we like to keep us comfortable’, but a desire for greater security for the next generation: ‘I want him [his son] to get a skilled job with security. Not to depend on the ups and downs of a less skilled job because of the lure of big money when times are good.’ It is possible to interpret this as an example of a conservative print media undermining the rights of striking workers. However, the language used by the reluctant striking worker, his claims to ‘ordinariness’ and ‘average wages’ is comparable to the testimony of participants in the Affluent Workers study, recently re-examined by Mike Savage. His analysis placed emphasis on the location of working-class identity as the ability to claim to be an ‘ordinary individual’ rather than through a connection to specific workplace experiences.²⁴

The local press had to tread a fine line between expressing support and criticism for car workers. Ordinariness was again drawn upon in an article announcing the beginning of the annual tradesman’s holidays in 27th July 1956, which meant the suspension of work at the BMC. Under the headline ‘Mr Midlands’ makes sure of his holiday’ the by-line read:

²⁴ Savage, ‘Working-class identities’, p. 943.

His name is Mr M J Bradley, of Selly Oak, but you might have called him Mr Midlands today. He typified the attitude of thousands of his colleagues in the motor industry –determined to get his family away for a holiday whatever the future may bring. He and his family were off to Rhyl.²⁵

This article was accompanied by a photograph of the family. It featured father and mother with four children and a toddler in a push chair, suitcases in hand. The text above emphasised that the workers were taking a holiday when they could rather than relying on it being an annual event.

Moving on to the television coverage of the BMC strike, the mute television footage showed workers on the picket line. The police presence, on horseback was featured in the background. At the centre of the establishing shot was a placard reading: ‘STRIKE OFFICIAL’ and below ‘SUPPORT YOUR MATES’. The next shot showed a woman in a printed floral dress and cardigan, with a handbag around her wrist encouraging those crossing the picket line to join the strike, she held a placard reading: ‘BE MEN COME OUT’. The camera then showed a march by the workers, predominantly men in shirts and jackets but also women. It is unclear whether these women were workers or wives in support of the strike. A car with a cameraman filming from the roof drove by the demonstrating workers. This was the ITN camera, the footage from this vantage point can be seen in their coverage of the strike for the national news bulletin.²⁶ Its

²⁵ “‘Mr Midlands’ makes sure of his holiday’, *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (27 July 1956), front page.

²⁶ *BMC Workers at Longbridge Strike* [online video, ID:VS240756043], (ITN Source, first broadcast 24 July 1956), http://www.itnsource.com/en/shotlist/BHC_ITN/1956/07/24/VS240756043/?s=BMC+strike&st=0&pn=1 [accessed 2 May 2013].

presence in the regional news bulletin reveals how this was a national news story of significance to the British economy and workers connected to motor vehicle production across the country. The footage then showed points of struggle between the workers and vehicles attempting to cross the picket line and the interventions by mounted police. The closing shot framed a group of workers staging a sit down protest, mounted policemen were positioned between them and the television camera. A worker lifted his placard so it could be seen clearly by the camera it read: 'BE A MAN NOT A BLACKLEG'.

This framing is best understood in terms of the practices and limitations of broadcast news teams as they were becoming established at this time, rather than having an established and coherent set of values which news teams applied to filming the picket line. The item has been shot in a style closely resembling cinema newsreels. It reveals how the regional news teams were appropriating the newsreels formula in the early stages of television news broadcasts and had not established a televisual style at this point. The comparison with newsreels is also pertinent because at this point ATV relied on a local Birmingham company to supply their news film and did not yet have a resident news team in the Midlands. This meant that as in newsreel production, the camera teams were remote from the reporters and producers. This explains why there were no interviews conducted by broadcasters on the picket line. However, Dick Etheridge, works convener at BMC, was invited by ATV's Ned Sherrin to appear on television following the strike.²⁷

In comparison with the print media or trade union records, or even oral histories from shop stewards, this film provides a broad shot of the picket line, rather than privileging

²⁷ MRO: TUC Archive, MSS.202/S/J/3/3/9, 1956.

the testimony of one particular group. The women's position on the picket line was a controversial point in parts of the media, which had claimed the women had been bullied into taking part in the strike. The unions refuted this and issued notices to the workers on Thursday the 26th July stating: 'Women led the way. These people were not intimidated as had been stated, they had gone into work, had small meetings and taken the decision to strike themselves.'²⁸ The television news material shows both men and women baring placards. The slogans drew heavily on the masculinity of the male breadwinner, but also suggest the shared interest working class families had in supporting the strike. Strike action had the potential to disturb the car workers claims to their status as ordinary private individuals, but the placards are a plea to the ordinary sensibilities of the car worker, 'be a man', 'support your mates'. The presence of what Judy Giles has termed the 'ordinary housewife' in the television images of the picket line gives strength to definitions of class based on 'ordinariness', rather than a class identity based on 'occupation'. In these images working class struggles for work and a comfortable home are visible as a joint aspiration for husbands and wives, rather than one of gender antagonism.

Debates on car workers, wages and industrial action continued throughout the 1960s. Three readers' letters from September 1966 were printed in *The Birmingham Mail* under the title 'Car workers' earnings in perspective'. One from Albert Ingram in Kings Heath maintained that the men of the car industry worked hard, were 'prepared to make sacrifices for the country's good' and the benefits of the car manufacturing industry to the British economy through exports had to be appreciated before any criticism could

²⁸ MRO: TUC Archive, MSS.202/S/J/3/3/9, 1956.

be made.²⁹ Another, from a pensioner who signed themselves Threadbare, suggested car workers should ‘just go without’ rather than take action to improve their wages.³⁰ The other letter featured was from the wife of a car worker. She maintained, similar to the Austin worker quoted above, that not all car workers were paid £30 per week and moreover that the nature of the car industry meant that car workers were frequently out of work and on the dole at £2 5s. She signed herself ‘Fair Play’.³¹ Again the focus of the car worker’s family was their unexceptional position and their comparative vulnerability rather than an ability to transcend class boundaries.

While trade unions may have organised around occupational status and in government statistics attempts are made to understand class through occupation, workers themselves made consistent attempts throughout the twentieth century to claim ‘ordinariness’ as an attribute of the working class. The reorganisation of the working class away from occupationally defined communities did not change the nature of class. Stable employment remained the way for the working class to claim ‘ordinariness’.

Throughout the print media and television footage the husbands and wives of the motor vehicle industry maintained that they would rather not take the public stand of industrial action, they preferred to be ‘ordinary’ and private. Their privacy was not based on a preoccupation with consumption but sufficient work and wages to allow them to blend in and not be identified as socially problematic. The retreat to privacy of the working class was interrupted by the regional news teams who increasingly sought them out and encouraged their participation in more elaborate pieces to camera.

