

<p>Institution: London School of Economics and Political Science</p> <p>Unit of Assessment: 36: Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management</p> <p>a. Overview</p> <p>The Department undertakes original and influential social-science-based research, providing a research-led education and engaging with national and international debates about media and communications. Our priorities are high quality, robust and independent empirical research and intellectually ambitious, theoretically-grounded critical analysis. Established in 2003, the Department has doubled in size from eight full time permanent academic staff in 2008 to 16 in 2013. Our research generates significant interventions in policy and practice in relation to a broad range of transformations affecting the intersections of media and communications with knowledge construction, political agency, culture and identities, and governance. Throughout our recent growth, we have sustained a commitment to building a distinctive, interdisciplinary department.</p> <p>b. Research strategy</p> <p>The Department's mission is to conduct critical and engaged social science research in relation to media and communications. We bring a deep understanding of changes in the media and communications environment to multiple disciplinary agendas examining how these shape, and are shaped by, complex socio-technical, political-economic, cultural and historical developments. We draw on theories from social science and the humanities, with particular strengths in social science methodologies. A wide array of theoretical, empirical and policy-oriented projects focuses on the intersection of societal change and the overall media and communications environment, more than on specific media contents. This distinctive approach emphasises structures, processes and practices in an increasingly media-saturated society. It is underpinned by examinations of the often-contested consequences of innovations in digital technologies. We aim to develop comparative approaches building on the Department's diversity that guide our research on the challenges posed by a media and communications environment, marked by continual change, strong historical continuities, and major inequalities.</p> <p>Research foci</p> <p>Our research foci have evolved as the Department has grown. Four integrating and intersecting sets of concepts and questions guide our work. These are flexibly interpreted and periodically debated among academic staff and research students, especially following new appointments, and to recognise emerging and cutting-edge issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Knowledge Construction. What are the shifting relations between knowledge producers and users within and across diverse domains of practice, including contexts such as the global media industries, journalism, media organisations, and digital technology and service producers in wealthy, developing and transitional states? What forms of literacy - interpretative, creative, resistant - are possible in a changing media and communications environment, and what forms of inequality shape opportunities for knowledge sharing? ii) Mediated Political Agency. How and why are relations changing between the media and the forms, subjects and modalities of contemporary agency, especially political and civic agency? What does this mean for the actual and potential significance of mediated public spheres, the active role of audiences, and diverse capacities for democratic debate? What resources available to citizens and other stakeholders are shaping and mediating their participation? iii) Cultures and Identities. How are cultures of identity, belonging and community changing, on all scales from local to transnational? What historical and current trends in the global media and communications industries, media representations, and everyday production, audience consumption and participation matter, and why, for the constitution of identities (ethnic, class, youth, gender, urban), social solidarity, quality of life, and ethical concern for the Other? iv) Governing Mediated Environments. How are the technologies, structures and processes of media and communications implicated in the challenges and possibilities of governance, nationally and internationally? What are the insights from sustained critical engagement with the institutions, regulations and policies crucial to governance on issues such as industry

Environment template (REF5)

structure, copyright, privacy, security, rights and freedom of expression in relation to the media and digital technologies and services in the global North and South?

Two cross-cutting themes integrate the diverse perspectives in the Department. First, our research is strongly **comparative and transnational**, which we consider vital to understanding the global, national and local significance of media and communications and to addressing the theoretical and methodological challenges of de-Westernizing research. Second, a critical and engaged approach underpins our concern with **ethical implications** in relation to norms of democracy, equality and inclusiveness, ethical inquiry and action, and quality of life. We investigate what adjustments to the mediated environment and practices are needed to respond more adequately to such norms.

