

Institution: De Montfort University
Unit of Assessment: 34
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>1.1 UNIT CONTEXT AND STRUCTURE</p> <p>Research-active staff submitted in the Unit (16) are drawn primarily from three research groups (see section 2), with support from individuals from other Centres whose activity most closely follows the research trajectory and impact agenda of this Unit. The three main groups are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Media Discourse Centre (MDC, composed of 16 individuals and led by Professor Stuart Price with 7 FTE submitted); • The Media and Culture Research Centre (MCRC, with 8 individuals, led by Dr Simon Mills with 7 FTE submitted); • The Cinema and Television History Institute (CATHI, with 16 members – the majority of whom are entered in UOA 33 – led by Professor Justin Smith. Four primary members are submitted to the REF, two with outputs and two with case studies). <p>The three collectives pursue independent, yet coordinated and complementary research agendas within the broad field of Media and Communication, with a particular orientation to inclusive, transnational inquiry, 'real-world' research, and a shared conception of the public good. This is exemplified by the Unit's close alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; and see 1.2 for our record of SDG conferences) and the local, national and global research goals agreed within the institution as a whole (REF5a).</p> <p>DMU's explicit commitment to the pursuit of demonstrable excellence, within both established and emerging fields of inquiry (documented in its Research Strategy for 2018–2023), and its reputation as one of the UK's most inclusive and diverse HEIs (REF5a) has helped to form and sustain the Unit's strategic goals.</p> <p>This statement refers to staff who have contributed to the Unit over the assessment period. Those submitting to the Unit (including the 2 ICS authors and the Category B submission) are indicated in bold.</p> <p>1.1.1 Development of research collectives</p> <p>Since the division of this field into UOAs 33 and 34, academics submitting to UOA 34 have expanded their portfolio to encompass new forms of sociological, political, philosophical and textual inquiry. The REF's separation of Film from Media accelerated the growth of these activities, though we retained the productive relationship between the three Centres, evident in the interdisciplinarity that underpins our achievements. For instance, those members of CATHI whose case studies or outputs are more closely aligned with the research orientation of UOA 34, are entered in this Unit.</p> <p>MDC began as a Group in 2007 and is focused on the critical analysis of public events, culture and politics within the contemporary global social order, while MCRC, which emerged as a Group in 2017, examines the relationships between media, culture, technology and society. The Cinema and Television History Centre became an Institute in 2018 (CATHI), while MDC and MCRC were recognised as Centres in the same year. Together, the three collectives cover the broad range of academic activity that constitutes Media and Communication, with each contributing forms of specialist inquiry (such as, respectively, the critique of global media events, the study of technological developments, and the production of community media/documentary), that substantiate our claim to offer a progressive and inclusive environment for outstanding forms of Media research.</p> <p>1.1.2 Institutional support and Unit growth</p> <p>Since REF 2014, when all entrants were included in UOA 36, new programmatic and strategic initiatives, including the University's drive to recruit a new generation of Early Career Researchers (ECRs), allowed our research collectives to expand their intellectual horizons.</p>

Central to this strategy was an orientation to the SDGs, with particular reference to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), exemplified for instance in our work on social movements, protest, peace journalism, the mediation of far-right politics, and feminist public culture (an edited volume on the mediation of the SDGs will appear in 2022). An additional focus has been new work on the media framing of the Covid-19 pandemic, due for publication later in 2021.

In line with this focus, from 2014 on, we secured the appointment of new staff with interests in Investigative and Peace Journalism (Danbury, **Tiripelli**), Media and Protest Movements (Hanska, **Harbisher**), Feminist Media and Film Theory Practice (**Havas, Kubatta, Wright**), the Rise of the Far Right (Kamenou, **Lee**), Nation Branding and Visual Culture (**Chao**), Multicultural Film and Media (**Acciari**), Philosophies of Resistance (**Checchi**), Race and Ethnicity (Aujla-Sidhu, Researcher in Training (RIT)), Briscoe-Palmer (RIT), and **Palmer**) and Public Relations (**Lahiri**).