²⁹ ‘Car workers’ earnings in perspective’ [Readers’ letters], *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch*, (23 September 1966), p. 12.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

The position of the wives of striking workers provides evidence of this developing relationship between the working class and the television news teams. In July 1957 a strike was called at the Midland Red bus company in an attempt to bring pay in line with the busworkers at municipal undertakings. It has been suggested that the status of the bus worker was under threat in the age of affluence.³² Their struggle for increased wages in order to maintain an existing differential rather than see it eroded, was the most common cause of industrial action at this time.³³ The lead-up to the strike received daily coverage because it placed in potential jeopardy the holiday plans of thousands of Midlanders who had booked their summer holiday trips to the seaside with the coach company. When the strike went ahead on the 20th July 1957 *The Birmingham Mail* focused its reports on the few employees who crossed the picket line and the coping strategies of commuters and holiday makers.

As the strike continued the television cameras visited a Midland Red depot at Stourbridge on the 22nd July and later the picket line at Bearwood on the 25th July 1957.³⁴ The regional television news took a very different strategy in its 22nd July report, resulting in an experimental piece, which explored the televisual role of broadcast news as well as the story of the strike itself. The regional television news, produced by Kit Plant was at this point filming its own material and including interviews and occasionally vox pops. The item opened with a piece to camera by Plant and an interview with the shop steward. The piece then cut to Pat Cox interviewing a

³² Rule, 'Time, affluence and private leisure', p. 227.

³³ Duncan, McCarthy and Redman, *Strikes in Post-War Britain*, p. 67.

³⁴ *Midland Red strike* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 25071957], (ATV, first broadcast 25 July 1957), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-25071957-midland-red-strike/MediaEntry/2072.html> [accessed 2 May 2013]; *Bus strike interviews* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID:22071957], (22 July 1957), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-22071957-bus-strike-interviews/MediaEntry/2080.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

wife of a striking worker on the doorstep of her terrace. This was the only example of the workplace/ doorstep split in the collection and can be understood as the attempts of the regional news team to find their position in the 'theatre of news'.³⁵ As Luke McKernan has argued news providers maintained a reflexive position in their relation to other forms of news available to their audiences.³⁶ The greater accommodation of a female audience was also evident in the choice of a female newsreader Pat Cox, eliciting the 'female perspective', which resonated with contemporary ideas of gender balance on screen.³⁷ Seeking out and filming the piece with Mrs Butley on the doorstep of her terrace would have been costly and time consuming, which is probably why there are not more news items that follow this pattern. However, it does demonstrate the commitment of the news teams to engaging the 'housewives' of the Midlands, who had a vested interest in local politics beyond their roles as consumers.

The equal weight given to the shop steward on the picket line and the budgeting skills of Mrs Butley on strike pay, suggests that women's status in the family as an effective manager of meagre incomes was respected. In literature which has described an increasing move away from the centrality of production in working class lives to the centrality of consumption the imperatives for co-operation between husbands, wives and wage-earning children to balance the budget of the working class household has been overlooked. As previously mentioned, Elizabeth Roberts has suggested that working class wives of the interwar era were afforded status through their budgeting abilities.³⁸ While Roberts has suggested a loss of status for working-class women in the

³⁵ Harrison, 'From newsreels to a theatre of news', pp. 120-139.

³⁶ McKernon, 'Newsreels: form and function', pp. 95-106.

³⁷ Thumim, 'Mrs Knight must be balanced', pp. 91-104.

³⁸ Roberts, *Women and Families*, pp. 139-140.

1950s, the regional television news material suggests that this status was certainly not entirely eroded, but was beginning to take new forms. Mrs Butley was a neatly dressed young housewife, not the nostalgic image of the working class housewife that Richard Hoggart described when he referred to 'our mam'.³⁹ The visible and public support women provided to their husbands in times of industrial action suggests that there was no simple delineation of the working class family around gendered identities of producer and consumer and that the regional news teams continued to acknowledge women as the financial managers of the working-class household and worthy commentators during strike action.

Cinderella's of affluence: The female-led picket line

As discussed in chapter one, although equal pay has been high on the research agenda for feminist historians, it was rarely an integral part of women's industrial action in the 1950s and 1960s. The regional television news provides important material that allows us to analyse the actual motivations of women on the picket line in the 1950s and 1960s. In addition, the dynamics between the agency of the women on the picket line and the attention they received from the media will be explored. Louise Raw's recent work on the matchwomen's strike has highlighted the popular appeal of the matchwomen's story:

The fairytale quality of the struggle between the powerful and the poor; and a mostly young and female workforce with the

³⁹ Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, pp. 37-38.

photogenically waif-like appeal of Hans Christian Anderson's
'Little Matchgirl', a Victorian classic.⁴⁰

Drawing on Raw's analysis the following section discusses the gendered dynamics in reports and images of female led industrial action in the 1950s and 1960s. A discussion of the regional television news material is preceded by an analysis of the female civil servants equal pay campaign (1952-1955) to provide context and comparison. The equal pay campaign was a national movement largely driven by a pressure group, the Equal Pay Campaign Committee (EPCC), an amalgamation of feminist groups and all-female employee associations.⁴¹ The historiography of the 1952-1955 Equal Pay campaign has variously emphasised shortages of female staff, campaigns by white-collar unions and feminist pressure groups, and electoral considerations as the central influences on the granting of equal pay to female civil servants.⁴² It must be noted, however, that even within the civil service this was a limited victory, largely applicable to professional middle class women. Equal pay did not apply to those working in manual grades as cooks cleaners and canteen workers, or postal and telegraph officers in the Post Office. Nurses were also excluded on the grounds that nursing was perceived as 'women's work'.⁴³

There has been scant consideration given to how female activists presented their campaign to the media, which has meant that historians have overlooked the innovative

⁴⁰ Raw, 'Striking a light: Bryant & May revisited', p. 151.

⁴¹ Harold L Smith, 'The politics of conservative reform: The equal pay for equal work issue, 1945-1955', *The Historical Journal*, 35:2 (1992), p. 402.

⁴² See respectively, Keith Grint, 'Women and equality: the acquisition of equal pay in the post office 1870-1961', *Sociology*, 22:1 (1988), pp. 103-4; Boston, *Women Workers and the Trade Unions*, pp. 249-50; Allen Potter, 'The equal pay campaign committee: a case-study of a pressure group', *Political Studies*, 5:1 (1957), pp. 49-64; Smith, 'The Politics of Conservative Reform', pp. 401-15.