Implementation of the research strategy

The Department celebrated its 10th Anniversary in 2013 with a successful international conference. Having introduced a new field of study to LSE and becoming a world-leading contributor to the field of media and communications as acknowledged by our 2008 RAE ranking, our research strategy was to build on that success to further expand and firmly establish the Department. Since 2008, the strategy was developed through jointly reached, ambitious, yet realistic decisions about where to focus effort and formal and informal supports for staff to strengthen the quality and reach of their work. We have remained open to novel research initiatives without trying to encompass everything in the media and communications field. Creating a Department Research Committee that provides seed funds for new research initiatives and external funding bids proved to be very constructive. The Committee is playing a significant role in fostering the intellectual climate of debate within and beyond the Department and in stimulating collaborative research initiatives, as detailed below. Also significant, POLIS, our think tank on journalism and society, initially part-funded by LSE, is now fully funded within the Department, and is consolidating links between academic research and public/professional engagement.

The LSE has a proactive and effective Research Division that supports our research at all stages from seed funding, to expert help with funding applications, to post-award management. The most significant way in which the School supports our research is by keeping the staff-student ratio low at 1:14, enabling quality time for research. The School provides an annual £870 per head (to which the Department adds £350) for conference participation and research-related costs. Biannual Away Days are well attended, supporting the collaborative development of our research strategy and agenda. We regularly review research opportunities, emphasising intellectually demanding questions and problems and gaps in the existing research base, and collaborations, and our research agenda is advanced through a wide range of public and internal events.

Looking forward, the strategy is to grow to 20+ FTE permanent academic staff by 2019. This will further enhance our range and depth of research coverage and outreach as well as our capacity to attract external funding and increase impact. The Research Committee will play an increasing role in research bids. We will work closely with LSE's Research Division which from 2013-14 will allocate a significant share of research overheads to departments. In line with this forward strategy, we bid within the LSE and won a new Professorship from September 2013. As Professor of Media, Communications and Social Theory, Nick Couldry's appointment is expected to strengthen the Department's success in bidding for large scale external research funds. We will build on existing research on the normative implications of changing media and communications environments by developing a core research focus on **Ethics of/in Media**, deepening research on implicit imaginaries and their consequences for the everyday production of values and for the explicit ethics of media production.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

The Department's 16 FTE academic staff is comprised of five Professors, one Professor of Practice, four Senior Lecturers, and six Lecturers. In keeping with our distinctive research strategy, some faculty are trained in media and communications, while others are trained in linguistics, philosophy, political science, social psychology, sociology, and science, technology and innovation studies. Beckett is a career journalist who directs POLIS and is a 'Professor of Practice', linking

research to contemporary practice. Such diversity informs our reflexive development as we theorise and engage with changes in media and communications. Our diverse trainings and origins (our academic staff and fellows come from 12 countries other than the UK) equip us to enter diverse networks outside the Department while also stimulating lively debate and collaboration within it. Our research capacity is augmented by five LSE Fellows, two Scholars at Risk, two Marie Curie Fellows, three post-doctoral researchers and very strong support by four full time administrative staff who are actively involved in departmental decision-making.

Following a robust recruitment process, a comprehensive **staff development strategy** supports all academic staff throughout their career. The School provides new academic staff with a full orientation programme, encouraging them to engage actively in life at LSE. The Teaching and Learning Centre offers interdisciplinary workshops in line with the national Vitae Researcher Development Framework supporting early career researchers, and there are numerous courses for academic staff to develop their research skills. We have clear **procedures for career progression**. All academic staff, including professors, are assigned a mentor in the Department who meets with his/her mentee regularly to give advice and support for career progression. Fellows and visiting researchers are closely integrated in the Department. All academic staff receive an annual Career Development Review conducted by a senior member of the Department which sets out training needs. For early career staff, probation normally involves an Interim Review after three years and a Major Review after five years, leading to a permanent contract, with provision for maternity and sick leave. The Department reduces the teaching and marking load of pre-Major Review staff by 20%. Full time academic staff are entitled to Sabbatical Leave (normally one term after every eight) and this entitlement is respected. Additional entitlement of up to three terms accrues to staff taking on senior management responsibilities. Provision is made for research leave and for teaching and associated duty buyouts up to a maximum equivalent to 40% of the normal load in any five year period. The implementation of our research strategy is strengthened by frequent communication during Departmental (three termly) and Research Committee meetings, and in support of all of our initiatives including conference and workshop organisation.