These appointments increased the breadth of our research base, which included established interests in the Philosophy of New Media (**Mills**), Media and Sport (**Paul Smith**), and Critical Media Discourse and Mediated Protest Cultures (**Price**).

The work of three distinct but mutually supportive Centres was underpinned by DMU's commitment to the SDGs (in particular, SDG 16), meaning that the Unit could pursue its research and impact within a truly global, yet determinedly moral context.

1.2 RESEARCH AND IMPACT STRATEGY

The Unit's research and impact strategy for 2014–2020 is driven by a focused set of principles, goals and standards, determined in many cases by institutional and sector-wide developments and, in recent years, by our commitment to the SDGs. The most important impetus, however, has been our desire to make a sustained and significant contribution to Media and Communication as a coherent field of *critical* analysis, with the emphasis on an interdisciplinary, transnational and inclusive form of inquiry. The Unit also seeks to produce research that expands the parameters of Media, Communication and Film scholarship and, in line with DMU's precepts, to make genuine links with external partners (for example, the Communication and Business Institute in Jakarta, and the Laboratório dos Estudos de Mídia e Relações Internacionais (LEMRI) research institute in Rio de Janeiro).

1.2.1 Key strategic aims: research

- i To substantiate further a broad and sustainable research base, underpinned by our commitment to recognised international initiatives like the SDGs and the coordinated response to Covid-19.
- ii To contribute to the University's promotion of equality and diversity, through our staffing and research agendas.
- iii To enable the acquisition of internal and external research income guided by annual targets set by the Faculty.
- iv To increase the number and quality of outputs.
- v To extend our international collaborations.
- vi To increase PhD recruits and completions.
- vii To increase the number of staff undertaking research supervision.

1.2.2 Progress against key strategic aims: research

- i Research base: since 2014, 15 new research-active staff have been appointed. MDC ran three international SDG conferences in 2019 and 2020 and began new work on books about the sociopolitical impact of Covid-19 (publication in 2021), protest during the 'Covid era' (due 2022) and the mediation of the SDGs (due 2022).

- ii Equality and diversity: submitting staff are 50% female and 19% BAME. In 2014, all staff entrants identified as White and 75% were male. One of the Unit's staff is the Faculty lead for our Decolonising DMU initiative.
- iii Income: highlights include **Chao's** AHRC grant of £44,876, **Lahiri's** ESRC/AHRC/GCRF award of £22,911 and Briscoe-Palmer's £45,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- iv Outputs: 40 outputs submitted from 16 FTE staff, chosen from 33 articles, 22 book chapters, 6 monographs and 6 edited books / special journal issues.
- v International collaboration: new MDC link with the Brazilian LEMRI institute; the initiation of a community-based MCRC project in Kerala, India; the MDC Centre in Babylon University, Iraq; MDC collaborative work with Panteion University in Athens; and SDG projects undertaken by MDC with the Communication and Business Institute in Jakarta.
- vi Expansion in numbers of PhDs and completions: from an initial completion of two PhDs reported in REF2014 to a total of nine in the current period (2.3), with 17 students currently enrolled.
- vii Increase in staff supervision: since 2014, new staff supervisors are **Harbisher, Havas, Lahiri, Lee, Mills** and **Tiripelli**.

1.2.3 Key strategic aims: impact

- i To develop new forms of engagement with local and global communities, building on the outreach work undertaken in the two case studies.
- ii To measure the Unit's research by public engagement, community impact and popular publication.