⁴³ Boston, *Women Workers and the Trade Unions*, p. 251.

methods used by campaigners to draw attention and support to the cause. Within this literature, Allen Potter has considered the relationship between the EPCC and the print media in the most detail. He identified three techniques used to gain media attention: large-scale ‘publicity stunts’, such as delivering petitions to parliament on ‘Equal Pay Day’, putting pressure on editors to keep the issue live in printed readers’ letters, and individual members taking advantage of opportunities to publish articles in magazines, periodicals and trade journals.⁴⁴ Campaigners were explicit in how fellow activists should raise the profile of the campaign at a regional and national level:

Publicity for our cause is essential. Any National campaign will probably achieve notice in the National Press, but local Press news is no less important. Don’t forget to inform your local newspaper of the results of your political representations. Start a correspondence in the local Press and see that other colleagues keep it up. If the paper is sympathetic, they may write up an interview or even do a feature article. They are almost certain to publish a story on any local activity that you can initiate...In fact, do everything possible thing you can think of to keep the question of Equal Pay political dynamite.⁴⁵

In order to fulfil this aim, on the 14th February 1953 three women representatives of the National Staff Side Equal Pay Committee went to number eleven Downing Street to present the Chancellor of the Exchequer with an oversized Valentine’s card. On the front it read ‘Remember Your Promise of the 16th of May’, ‘Be True to Us on Budget

⁴⁴ Potter, ‘The Equal Pay Campaign Committee’, pp. 54-55.

⁴⁵ MRO: TUC Archive, MSS.296/6/1/12, 1953.

Day’ and inside ‘All parties are agreed on the principle’, ‘The Labour Party is committed to introduce it’, ‘The TUC are on record for it’, ‘Women of the Public Services look to YOU to introduce it’, ‘EQUAL PAY’ (see Figure 25).⁴⁶ The following year the EPCC addressed the press at a rally below the Emmeline Pankhurst statue in Victoria Tower Gardens, Westminster on March 9th as the issue was debated in parliament (see Figure 26).⁴⁷ They therefore mixed the feminised and the feminist in the visual imagery of their campaign. By successfully balancing the tension between the two the campaigners raised their visibility in the media and the significance of their campaign. The equal pay campaigners clearly saw the ability to feminise their campaign as a strength, and retained significant agency over their media presence. However in the regional television news material it is more difficult to establish whether the women on the picket lines were feminised by the local media, or whether the material provides insight into women’s picket line practices.



Figure 25 TUC archive collection, feminised imagery in the civil service Equal Pay Campaign, 1953

⁴⁶ MRO: TUC Archive, MSS.296/6/1/12, 1953.

⁴⁷ Smith, ‘The Politics of Conservative Reform’, p. 410.



Figure 26 TUC archive collection, feminist imagery in the civil service Equal Pay Campaign, 1954

As stated previously, equal pay was not an issue which frequently provoked working-class female workers to take strike action in the 1950s and 1960s. Women, as was the general trend in industrial action at this time, were more likely to strike for union recognition and wage increases. As Sarsby has pointed out in her study of women pottery workers, between the 1950s and the 1970s increasing wages meant that growing numbers of women could make a living wage allowing them to throw out feckless husbands, even if their earnings were far from equal with their male colleagues.⁴⁸ While the principle of equal pay remained elusive, women were using relative increases in financial independence to make choices about their lives unknown to previous generations of women. The local print and broadcast media were sensitive to women's industrial action in the Midlands during the 1950s and 1960s. Relatively small numbers

⁴⁸ Sarsby, *Missuses & Mouldrunners*, p. 108.

of striking workers could reasonably expect to make the front page. This was of course mediated by other national and regional events and the ability of journalists to make contact with workers, shop stewards, union officials and employers.

Eight female clerks working at the Birmingham offices of the Automobile Association (AA) were front page news in August 1960 when they staged a lunch-time walk out. They complained they were overworked and received low pay in comparison to commercial offices in the area. Although they heeded the advice of the regional organiser for the Clerical and Administrative Workers Union and reported for work the following morning they were sacked before the union could attempt negotiations. The appearance of the story on the front page may have been primarily because reporters and photographers had easy access to the workers in the city centre. Likewise the lack of engagement with the CAWU by the AA was not an issue of the workers gender. Evidence from union discussions with the AA in the 1930s when the organisation comprised a predominately male workforce reveals how it continually evaded calls for union recognition. This is apparent in a memo recording a meeting with AA management by a frustrated union official in 1938:

The Deputy Secretary, Fryer, is a very hard-boiled type of elderly individual, quite convinced that although he is an autocrat he is a very benevolent one, and he told me a number of things which they did for their staff. –month's gratuity on marriage, if they had to dispense with their services 3 months pay, and so on.

I asked why, if the conditions were so good, they were rather afraid of a trade union coming in? He then said that there was

no bar to any of their members becoming trade unionists. There was no enquiry ever made regarding wither the political, religious or other activities, of their employees, so long as they were efficient on their job.⁴⁹

This individualisation of the workers by their employers in the 1930s is revealing of conservative approaches to democracy in the workplace. As the 1960 strike entered a second week more employees joined the striking workers, by this point numbering thirty one. The general secretary of the CAWU, Ann Godwin, appears to have used a variety of tactics to raise the profile of the strike. The women received support from the Birmingham Trades Council who called on all their union members to write ‘letters of indignation’ to the Duke of Edinburgh who was then president of the AA.⁵⁰ The ability to connect the strike action with the Duke of Edinburgh and car manufacture in the Midlands kept the story on the front page. Linking the AA clerical workers strike with the production of Land Rovers for the Association also broadened the relevance of the strike in the region when shop stewards at the Solihull works ‘blackened’ the production of vehicles for the AA.⁵¹ *The Birmingham Mail* printed part of a letter from the Joint Shop Stewards Committee of the Tractors and Transmissions Branch of Morris Minors Ltd:

‘Should you persist in pursuing this out-dated, mid-Victorian attitude,’ the letter states, ‘we advise our members who are

⁴⁹ MRO: TUC Archive, MSS.292/253.23/2, 1938.

⁵⁰ ‘AA girls strike may be official’, *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (18 August 1960), front page.