The School has a strong commitment to **equality and diversity**. It ensures that all posts are advertised widely. A proactive Action Plan is in place and equality and diversity training and advice are part of the Academic Induction Programme. Flexible working policies are available to all staff returning to work from maternity leave or when reducing hours of work for other reasons. Within the Department, issues of equality and diversity are addressed as a standing item at Department meetings. To ensure equality in the treatment of academic staff, administrative roles are rotated every three years. Our Department Manager attends equality briefings and has received training for recruitment and interviewing. We have served on the LSE's Equality and Diversity Committee, are active in the LSE Gender Equity Forum, and Orgad served as LSE Adviser to Female Students for several years. All measures are taken to ensure that policies and practices in relation to research staff are in line with the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*, in particular in matters of hiring and mentoring. This is closely monitored by the School's Research Staff Committee (with substantial input from LPU) through consultations with staff, surveys, and workshops for PIs.

The vibrancy of the research culture in the Department is enhanced by many visiting researchers. Since 2008 the Department has hosted 57 visiting scholars from 24 countries. Visiting Professors have included Mark Poster, Philip Gould, William Melody and Philip Schlesinger (current). All visitors contribute a working paper and are encouraged to participate in the Department's Research Dialogues and ad hoc seminars. In addition, procedures are in place to **stimulate and facilitate exchanges** with external parties. These include guidance provided by the Head of Department and the Research Committee, initiatives by individual academic staff and research students, supported by a strong administrative infrastructure, all underpinning a rich menu of conferences, symposia, public lectures, research dialogues, and networking activities.

ii. Research students

In 2013-14 there were 34.5 FTE PhD students in the Department, an increase from 30.5 FTE in 2008-09, of whom 31 are full time, evenly divided between male and female. Our student body is highly diverse, with students from more than 20 countries since 2003. Of the 27 students who have completed since 2008, 20 have lecturer or research positions at UK or overseas universities, four have post-doctoral fellowships (British Academy, Marie Curie, universities of Gothenburg and National Sun Yat-sen), two work in the private sector as media analysts and one with a United Nations agency. This record demonstrates that our research training (we employed 23 PhD students as research assistants on departmental projects since 2008) successfully prepares students for research careers in the academy and other institutions.

The Department's **student recruitment strategy** enables us to attract outstanding research students. There is strong demand for a place in the Department as evidenced by 104 applications for 20 offers and 8 acceptances for 2013-14 entry, an improvement over previous years. The minimum entry requirement is set high to ensure that students are well positioned to take advantage of their training. The minimum English language requirement is also set high (IELTS 7.0 overall with a least 7.0 in writing and 6.5 in other elements) to further ensure the rapid integration of students within the Department's research culture.

Research students are increasingly **well supported financially**. The School is recognised as an ESRC Doctoral Training Centre and holds a block grant from the AHRC. Students in the Department have been recipients of ESRC (5) and AHRC (1) studentships since 2008. They have won LSE PhD studentships (7) each year since the start of a competition in 2009 across all departments, with a success rate that has improved in each competition. Additional research student financial support from LSE central and external sources amounted to £437,788 (2008-13).

Research student **monitoring and support mechanisms** are closely linked to progression and successful completion, with clear expectations for progress, review and upgrade from MPhil to PhD set out in the *LSE Regulations for Research Degrees*. This is stated in the Department's PhD Student Handbook. The Research Seminar for Media, Communications & Culture (40 hours in both years 1 and 2) provides students with opportunities to present their developing research and to learn advanced research methodology. Students must pass a full unit of quantitative and qualitative research methods training and complete a course in Theories and Methods in Media and Communications, ensuring they are well informed about the interdisciplinary richness of the field. The first year upgrade includes an oral examination by a Thesis Committee (chair and two supervisors) of a 10,000 word proposal that determines progression to the second year. Second year students submit two chapters and receive feedback from the Thesis Committee. The PhD Review Board (all full-time members of staff supervising research students) formally considers the progress of each student annually, with recommendations fed back to students through the Director of the Department's PhD Programme. We make use of an online PhD log recording supervisor/student interaction and progress.