1.2.4 Progress against key strategic aims: impact

- i **Lahiri's** community work on the Covid-19 pandemic, **Harbisher's** transnational SDG film festival, **Lee's** initiative on digital literacy in Mexico, **Price's** 20-year lecture programme in the University's annual Cultural Exchanges festival, and **Kubatta's** establishment of the DocHub@DMU to showcase new documentaries in partnership with Leicester's Phoenix Cinema are developing future impact through festival development. These build on the expertise garnered from our two submitted case studies, produced by **Acciari** and **Porter**, both of which demonstrate a strong orientation to community engagement in Leicester, while attaining a national profile through organisations like the British Film Institute (BFI).
- ii The Unit is tracking work that has future impact on teaching cultural awareness and behavioural change through Vertigo Ventures-Impact Tracker, in the following areas: the philosophy of new and digital media; feminist cultural studies; protest, media and culture; peace journalism; sport and the media; investigative journalism; SDG conferences; cultural life and cinematic consumption in the global/local context of Leicester city (in line with impact case study submissions) and the sociopolitical impact of the Covid pandemic.

1.3 CURRENT RESEARCH AND IMPACT ACTIVITY

As these outcomes were pursued and attained, a new set of local and institution-wide schemes, designed to reinforce research capability and enhance the profile of our media research and scholarship, began to emerge. This included DMU's commitment to the DMUfreedom programme (2016), followed in 2019 by the University's teaching and research Decolonisation programme. In 2018, DMU had its Athena SWAN Bronze Award renewed (REF5a).

These imperatives inform our strategic aims (see 1.2), underpinned by collective dedication to high-profile interdisciplinary research engagement (we ran over 40 conferences, public lectures and academic symposia in this period, together with three bookfairs, two Black Film Festivals, and three 'Mediation of SDGs' MDC conferences). In addition, our achievements included membership of journal boards, fulfilment of invitations to give keynote presentations, links with overseas institutions, conference attendance, commitment to Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA) events and leadership of its official networks (see section 4).

1.4 FUTURE RESEARCH AND IMPACT STRATEGY

The Unit's five-year research development plan begins, therefore, from its alignment with the University's equality and social justice agenda, exemplified by close engagement with feminist research and intersectional practices, a commitment to the development of critical work on the SDGs, the study of Digital Communication, and community engagement with its contacts in the Creative and Heritage industries (including further development of impact work with Channel Four through contacts like its Visiting Professor in Media Discourse and Journalism, Krishnan Guru-Murthy).

The Unit will develop its research and impact in established areas of research (identified in 4.1):

- feminist theory, with a particular emphasis on challenging the assumptions perpetuated within normative culture, feeding into SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) and events on International Women's Day;
- journalism studies, preparing, for instance, a Leverhulme bid and another for the Royal Academy on the Israel–Palestine conflict;
- philosophical inquiries into the impact of technology, through new publications and symposia;
- political resistance and dissent, launching publications like *Power, Media and the Covid-19 Pandemic: Framing Public Discourse*, 2021;
- race and the media, focused on new interventions in the impact agenda;
- sport and the media, with an emphasis on policy;
- subcultural music, through publication and impact;
- political controversy, musical subcultures, media and health, supporting University-wide SDG initiatives; and
- festivals and festivalisation, representing an opportunity to develop the impact agenda.

Future activity in these spheres will be set within the context of international collaboration, including the LEMRI consortium of research centres in Rio de Janeiro, community projects in Kerala, joint research projects with Complutense, Spain, and collaboration with the Universities of Coimbra and Aveiro, Portugal.

The Unit will also promote further community engagement through MDC's collaboration with the Documentary Media Centre and other initiatives, and through MCRC's extensive contacts with academics in fields like New Media, Punk Scholarship, Contemporary Media Industries, and Public Relations.

1.5 RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND OPEN ACCESS

Research in the Unit follows the University's processes for ethics and integrity and encourages its members to disseminate their work to the widest possible audiences. This includes the circulation of material through DORA, the DMU Open Research Archive repository, which provides staff with enhanced visibility, boosting their profiles within the field of Media and Communication and beyond. Researchers follow the Policy for Managing Open Access and the Research Data Management Policy. Since 2019 our researchers and Postgraduate Research (PGR) students can use the Research Data Management repository, DMU Figshare, to make their research data accessible.