⁵¹ ‘Rover stewards ‘black’ AA field-cars’, *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch*, (5 September 1960), p. 7.

members of your association to withdraw forthwith, or not to renew their membership when it expires and join an association that recognises the democratic right of the individual.’⁵²

In this context, the use of the term ‘mid-Victorian’ refers to the refusal of the organisation to recognise the union, but accusations of mid-Victorianism could be used to cover a multitude of social issues, including the treatment of women, and also featured on the strikers placards with the slogans: ‘Good employers recognise unions. Why does the AA differ?’ and ‘AA is motorists union. AA staff want own union.’⁵³ The strike was finally resolved after five weeks of action. The workers were reinstated and the CAWU were allowed to represent employees who were members of the union. However the organisation’s position on union representation remained unchanged and it would not allow a revision of national conditions of service while the CAWU only represented a ‘minority of staff’.⁵⁴

The television news visited the AA workers picket line three times over the five week action. Like the print media the easy access to the city centre picket line and changing twists in the story meant it maintained a media profile that was difficult for the AA managers to ignore. The first television news story on the AA strike was broadcast on the third day of action, 17th of August 1960.⁵⁵ The establishing shot shows the office

⁵² ‘AA dispute before the TUC Council’, *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch*, (24 August 1960), front page.

⁵³ *AA Strike in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 29081960], (ATV, first broadcast 29 August 1960), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-29081960-aa-strike/MediaEntry/3948.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁵⁴ ‘AA dispute ends –B’ham staff to be reinstated’, *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (22 September 1960), p. 9.

⁵⁵ *Women employed by the AA on strike in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 29081960], (ATV, first broadcast 17 August 1960), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-29081960-aa->

buildings, moving to a highly choreographed shot of the pickets marching in a line towards the camera holding placards. The image is reminiscent of a beauty pageant rather than a picket, although it is not possible to know if this comparison resonated with contemporary audiences. The next shot shows the workers on the picket line being addressed by a male speaker, potentially either Ken Whitehead chairman of the Birmingham AA branch of the CAWU, or FW Leath the CAWU Midland area organiser. The skirts and heels of the strikers become significant to this image, because in the next shot they are sat on chairs on the picket line, reminiscent of their desk jobs, rather than other images of picketing workers who stood or sat on the ground. In this way these subtle differences constructed a very different image of the AA strike action compared to the picket lines of female factory workers. The television cameras next visited the AA pickets on the 29th August, this time the pickets did not make an elaborate procession for the cameras.⁵⁶ The cameras also followed the strikers as they handed out leaflets to car workers at their factory gates, a connection that was also detailed in the print media. The closing shot showed a group of car workers at the gates. The third news film broadcast on the 6th September 1960, showed the pickets in the rain under umbrellas, while discussions went on inside with their employers, the last shot showed the pickets standing in the rain.⁵⁷

[strike/MediaEntry/3948.html](http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-17081960-woman-employed-by-the-aa-on-strike/MediaEntry/3929.html)<http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-17081960-woman-employed-by-the-aa-on-strike/MediaEntry/3929.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁵⁶ *AA strike in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 29081960], (ATV, first broadcast 29 August 1960), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-29081960-aa-strike/MediaEntry/3948.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁵⁷ *Strike pickets at the AA office in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 06091960], (ATV, first broadcast 6 September 1960), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-06091960-strike-pickets-at-the-aa-office/MediaEntry/3970.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

Without more evidence of the women's own testimony is it difficult to ascertain how the women featured in the news film reflected on their experience of strike action. Understanding the images as an echo of their social agency, it is tempting to suggest that the television news film provides insight into their changing attitudes towards their media attention as the strike continued. In the first piece, they women obediently marched in line for the camera, but by the third piece they barely acknowledged its presence. The loss of the voiceover commentary means it is also impossible to know how the television news teams described the strikers. Their changing demeanour before the camera, however, suggests that the women did reflect on their media attention and chose not to feminise their picket line practices. Viewing the extant moving images as objects, they have an emblematic value as historical evidence. Emblematically, the clerical worker on the picket line is an image which encompasses many of the contradictions of living in the 'affluent' Midlands. She has often been a symbol of mobility for young working-class women, but her physical mobility out of the factory and into the office did not change her level of pay or her class position. On the surface she is well dressed and a picture of fashion, a symbol of the transformative powers of consumerism, but she is present on the picket line not as a 'strike happy' 'affluent worker', but in an attempt to gain modest levels of recognition as a worker and economic agent.

In the mid-1960s there were even more explicit links being drawn between the disparity of women's low pay and poor working conditions, and the aspirations of affluent society. In 1963 at the annual conference of the National Union of Public Employees, General Sydney Hill described nurses in particular as:

‘Cinderellas left sitting among the ashes while others have a ball on the proceeds of the affluent society.’⁵⁸

This metaphor is interesting in terms of the identification of the persistence of low wages for women, and their inability to participate in affluent society.

In 1964 the workers of the Bluebird toffee factory at Halesowen, later joined by workers at the Hunnington factory took part in successful action for union recognition and a pay increase. Their action provides further evidence that working women were receiving media attention as a social group whose employment was not sufficiently remunerated. The prospective Labour parliamentary candidate for Oldbury and Halesowen visited the picket line and was quoted in *The Birmingham Mail*:

‘In 25 years experience of trade union work I do not think I have ever been in touch with a strike where the women have been so solid.’⁵⁹

This praise should not be read as a marker of women’s increasing militancy. None of the sources available suggest that the toffee workers practices on the picket line were remarkably different from either their contemporaries or earlier examples of female-led industrial action in the Midlands. What is significant is acknowledgement of the strike by a local politician and his willingness to associate himself with, and give praise to, the women’s action in the local media.

This was not the first time the toffee workers had been on strike, nor was it the first time the press and broadcast media had visited their picket line, nor indeed the factory.

⁵⁸ ‘Extra payments move for “Cinderella” nurses’, *Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (13 May 1963), front page.

⁵⁹ ‘Toffee strikers vote to go back’, *Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (September 21 1964), p. 9.

The images of the workers featured in Donald Campbell's tour of the factory showed images of smiling production line workers (see Figure 17). On 19th March 1958 one hundred women walked out of Parkes (Classic Confectionary) Ltd at Oldbury because their management refused to recognise the T&GWU at their factory. They also had grievances over first-aid, canteen and toilet facilities, as well as claiming they were forced to buy soap personally to wash down the machines in the factory. The workers shut down the North Side factory, but another on the South Side was not unionised and continued production. On the second day of the strike the management issued a notice stating the women should return to work by lunch time or they 'would be considered to have left their employment.' The T&GWU took the usual step of 'blacking' the firm's products by asking all their members in road transport and British Rail not to handle them.⁶⁰ Later they went further calling on members to 'Boycott Parkes' sweets when you buy your weekend supplies'.⁶¹ The strike was declared official on Monday 24th March and *The Birmingham Mail* continued to report almost daily on its progress on pages seven and eleven.