A **strong Departmental research culture** involves students fully. Students organise an annual Department Research Dialogue attended by students and academic staff and convene PhD Symposia attracting research students from the UK and overseas. Two students are sponsored each year to attend the ECREA Intensive European Programme for Doctoral Research in Communication. Our students participate in the Westminster Consortium PhD Symposium, and they are all strongly encouraged to attend conferences and other events. Students can apply to LSE's PhD student travel fund (which has been increasingly generous) to support attendance and we allocate £3,000 annually from Department resources to top up these funds. Some of our research students serve as POLIS interns and contribute to policy briefing papers, blogs, and research reports for external research sponsors. This brings students into contact with many external bodies including Ofcom, media companies, civil society organisations and government departments.

Our research students are well integrated into the School's **research culture** with its infrastructure of training and provision. The Teaching and Learning Centre offers the LSE Higher Education Academy-accredited Postgraduate Teaching Certificate, an opportunity taken up by many of our

students. Transferable skills training is provided by the Academic and Professional Development Division. Additional specialised research methods training is available from the Methodology Department and foreign language courses and support for non-native speakers of English are provided by the Language Centre. The Careers Service has a dedicated PhD Careers Advisor and the Centre for Learning Technology provides skills training in new technologies. The Library provides facilities (including a quiet study room) and support for PhD students for skills training in literature searching, finding specialist research materials (there is a proactive and dedicated media subject manager), reference management, online sharing of research and networking. The Department's students have led School-wide research student initiatives such as the Research Poster Day to which PhD students from all departments contributed.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The Department has a strong record of external, especially international, income generation involving most staff – 13 staff worked on research *grants* exceeding £7 million (of which £4,216,841 is returned as research *income* in REF4b). Contributing to the **Knowledge Construction** area, Livingstone's high profile European Commission-funded EU Kids Online projects have provided a secure basis for successful bids to the Commission for further research on families and family policies and to the MacArthur Foundation for research on connected learning. Funding from the Canadian International Development Research Centre on the impacts of information and communication technologies on livelihoods in Mozambique, Uganda and Mali also contributed in this area (Manyozo, who left in 2011). Rantanen's research on media and democracy in ten countries in Central and Eastern Europe, funded by a European Research Council Advanced Grant, contributed to the **Mediated Political Agency** area. Georgiou's European Commission funding for research on transnational television cultures, Orgad's from the Leverhulme Trust on mediated humanitarian knowledge, and Beckett's from the Open Society Foundation on new media and the Arab Spring, all contributed to the **Cultures and Identities** area. Contributions to the **Governing Mediated Environments** area included Mansell's work with Research Associate, Dini, on the development of open digital networks and services was funded by the European Commission leading to smaller projects on the dynamics of knowledge societies in Europe and Latin America and on evaluation methodologies for assessing the socio-economic impacts of digital technology. Commission funding is supporting participation in the InterNet Science network (Powell, Dini). This strand benefited from LSE seed funding for research on financial journalism (Tambini), and HEFCE funding for research on media, public action and policy (Livingstone). Funding from the European Union's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency and the Youth Policy Unit of the Education and Culture Commission directorate supported a project on Youth Participation in Democratic Life' (Anstead, Banaji, Cammaerts). POLIS attracts £30,000 annually and sponsorships from diverse external sources in support of its running costs (additional to Director salary) augmenting the Department's core research funding. We generated £398,895 (2009-13) from the LSE Summer School, enabling us to top up Department research support funds for academic staff and research students.