2. People

2.1 STAFF IN THE SUBMISSION

Staff gained since 2014 are **Acciari, Chao, Checchi, Harbisher, Havas, Kubatta, Lahiri, Lee, Palmer, Tiripelli** and **Wright**, while staff losses since 2014 are Danbury (who has left the institution), Hanska (returned here as a Category B staff member), Kamenou (returned to UOA20) and Wood (who has taken up a new position).

2.1.1 Staff submitting to REF 2021

Outputs (16 FTE):

- MDC members: **Chao, Checchi, Harbisher, Lee, Palmer, Price, Tiripelli** and Hanska (Category B).
- MCRC members: **Gordon, Havas, Lahiri, Mills, Scott, PSmith** and **Jordan** (secondary member).
- CATHI members: **Acciari** and **Kubatta**; Case Studies: **Porter** and **Wright**.

2.1.2 PhDs

- Current PhDs, total: 17
- PhD completions, total: 9

Comparisons with 2014 are difficult to make, because of the division of UOA 36 into two distinct units (33 and 34) for REF 2021. However, the sum total of completions represents a considerable increase on the period to 2014, when 'pure' media doctoral completions stood at two.

Category A staff data

The 16 staff providing outputs include two professors (**Lee** and **Price**), five associate professors (**Chao, Jordan, Kubatta, Mills, PSmith**), seven senior lecturers (**Gordon, Harbisher, Lahiri, Palmer, Scott, Tiripelli, Wright**), and two lecturers (**Checchi, Havas**).

2.2 STAFFING STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

Our strategy over the assessment period has been to consolidate and expand the Unit's research base by:

- identifying research-active individuals who could apply for a Research and Innovation Allowance (RIA), while encouraging other staff to apply to the Researcher-in-Training scheme (RIT);
- supporting ECR staff in their efforts to increase their range of publications and obtain funding, utilising VC2020 funding, the 'Future Research Leaders' scheme, and the introduction of identified senior mentors to support ECRs;
- encouraging interdisciplinary collaborations with colleagues outside of the Unit and Faculty;
- supporting the trajectory of our own PTHP (Part-Time Hourly Paid) and highly diverse cohort of PhD candidates, by offering training and guidance as they begin to produce publications and make an impact at conferences and symposia; and
- substantiating the above by implementing the University's programmes dedicated to diversity and the support of ECR staff.

Formal support mechanisms include the Research Services Directorate, an institution-wide resource that provides one-to-one guidance and advice for the production of funding bids which, once submitted, are passed to senior academics (from 2020, formally constituted as a University-wide Peer Review College). DMU's dedicated research support structure also includes a Doctoral College, which devotes its energies to supporting PhD candidates (see 2.3).

The Unit works, therefore, within a system based on the notion of career progression and individual development: ECR staff, for example, can apply for institution-wide support through the Future Research Leaders' Scheme (which includes an allowance of £1,500). **Chao** has benefited from such an award, while those who gained posts as VC2020 lecturers were, in the first year of their contract, allocated 50% of their time for research and up to £5,000 in funding. The Researcher-in-Training scheme assists those beginning the research process and includes an allowance of 320 hours (1 day per week). The Unit has been able to benefit from the implementation of University-wide initiatives, particularly with regard to career progression to associate professor, and the provision of new research-active staff (**Acciari, Chao, Checchi,**

Harbisher and Tiripelli) recruited under the VC2020 lectureships scheme. The University offers all staff the opportunity to apply for the Research and Innovation Allowance (in addition to a 10% scholarship allocation), which provides a range of awards of 320, 480 or 640 hours (equating to 1–2 days per week, excluding the 10% allowance). In the year to July 2020, Unit staff received a combined total of 8,160 hours for research activity.

An annual competitive University Research Leave Scheme (for one term) is also offered to staff.