The television footage of the toffee workers on strike in 1964 reveals some interesting points of departure when compared with the earlier material from 1958. The first television news coverage of the Parkes strike was broadcast on the first day on action, 19th March 1958.⁶² The establishing shot showed the company name above the factory, moving out to a wider shot of the factory front and the picket line below, with some

⁶⁰ 'Women sweet workers stay on strike', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (20 March 1958), front page.

⁶¹ 'Boycott these sweets, says union', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (21 March 1958), p. 11.

⁶² *Strike at the Parkes Confectionary* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID:19031958], (ATV, first broadcast 19 March 1958), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-19031958-strike-at-the-parkes-confectionery-factory/MediaEntry/2427.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

pickets sat on the ground against the wall and others by the roadside. The camera then provided a close up of the workers sat against the wall, talking amongst each other. There were a handful of young men among the young women. The next shot showed four women in white overalls crossing the picket line; one shouted to the striking workers. This was followed by another close up shot of two young women and young man sharing in conversation. As the women talked they stroked each other's hands. The camera then provided a shot of a notice at the front of the factory advertising for male and female workers. It read: 'Vacancies, Boys for learning the trade, Girls in all departments, Ex-employees welcomed' (giving an indication of the gender segregation and the fluidity of the workforce turnover at the factory). The final shot showed the pickets on their feet jeering at two women in overalls as they crossed the picket line at the factory door. They gestured to the women to join them, but the women dismissed them by waving their arms and disappeared with a trolley inside the factory.

The second television news item was broadcast on the second day of the strike, and was far less neatly edited.⁶³ It opened with a view of the workers on the picket line, variously standing and sitting along the factory wall. They all wore long coats and some of the women, headscarves. Their bodily gestures suggest they were cold. The second shot, a close up of the pickets revealed that some women were there in their white work overalls, suggesting they may have been persuaded to join the strike that morning. A police officer was also in attendance. The next shot showed the strikers gathered by the roadside listening to a male speaker. This may have been A Mostyn Evans, district organiser for the T&GWU who supported the toffee workers and was widely quoted in

⁶³ *Strike at Parkes factory* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 20031958], (ATV, first broadcast 20 March 1958), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-20031958-strike-at-parkes-factory/MediaEntry/2431.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

the local print media on the action.⁶⁴ There was not a clear enough shot of his face to confirm this. The final shot showed the strikers cheering, clapping and waving their arms in the air as they turned a delivery lorry away from the factory.

Interpretations of women's behaviour on the picket line, especially in print media, have commonly commented on their physicality, associating them with liveliness and exuberance. Lindsey McMaster has suggested that 'fun and violence' were dominant in the representations of working women's activism in newspaper reports from early twentieth century Canada.⁶⁵ In interwar Britain, Selina Todd has discussed how the representation of work as a 'dreamy interlude' for young factory women between childhood and marriage competed with the identification of the same group as potentially or actually delinquent when involved in industrial action.⁶⁶ This was likewise visible in the print media reports of the Parkes workers in articles that described how 'the strikers sang and Rock 'n Rolled outside the factory to keep warm.'⁶⁷ The youth, camaraderie and energy of the toffee strike workers was also evident in the 1958 television news material.

This 1964 television coverage contained some important differences. The format of the report was remarkably similar, although more neatly edited than the 1958 reports. It was broadcast on the 1st September 1964, during the second week of the strike.⁶⁸ It

⁶⁴ 'Women sweet workers stay on strike', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (20 March 1958), front page.

⁶⁵ Lindsey McMaster, *Working Girls in the West: Representations of Wage-Earning Women*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), p. 122.

⁶⁶ Todd, 'Boisterous workers', p. 293.

⁶⁷ 'Women Defy Firm – Stay Out', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (20 March 1958), p. 11.

⁶⁸ *Strike women at toffee works in Midlands News* [online video, ID: 01091964], (ATV, first broadcast 1 September 1964), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-01091964-strike-women-at-toffee-works/MediaEntry/7406.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

began with an establishing shot of the factory, moving to a long shot of the pickets at the factory gates. The camera then showed the pickets obstructing the entrance of a vehicle to the grounds, followed by another wide shot of the picket line. The next shot, was a close up of a female picket talking to the policemen stationed at the gate. Further along the factory fence five women shared out cups of tea. The next shot showed two women, one a floral print dress, the other wearing a cardigan, knitting on the picket line (see Figure 27). The camera then followed one woman as she approached a van, in an attempt to turn it from the gates. The closing shot was another wide view of the picket line, factory gates and factory building in the background.



Figure 27 *Midlands News* still, worker knitting on the picket line, Halesowen 1964

What is most evident from this footage is the age of the women on the picket line. These were middle-aged women, rather than boisterous youthful workers, reflecting the changing age demographic of the female labour force in the 1950s and 1960s as

increasing numbers of women adopted a bi-modal work pattern. The physicality of the women's picketing practices, tea and knitting rather than rocking and rolling, was revealed in the television footage. The everyday quality of the women's gestures and actions suggest that these were not spectacles played out for the camera, but a view of how this group of women spent their time on the picket line. The television news cameras may have paid particular attention to these gestures, because of their novelty value, but this does not undermine the integrity of the women's action. Like the discussion with the housewife on the terrace doorstep and the placard wielding clerical worker, this image makes a powerful intervention into ideas of affluence in the Midlands. At a historical moment where participation in consumer culture and home-ownership were upheld as a realistic aspiration for the working class, knitting on the picket line was a powerful image of how women realised that aspiration. The television footage made visible the continuing relevance of women's 'traditional' skills in balancing the production and consumption of the working class household through their efforts as working wives. Ultimately their strike action was successful and resulted in a 15s a week increase. In addition their endorsement by a local politician shows the female worker as a recognised social force, legitimately claiming higher wages in order to participate in the affluent society.

The absence of a sense of anxiety in these images provides further evidence of women's ambiguous status as workers. Just as the images discussed in chapter six echoed women's dual role, the women knitting on the picket line is simultaneously disengaged from work, taking pleasure in her knitting, and at work, completing a domestic task. Rather than this image exemplifying women's lack of militancy, it shows how women's political engagement with workplace politics was seamlessly woven into their position as wives and mothers.