A high level of research activity is sustained by the LSE's **scholarly infrastructure** including the LSE Library with its specialised Research Support Services team and world leading collections, including access to 50,000 e-journal titles. Particularly important for our Department is the LSE Research Online repository, the newly acquired Women's Library and significant investments in, e.g. archival holdings on social movements and political communication, UK and worldwide community radio and television, film collections, access to BFI Screen Online and a variety of other resources. The Department is co-located on one floor providing an **operational infrastructure** that enables frequent research interactions among academic staff and research students. IT Support allows for one PC per three PhD students with staff PCs replaced every four years. The **balance** among scholarly, operational and organisational infrastructures is maintained through regular submission of Department Development Plans to the School and agreement with the Senior Management Team on priorities.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

We endeavour to **shape the media and communications field** and **disciplinary research** in numerous ways. We have a high level of scholarly output: 15 monographs, 18 edited collections, 128 book chapters and 129 peer refereed articles since 2008 by eight FTE staff rising to 16 in

Environment template (REF5)

2013. 72 reports were completed for external research sponsors. Our work appears in diverse scholarly journals, many with high impact and h-index factors. It has been translated into 11 languages including Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Polish and Russian. In addition to media and communications journals, our work has appeared in leading journals in the fields of Cultural Studies, Development, Discourse Studies, Science Technology and Innovation Studies, Information Systems, and Education and Journalism; in disciplinary journals - Economics, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology; in specialist journals on children and youth; and in national journals based in 17 countries, excluding the UK and US.

Monographs providing in-depth examinations of research problems and challenges within and across each of our research foci have been published by: Banaji on the civic web, Beckett on networked journalism, Cammaerts on political communication, Chouliaraki on spectatorship and mediation, Couldry on social theory and digital media practice, and on voice, Georgiou on media and the city, Livingstone on literacies, young people and the internet, and on media regulation, Mansell on innovation and the internet, Orgad on globalisation and the media, Tambini on self- and co-regulation, and Rantanen on news and journalism.

We edited Handbooks providing intensive overviews of state-of-the-art theoretical and empirical research which influence research agendas: Livingstone's *The International Handbook of Children, Media and Culture* Sage 2008 and Mansell's *The Handbook of Global Media and Communications Policy* Blackwell-Wiley 2011. Two four-volume works, serving as place markers for a peer-reviewed consensus on key works, were edited by Livingstone - *New Media: Sage Benchmarks in Communication*, 2009, and by Mansell - *The Information Society: Critical Studies in Sociology*, Routledge 2009. Other edited volumes helped us to establish leading positions in various sub-fields: Chouliaraki on the soft power of war and on new media, citizenship and the self; Cammaerts' five volumes on alternative media, democracy and diversity, protest movements, and policy interventions; Couldry's collections on media ethics and on media events in a global age; Livingstone's collections of EU Kids Online I and II findings and Georgiou's on gender and the media.

We are lead (and in two cases, founding) or associate editors of five journals giving us opportunities to shape editorial policy and influence the boundaries of the field: Couldry *Television and New Media*, Livingstone *Communications Review*, Rantanen *Global Media and Communications*, and Willems *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* and the *Journal of African Media Studies*. Mansell is on the Advisory Board of the Wiley-Blackwell ICA sub-disciplinary encyclopaedias, is co-editor of ICA's *Sub-Disciplinary Encyclopaedia of Digital Communication and Society*, and on the *ICA Yearbook* Editorial Board (2010-13). Collectively, we hold 73 journal editorial board positions. We also shaped research agendas through 11 special journal issue editorships (Cammaerts, Chouliaraki, Couldry, Georgiou, Livingstone, Mansell and Willems). We serve actively as referees for a very wide range of peer refereed academic journals (conventional and open access), publishing houses and funding bodies in the UK (AHRC, ESRC and EPSRC), the European Commission, and the national funding bodies in nine countries. Mansell served on the European Research Councils' Advanced Grants Panel (SH2 Institutions, Values and Beliefs and Behaviour 2009-12) that funds media and communications projects.