In MCRC, a new venture is to identify nominated mentors for staff, while running a series of on-site writing workshops, during which members are encouraged to seek advice on work in progress, career development, grant application and the ethics of research. MDC, meanwhile, employed one-to-one advice sessions, led by experienced mentors, while also providing its full-time members and doctoral candidates with outlets for publication. These included the 2016 special edition of *Critical Discourse Studies*, 2016's *Sites of Protest* and the edited volume *Journalism, Power and Investigation* (which appeared in 2019 and contains the work of five MDC members).

2.3 SUPPORT MECHANISMS FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHER STUDENTS

We have also expanded our PhD numbers. In the last REF, UOA 36, recorded six completions (two of which were 'pure' Media students), which has now risen to nine. As at July 2020, 17 students were registered as PhD students within the Unit. Discussions at School level have identified the need to create an identifiable Postgraduate Taught route for students to move into PhDs, and the Unit is contributing to this process. Within the census period, MDC gained a fully funded DMU PhD bursary for the study of news culture and public exhibitions.

The training regimen for PGR students is delivered in part through a central mechanism, monitored by the University's Doctoral College, and underpinned through online and face-to-face tutorials and training sessions (such as those devoted to data collection, ethics, employability and English language). The Faculty also runs a 'three-minute' thesis event and a more extended series of PhD presentations. Five of the more senior staff advise PGR students on the quality of publications and encourage them to attend and present at our own and others' conferences. Ten staff are currently involved in PhD supervision, and, with the help of an online PGR management system, all staff have monitored the health and well-being of their PGR students during the current pandemic, supported by (where appropriate) standard interruptions used to mitigate the effects of Covid-19 on the academic community.

PhD students are able to access ring-fenced funding for travel to symposia and research training events (up to £500) and can take advantage of the Doctoral Training Programmes that are run within the Faculties and the Doctoral College. In addition, our cohort of doctoral candidates make an essential contribution, as PTHP lecturers and tutors, to the research environment of the Unit. In some cases, they have already produced publications, and all take an active part in conferences and PGR events. Three PhD-led events in MDC included 'The Black Experience in the Film and Media Industries' (2018), 'Research Methods in Media Discourse' (2016) and 'Anti-Fascism on Film' (2014). Within the census period, PGR destinations have included a Reader in Media in Canterbury Christ Church University, two lecturers in Brazil and Iraq and an associate professor at DMU.

Lee's Leicester Media Productions offers considerable infrastructural support, as does the externally run Documentary Media Centre facility, a close partner of the MDC: both represent major resources for stimulating postgraduate practice-based research. The recruitment of a large cohort of overseas students (nine since 2014) has ensured the internationalisation of our research agenda and has paved the way for our current expansion in the numbers of doctoral candidates. These relationships have helped us reconfigure the subject's parameters, as new currents of research emerge, and older ones are reinvigorated. This can be seen in MCRC's recent interventions in the debates over AI and Big Data, and MDC's hosting of the symposium 'Degradation: Profiting from Environmental Catastrophe' (2019), designed to address SDG 13 on Climate Action.

All students are monitored through our PGR management system with a minimum of 12 (6 for part-time students) mandatory records of discussion with supervisors per year. They are reviewed annually by a panel that includes an independent assessor.

2.4 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Table 1, a comparison with our former submission in UOA 34, reflects the changes in staffing (although some of the original members are submitting to UOA 33).

Table 1: UOA 34 (UOA 36 in 2014)

	Male	Female	White	BAME/ other	Not dis- closed	Profs/ Senior staff	Readers/ AP/PL	ECAF/L/SL
2014 (12)	75%	25%	100%	0	0	42%	25% F = 33%	33% (F = 50%)
2021 (16)	50%	50%	69%	19%	12%	12%	25% F = 75%; BAME = 25%	63% F = 50%; BAME = 20%

Note: VC2020 lecturers = 2; VC2020 senior lecturers = 4.