Some of the mid-1960s newspaper reports discussed women's strike action in far more feminised terms than reports from the 1950s. The reportage of a brief strike by women at Joseph Lucas in October 1963 provides a good example. The action was described by *The Birmingham Mail* as 'the firms first "all petticoat" strike in the history of Joseph Lucas Ltd'. The article also included direct testimony from the striking workers, which was unusual for an action led by male as well as female workers. It appears that this may have been the result of some confusion over the start time of the meeting, thus giving the reporters more time to interview and photograph the women:

While they were waiting they [the women on strike] amused themselves on the swings and roundabouts in the children's corner and one of them brought with her a whistle to call them together for the meeting. This 'Rag Trade' touch caused a great deal of laughter while they waited for the arrival of Mr Moss Evans, of the TGWU.⁶⁹

This suggests that the visibility of women in the workplace and in popular culture was making an impact on social commentary by the mid-1960s. The mention of the militant characters of the BBC situation comedy *Rag Trade* provided a useful reference for commentary on the changing place of women in society.⁷⁰ The strike action of women in the late-1950s had been diligently reported, but the language in this piece was more elaborate and invested with historical significance. The television news report of the same strike meeting also appears to have taken advantage of the delay, because it produced similar pictures to those in the newspaper.

⁶⁹ "'Men get more for same job" claim 700 women in pay strike', *The Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch* (25 October 1963), front page.

⁷⁰ *Rag Trade* was a BBC situation comedy broadcast between 1961 and 1963.



Figure 28 *Midlands News* still, lamp assemblers wait for strike meeting, Birmingham 1963

The establishing shot in the *Midlands News* item showed the strikers with children on the swings and roundabouts in the children's corner of the park (see Figure 28).⁷¹ The camera then followed the women as they made their way to the meeting point, surveying the crowd as they walked. This was followed by a close-up of Moss Evans addressing the crowd and closed with a wide shot of the whole group. The inclusion of the shot of the women on the swings was an interesting addition to the sequence of shots used in other coverage of strikes at Lucas. The previous year, when the batteries section had been out on strike, the television news team filmed the meeting that resulted

⁷¹ *Strike by women lamp assemblers* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 25101963], (ATV, first broadcast 25 October 1963), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-25101963-strike-by-women-lamp-assemblers/MediaEntry/6546.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

in a vote to go back to work.⁷² There was an establishing shot of the crowd, followed by close-ups of the workers (predominantly men) as they filed past the camera and into the factory gates. The footage is reminiscent of early actuality footage from the early 1900s which had filmed workers at the factory gates. These films were fascinating to audiences because of the movement of the crowd and the opportunity to see the faces of the working-class on screen. Depending on the context of the screening, it also allowed the working-class to see themselves on film for the first time. This item reveals how there had been no innovation in this formula in capturing male workers on camera. This item from 1962 was similar to another filmed in November 1963.⁷³ One month after the initial action, the women of Lucas came out on strike again and this time with the support of the men. In this item, although the workers are also walking through a park on the way to their meeting, there were no images of them on swings or roundabouts.

The 1963 news item featuring the strike by women lamp assemblers, may have included the additional shots of the women on the swings simply because they had more time to film them because of the mix up in the meeting start time. These shots may not necessarily have been the produce of gendered filming practices. The inclusion of this shot as the establishing shot of the news item, the first image the viewers at home would have seen, however, suggests that the gender of the strikers was a notable part of the story and that the news teams used feminised images of the working women if they could. This raises the question of the agency of the women working at Lucas,

⁷² *Lucas strikers return to work* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 05101962], (ATV, first broadcast, 5 October 1962); <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-05101962-lucas-strikers-return-to-work/MediaEntry/5524.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

⁷³ *Lucas strike* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 06111963], (ATV, first broadcast 6 November 1963), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-06111963-lucas-strike/MediaEntry/6579.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

which is perhaps best measured by the management's own television performance broadcast five months later.

This later ATV news item suggests that the Lucas management were unsettled by the action instigated by the women. Mr Armstrong appeared on the television news in March 1964, discussing a suggestion scheme set up by Lucas in Birmingham with reporter Tony Holmes.⁷⁴ His precise position in the company is unclear, but the reporter opened the piece with the line: 'Mr Armstrong it costs your organisation in payment for this suggestion scheme a pound for every working minute', which suggests a senior management role. The two men were seated in neat armchairs in a well furnished office. Glass shelving behind them displayed a range of lamps made by the company. Armstrong explained that apart from the potential benefits to company efficiency there was real value in giving the opportunity to workers to feel part of the company. The maximum reward for workers' suggestions was £100, with the opportunity to go forward to win an annual award for the best suggestion of £1000. It cannot be proved conclusively, but the item does appear to be an attempt by the Lucas management to redress the negative PR resulting from the previous year's strike action, but it can be interpreted as a public statement by the company that they were attempting to work more cooperatively with their workforce.

Summary

This chapter has demonstrated how the complexity of women's visibility and agency as 'housewives' and 'workers' was conflated in regional television news reports of industrial action. The car industry and its supposedly 'strike happy' and affluent male

⁷⁴ *Lucas suggestion scheme* in *Midlands News* [online video, ID: 04031964], (ATV, first broadcast 4 March 1964), <http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-04031964-lucas-suggestion-scheme/MediaEntry/6868.html> [accessed 2 May 2013].

workers made national headlines in this era and have been the focus of most contemporary sociological and historical study. From a regional perspective however, strike action was used in this period by women and men in a variety of industries who were interested in providing comfortable homes for their families and considered themselves to be 'ordinary'. This study therefore fits with recent work that has attempted to unpick ideas of affluence. The issues that prompted female workers to take strike action were usually those of basic union recognition and modest pay increases. Nevertheless they did make headline news in contemporary local print and broadcast media.

Their campaigns have not been recognised as part of labour history and have also been overlooked in feminist histories, because they did not focus on feminist issues such as equal pay. These images begin to challenge the idea that women did not identify themselves as workers, but shows how women's motivations to strike were based around their position as managers of household finances and working-class households struggles to maintain a comfortable home. The images of older (most likely married) women on the picket line are especially valuable, and show women comfortable with their status as domestic and paid workers. The actions of this generation of women not only normalised women's position in the workplace, but began to gain recognition from social commentators and government officials as a social force.

Through its discussion of contemporary print and broadcast media, this chapter has shown the instability in definitions of working-class ordinariness at this time. The histories of women's changing role in the working-class household economy were entwined with television as part of the working classes contribution to social commentary. In the context of this strong domestic structuring of television and the visibility of the domestic roles of Mr and Mrs Midlands, the regional television news

provides an innovative perspective on this contentious aspect of postwar history, which draws women into this history of the public struggles for 'ordinariness' and home-centeredness.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion: Women and the work of cultural production

What are present...are ordinary men, women and children who have progressed from being swains and peasants, painterly extras in a landscape, and turned, not into new cinematic actors and extras, but into spectator-citizens...They are the 'average man' whose representation in literature and in photography in the nineteenth century eventually makes its way into cinema, the 'theatre of the people'.¹

This quote, from Elizabeth Labas' *Forgotten Futures*, eloquently summarises the place of the 'average man' in cultural production from painting to cinema. This study has moved this discussion forward in terms of time-frame, medium and gender by analysing the place of ordinary women in the cultural production of regional television news. Paradoxically this exploratory research has found that the ordinary woman was far from a simple character: unravelling the complexities of her ordinariness was not only vital to understanding her work in cultural production, but has several implications for current understandings of women's history in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s.