Recognition of our contributions to the field is illustrated by Cammaerts' 2012 prize for best article of the year awarded by the *European Journal of Communication*, Chouliaraki's 2010 Top Faculty Paper Award at ICA (Journalism Division) and Livingstone's receipt of many prizes and awards for her outstanding research contributions (including ICA Communication Research as Collaborative Practice, Swedish Wahlgrenska Prize, and an Honorary Doctorate, Erasmus University of Rotterdam). Visiting Professor or Fellow invitations also are testaments to the recognition our research has received, including those from the Annenberg schools at the Universities of Southern California and Pennsylvania, the Berkman Center for Society and the Internet at Harvard, and the NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development in the US; the Oxford Internet and Reuters institutes in the UK; as well as from leading research universities and institutes in Australia, Chile, Czech Republic, France, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, South Africa, and Sweden. We presented 256 *keynote lectures* at academic conferences hosted by UK and overseas media and communications departments and

by academic organisations in the fields of criminology, multi-modal semiotics, organisational studies, Internet governance, and in internet-related fields of Information Processing, Interaction Design, and Global Knowledge Commons and Web Science, all indicating our active contribution to a range of external fields and to the field of media and communications.

In the face of the challenges to the media and communications field from within the academy and externally, we have played our part in advancing the field nationally, convening the 2010 MeCCSA conference; at the European level, through significant representation as section and working group leaders in ECREA (Couldry, Cammaerts, Livingstone); and, internationally, through strong visibility in ICA – Livingstone as past President, now Fellow; and Couldry and Georgiou leading Divisions and working groups; and IAMCR – Mansell as past President, now member of several Committees; Cammaerts leading a Section). The Department maintains institutional memberships in ICA, IAMCR, the London Screen Studies Group and MeCCSA, with individual memberships in ECREA and the national academic associations of Canada, Russia, South Africa and the US. We hold memberships in the professional associations of internet, information systems and social studies of science researchers, and disciplinary associations for Economics, Political Science and Sociology in the UK and the US, all helping us to keep abreast of research developments and to encourage others to benefit from work within our field.

Our **collaborative research projects and networks** reach into Africa, Asia, Latin America and Post-Soviet countries, in addition to the European Union, Canada and the United States, providing a foundation for the cross-cutting research foci on comparative and ethical/normative research. Building on this, our research projects with academic colleagues are numerous. **Large-scale research collaborations** include internationally comparative studies on: elections (Anstead); youth participation in the democratic life and mediated networks and citizenship (Georgiou); children and young people's use of online media (Banaji, Helsper, Livingstone); open digital services (Mansell) and internet science (Powell); media, ICTs and development (Mansell, Willems) and transnational media and democracy (Rantanen). Couldry, who joined us in September 2013, was a leading member of the Framework for Research and Innovation in MediaCityUK (FIRM) research consortium for the UK Digital Economy Programme 2009-2012. Our collaborations with 113 external scholars from 26 countries (38% with UK scholars) have led to co-authorships and many peer-reviewed publications. We are actively engaged in 22 **international research networks** and have **formal partnerships** with the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California and Fudan University. Both generate opportunities for collaborative research, including a Gulbenkian Foundation project on the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis (Rantanen).

Augmenting our **interdisciplinary strengths**, we maintain positive connections with other LSE departments and centres, engaging in collaborations with the Information Systems and Innovation Group (Management), the International Development, Government, Law, and Sociology Departments, and dialogue with Economics and Social Policy. We organise a Research Dialogues Series (15 annually) that facilitates exchanges among staff from our own and other LSE departments, research students and visitors with topics mapping onto our research foci.

These links are all enhanced by our Media Policy Project (2010-) and by POLIS (2006-), both of which attract visitors on secondment from government, industry and civil society organisations. The high priority we give to **facilitating exchanges** between academics and business, government and third sector bodies is confirmed by representation on the Councils and Advisory Boards of seven research institutes in five countries, 10 public and private sector boards, and five civil society organisations. We maintain **strong informal collaborations** with external organisations in the third and business sectors, 13 in the UK and four overseas. Those organisations and government departments are strongly represented at our public events which, from 2008-13, comprised 10 LSE Public Lectures (450 attendees); four Public Lectures co-hosted with other departments; 40 media industry speakers at POLIS Media Dialogues, plus 72 other events organised by POLIS; four major (150-250 attendees) LSE-based academic conferences including international conferences for our 5th and 10th anniversaries, organising the IAMCR conference 2008 and supporting ICA 2013, alongside seven smaller external workshops or pre-conferences.