The whole principle of inclusivity, equality and diversity is central to our research: without adherence to this principle, media theorists would be unable to produce a convincing critique of the racialised, patriarchal culture that suffuses mediated exchange. A genuine belief in the values of true diversity and economic and social equality, is reflected in our recruitment practices and in the composition of our diverse staff base (which is equally divided between genders). Within the Unit, women are well represented at the level of associate professor (4 out of 6) and at senior lecturer (5 out of 8). Some 19% of staff identified as BAME.

A member of MDC is Faculty Champion for the Fair Outcomes initiative and is also one of the leads for the Decolonisation DMU Initiative (REF5a). Flexible working and regular periods of leave are recognised within the University as a vital component of a healthy research culture. We regard ourselves, therefore, as one of the leading elements in DMU's drive to achieve a more equitable and diverse structure. The University's Flexible Working Policy allows all eligible employees the chance to request a change to working patterns, such as a reduction or variation of working hours, or working from a different location. A supportive approach to working from home has been particularly important during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Within DMU, equality and diversity training is mandatory for all staff, and members of interview panels have to attend dedicated sessions to ensure that they understand University policy on protected characteristics. In addition, the 2016 charter DMUfreedom, was based on 'the premise that all our staff and students be afforded the respect, inspiration, space and support to reach their full potential'.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

3.1 INCOME

3.1.1 External funding

A decline in income in the Unit over the assessment period (from over £500,000 reported in 2014), can be attributed to the division of staff into two UOAs (33 and 34) and to the Unit's emphasis on the development of ECRs (rather than in the appointment of senior staff) in order to both sustain and develop our research culture. However, over the assessment period, staff have been included in some significant awards.

Income over the REF period began with Corah's 2014 research project on e-learning and online video (part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, and worth £44,833). Lahiri's role as CI for the ESRC/AHRC/GCRF, netted an award of £22,911 (for the project 'Mental

Health Literacy in Urban and Rural Communities in Kerala, India: An Interdisciplinary Approach'). **Jordan** secured £2,500 from the Clore Leadership Programme. In addition, **Chao** was also awarded a £44,876 AHRC Research Networking Scheme for her project 'Art Diplomacy and Nation Branding: The Visual Politics of Reinventing China'. MDC's Kamenou (returned to UOA 20) was in receipt of two awards, from the FES Cyprus Office, and the Embassy of Ireland in Cyprus, which came to a total of £5,322. MCRC and SLRC member Briscoe-Palmer was awarded £45,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

3.1.2 Internal funding (in addition to Faculty research budgets)

The Unit received internal funding for a range of activities in the period, amounting to around £48,000, which included **Harbisher's** award of £24,000 Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) seed-funding for an SDG conference in Jakarta (which encompassed the new SDG film festival in Bali in 2019), followed by another £4,000 GCRF awarded in 2020 for the next SDG conference.

3.2 INFRASTRUCTURE

The creation of the Leicester Media School (LMS) in 2014, and the appearance in 2018 of new or enhanced research clusters, saw the creation of increased research capacity. Instead of one Centre (formerly, Cinema and Television History, CATH), one Group (MDG) and (from 2018) one nascent special interest group on New Media, we gained two Centres and one Institute: the Media Discourse Centre (directed by **Price**), the Media and Culture Research Centre (led by **Mills**), and the Cinema and Television History Institute (led by JSmith). MDC and MCRC each received a yearly budget of £5,500, while CATHI was in receipt of some £11,000: these sums were designed for direct staff support at conferences, and were separate from Faculty resources for equipment and space. Meanwhile, the broadening of the field of study led to increased demand for research-active staff to sustain our efforts. These staff are, in turn, supported through our mentoring schemes, while new PGRs are offered training and opportunities to contribute to symposia, through Doctoral College schemes, Doctoral Training programmes and individual tutoring.