By drawing together the histories of the establishment of regional television news and the changing patterns of women's employment in the Midlands this study has provided new insight into how this combination of cultural and social change affected how women were made visible and participated in this aspect of public culture. In studies of cultural production the work of ordinary people had, hitherto, rarely been considered in

¹ Elizabeth Lebas, *Forgotten Futures: British Municipal Cinema 1920-1980* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2011), p. 6.

scholarly analysis, much less the potential of this material to provide valuable evidence for social and cultural history. Debates in women's history have usually focused on either women's status in the home or in the workplace and in turn the impact of women 'going out to work' on the home. This thesis has taken a different perspective and suggests that it was precisely the definitional ambiguity surrounding women's work that intensified the visibility of women in the regional television news, suggesting that the effects of increasing numbers of women entering paid employment on social and cultural life should not be overlooked.

Women's history has at times been conceptualised as a twofold project of recovery and reinterpretation. Both these processes have been part of this doctoral project; the recovery aspect has uncovered and categorised the many ways in which ordinary women were made visible in the regional television news collection. In turn these images have been used to reinterpret women's agency in the work of cultural production and to point to new directions in the history of women's social roles in the 1950s and 1960s. This research, as in previous studies, has demonstrated that the relationship between women's visibility and agency is a complex. Using the regional television news collection this thesis has argued that it is possible to unpack the dynamics of this relationship to begin to provide a historically differentiated and multi-layered view of women's agency in the history of visual culture. To do so, the extant moving image material in the ATV regional news collection has been approached as contemporary moving images and as material objects. Pointing to new connections in women's history across the interconnected sites of home, work and leisure, this study therefore concludes that it is best to understand the collection not as a historical record that provides an index of the time, but as a record that can provide insight into the 'structure of feeling' of the period under discussion because of its present tense value.

The fundamental originality of this research lies in its use of moving image material and one of the central conclusions of this thesis is that audio-visual material, such as the extant news film in the ATV regional news collection, can be productively utilised as historical evidence. As a Collaborative Doctoral Award this research has paved the way for future studies by developing a working methodology and uploading material to the MACE online catalogue so that the materials used are freely available for future research. By contextualising the extant fragments of the ATV news collection with printed ephemera and official records this study has demonstrated that it is possible to understand moving image as part of social and cultural history, integral to the historical texture of everyday life, rather than existing as a sub discipline on the margins of ‘proper’ history. When set alongside evidence from oral history, the moving images evaluated here provide considerable nuance to our understanding of how women’s lives were changing in the mid-twentieth century and indeed the pace at which this change happened.

This thesis has demonstrated how even short thirty second pieces of mute film can provide rich material for historical discussion across a number of dimensions, as illustrated by a number of news items featuring in the analysis of more than one chapter of this study. Chapter two described how a working methodology had been developed for this research that combined analytical techniques from art history, and visual anthropology. This allowed the study to evaluate the extant moving image material in the ATV regional news collection as contemporary ephemera that represented the embodied social agency (albeit in indirect ways) of those it captured on film and as material objects that replaced that embodied experience with an aesthetic power to ‘clutter’ our understanding of everyday life in the Midlands.

The study maintained a cautious realist perspective, while acknowledging that a large proportion of past experience will remain unknowable to historians. Therefore chapter three provided the project with a sense of scale, emphasising an increasing uniformity in terms of the numbers of women engaging in some form of paid employment across all Midland counties and the kind of jobs they were doing. The rapidly expanding television audience during the period 1956-1968 regularly tuned in to the regional news programmes. Faced with the challenging task of representing the region the news teams adopted a practice of broadcasting popular stories that were not necessarily distinctively regional, but were told using ordinary local people. This practice, perhaps inadvertently, has left a historical record that does not provide a social survey of the Midlands in the 1950s and 1960s but does reveal contemporary responses to events that have faded from the historical agenda.

The regional television news teams both reflected and reinforced ideas that women's paid work contained elements of leisure and opportunities for feminine expression. These dynamics were explored further in chapter four, which studied women's roles in the formal work of cultural production at ATV. This provided a rich seam of study that could be expanded in numerous directions in future. The study found that off-screen women's work at ATV's Midland and London offices was largely comparable and also conformed to the patterns of female employment across the industry as a whole.

Women, especially if they were working-class, found it difficult to gain promotion beyond secretarial roles. Production roles for women were generally limited to that of Production Assistant, especially from the mid-1960s, which meant that women used travel to add variety to their careers. Women's on-screen roles at ATV were in some ways comparable to women's experience in the television industry at large, again especially in the contraction of opportunities for women in the mid-1960s, but also

departed from this picture in some important ways. The career of newscaster and reporter Pat Cox, demonstrated how the femininity and frivolity, the dominant popular televisual aesthetics of the late 1950s and early 1960s, were successful in establishing a regional news audience. 'Representing the region', especially between 1956 and 1964 was an experimental endeavour that within the time constraints of news production settled on filming ordinary Midlanders, alongside promoting television and television personalities as a symbol of change and modernity in the region.

The commitment to regional faces and voices synthesised the quotidian and the aspirational, visually and discursively, shaping the news teams relationship with ordinary Midland women. This distinctive relationship provided a space for working-class women quite unlike national television news, or women's magazines. The iconic figure of the 1950s housewife was certainly present in the Midlands news programmes, and these images were perhaps suggestive of how 'affluence' should be experienced. Nevertheless, even though the regional news was provided by a commercial television company the housewife was not only addressed or made visible as a consumer. The three ideal types of housewifely composure that have been identified in women's history: Mrs Consumer, the professional housewife and the good working mother, provided a framework for opening up this important aspect of ordinary women's cultural production. It was therefore possible to argue that in the 1950s and 1960s as paid work in combination with domestic work was becoming a reality for increasing numbers of (married) women definitions of 'women's work' were reframed as supportive jobs across the household and the workplace. This in turn had implications for the kind of femininity women were encouraged to adopt in order to efficiently operate between the roles of managing the home and paid work.

The concept of the dual role, central to this historical moment, was a prominent representational strategy developed by the regional news teams making the ordinary 'working woman' distinctively visible in the regional television news. The regional news team blurred women's embodied experience as workers (filmed in their uniforms and at factory gates) with a gendered interpretation of women as consumers and (potential) wives and mothers. This ambiguity which played upon the recognition of women as producers or consumers meant that women in paid work developed a role as social commentators in the context of regional television news. The regional news stories recognised the changing place of women in contemporary society, at times this was an explicit part of their news stories. However, the familiar representational strategies for expressing this change were formulaic. Thus the 'woman pioneer' ironically embodied less agency, than the female factory worker who was afforded a new role and space as social commentator. Although it must be acknowledged that these images of the female factory worker were mediated, the regional television news appears to have afforded her more agency than national news programmes and 'women's interest' media. The dual role of the working woman in the regional television news was highly visible because she embodied television's own role of mediating between the worlds of public and private life. She visualised points of identification for Midlands viewers, through 'actuality' footage of her nimble fingers at work, and a point of aspiration, with dramatised performances often focusing on her beststockinged legs.

In regional television news reports of industrial action, women were again made visible in a variety of ways. At times they represented the interests of the consumer and were active as strike breakers. In other news stories the women were shown standing side by side with their husbands on the picket line. If the more commercially orientated 'news'

items in the regional programmes provided images of how ‘affluent’ Midlanders could aspire to live, then images of the picket line exposed the cracks in this vision and the continuing struggle to maintain a comfortable home for working class families. The images of women on the picket line taking strike action as workers are mute in their archived form. Although symptomatic of the broadcasting of these stories at the lower end of the news hierarchy the extant images maintain an emblematic value as historical evidence. The agency of the women themselves is difficult to judge, although attempts have been made to reconstruct the motivations behind their strike action from other sources. These images are productive irritants, disturbing current perspectives on workers’ activism in the ‘affluent’ Midlands and provoking new lines of enquiry in historical research. 1968 is often used in women’s history to mark the beginning of second wave activism in Britain, demonstrated in the Dagenham machinists strike and the forming of Women’s Liberation groups. This thesis has demonstrated that although not always making demands for equal pay, women’s activism in the Midlands in the mid-1950s and 1960s was not dormant and women were actively engaged in seeking better working and living conditions for themselves and their families.

This thesis has been presented as a Midlands case study, exploring the definitions of ordinariness and their importance to representations of Midland counties in the regional television news. The ordinariness presented in the regional television news was based upon the white working-class of the region, but importantly included women working in paid employment within this definition. Likewise, even within the domesticated and commercially driven leisure form of television, the regional news broadcast images of collective action and the significance of women’s domestic skills. These images of Midlands women were part of the regions’ leisure time, and integral to contemporary social commentary. They did not provide the imaginative space for women’s self

fashioning that other media images in women's magazines provided, but they did normalise the working mother as a modern identity for women.

This is another key finding of this thesis, the normalising of the 'working wife' contributes to an understanding of an evolving and contested domesticity in the 1950s and 1960s. By providing a holistic view of women's work inside and outside the home, rather than positioning them as separate histories, it is possible to show that it was not only young women who aspired to a different kind of life in postwar Britain. Older women too sought new ways of living, which included paid employment and a comfortable, and especially in retirement, child-free, home. Thus the same generation of women usually associated with the archetype of the '1950s housewife' were in fact the driving force behind the normalisation of the position of women in the workplace. The extent to which female viewers found the images of working women broadcast by the regional news teams affective, or even affirmative, is perhaps impossible to pin down. However the conflation of production and consumption in images of women's work shows how the regional news constructed viewing pleasure into its programmes revealing that for regional news teams their programmes not only recorded but also communicated the twentieth century.

It is hoped that this study will stimulate further research in this area, either making use of moving image material, or other regional television news collections. In future study extending the timeframe of this research would allow more through consideration of ethnicity as well as class and gender. In material from the 1970s, black and Asian Midlands are far more visible, but again the ways in which they were made visible are often problematic and require historical investigation. Extending this study geographically would allow for further examination of how the popular and the vernacular was blended in different regions; at this stage it is impossible to say where

this study may stand as a paradigm case or regional part of the national picture.

Although the BFI and national archives such as ITV Source retain material deemed of national importance, building up a region by region study from the television news held by regional archives would allow an alternative picture of national importance to emerge, producing an important counterpoint to national historiography. Ideally, such a study, would also consider BBC material alongside ITV material to provide insight into how the production of news was affected by institutional background. This would allow questions to be asked around middle class and professional identities and how this affected representations of ordinariness. This study has focused on women and the visualisation of femininity on screen, however the construction of masculinity in screen culture is equally deserving of attention in historical study.

In closing, the rationale behind this project was explorative and based on the acknowledgment that it is impossible to provide an adequate history of the twentieth century if historians do not learn how to evaluate television material. As a study based in women's history it has also provided an opportunity to show ordinary women at the centre of social and cultural change. Ordinary Midland women were far more elaborately filmed than their male counterparts at work and at leisure, and were the focus of experiments in developing a regional and televisual news address. Locating women at the centre of this history has also shown the need to work across site of analysis, namely: home, work and leisure in order to reveal the full significance of their work in cultural production.

Filmography

ATV News collection (Media Archive for Central England)

34 year old mother taking degree in Midlands News (17 May 1965).

AA Strike in Midlands News (29 August 1960).

AA strike in Midlands News (29 August 1960).

Athletes Visit Accles and Pollock Factory in Midlands News (29 August 1962).

Bakers strike –bread queues in Birmingham and Midlands in Midlands News (17 November 1965).

Bakers strike –bread queues in Birmingham in Midlands News (18 November 1965).

Bakers strike in Midlands News (19 November 1965).

Ball Bearing Factory in Midlands News (13 April 1962).

Bromsgrove Couple Swap Jobs in Midland Montage (15 December 1960).

Bus Strike Interviews in Midlands News (22 July 1957).

Bus Strike Interviews in Midlands News (22 July 1957).

Cocktail party on a Viscount aircraft in Midlands News (19 February 1958).

Counter or self service shopping in Midland Montage (20 July 1961)

Donald Campbell and Bluebird Toffee Factory in Midlands News (2 June 1958).

Edgbaston in Look Around the Midlands (16 December 1960).

Fashion parade for nurses in ATV Today (23 December 1965).

Fastest typist competition held in Lewis's store in Midlands News (29 October 1959).

Female barber in ATV Today (27 February 1968).

Female level crossing keeper in Midlands News (30 January 1957)

First all Woman Police Patrol in Midlands News (3 November 1967).

Free washing facilities provided by Hoover Ltd in Midlands News (28 January 1963).

Frilly Underwear in ATV Today (14 June 1978).

Handsworth Factory in ATV Today (16 March 1967).

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