Physical infrastructure was also reconfigured in this period. In 2016, faced with a large cohort of international students, MDC acquired a secure research facility for students (many of whom are working with sensitive data from Latin America and the Middle East). This new facility, located in the Clephan Building, functions as the main hub for MDC activity. In 2020, the newly formed MCRC began to work with the Faculty and School to identify its own space. Its staff are also concentrated, for the most part, in Clephan, where it has a suite of offices, while roughly half the cohort of MDC occupy another, nearby corridor in Clephan. CATHI has a large facility in Clephan, with PCs, printing and an archive room, while it has also given dedicated space to some of its extensive research archives. In addition, CATHI benefits from DMU's annual investment of £155,000 in the Phoenix cinema and arts venue as a public-facing resource where teaching and research activities take place on a regular basis.

The Doctoral College is located in Gateway House. Since 2019, a Researcher Development Manager has been appointed who coordinates the central training, for both staff and PGR students, which takes place online and in a designated training room in Gateway House. The Doctoral College also provides an advice centre for students which has moved to a virtual 'Open Room' since the pandemic and is open for students on a daily basis.

Material facilities for staff and students consist of office and research space, served by computers and nearby printers. Through a competitive bidding process, permanent staff can acquire items of supplementary equipment, including cameras, iPads, laptops and voice recorders for data collection. Digital single lens reflex cameras (DSLRs) have been used extensively by members of MDC staff, during their forays into fieldwork in Spain, Brazil and the UK. These cameras have been invaluable for data collection, as has the MDC's one video camera, employed in supporting the creation of a documentary feature *Herencias del '36* (the Legacy of '36), shot over a three-week period in Spain in 2015. PGR students have used DSLRs in recording, for example, conference events (like the Modern Slavery section in MDC's Leicester SDG conference of autumn 2019). The Faculty has also supported, on occasion, direct

staff expenditure on books required for research purposes, and has in addition allowed individuals from the Unit to supplement their research inquiries by providing (from a dedicated Faculty research fund) discretionary support for conference costs. Unit funding for equipment in the REF period has amounted to approximately £12,000. Library expenditure for Media Studies over the assessment period has amounted to £122,750 on titles and £324,560 on electronic resources supporting Media Studies.

The day-to-day management of the Unit is as follows: each collective has a Director, a Deputy, a Head of PGR students (who monitors recruitment and well-being of PGRs and PhDs) and its own dedicated budget, which staff are able to call upon to attend conferences. These budgets are provided by the CEM Faculty, and consist of some £5,500 each for the Centres and some £12,000 for the Institute. Heads/Directors of Centre/Institute report directly to the Faculty Associate Dean, Research and Innovation, who coordinates the efforts of the Faculty's leads. Research expertise and administrative support is provided by the Faculty's Research and Innovation Office. The University Research Directorate also provides the Faculty with a Research Development Officer who assists colleagues in research funding applications and pre- and post-award staff to help manage research projects.

4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

4. 1 COLLABORATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE RESEARCH BASE: NETWORKS AND EVENTS

The Unit has established a number of partnerships, and operates within an extensive range of networks, both academic and public, in order to substantiate its claim to conduct research of benefit to society as a whole. As noted above, the MCRC conference Big Data, AI and Robotics was organised by the MCRC's **Lahiri** and **Mills**, while MCRC's **Gordon** organised a major international conference entitled Doing Metal, Being Punk (2018). Public-facing events also encompass MDC's long-standing relationship with DMU's 'Cultural Exchanges', which has run for over 20 years, and which is a key element in the University's programme of local, regional and national civic engagement.

In the period 2014–2021, MDC used the public-facing infrastructure of Cultural Exchanges, a University annual festival, aimed at the local community, to host a number of significant events. Overall yearly footfall is in the region of 2,500, mainly members of the public. MDC events have included the Leicester Media School's Legality/Illegality conference (2018), which included 30 representatives from UK and overseas universities, together with speakers from the BBC and the *Guardian*. This occasion also saw the launch of **Chao's** single-authored monograph, *Cultural Resistance, 9/11, and the War on Terror* (2017). One of MDC's strongest external links is with the radical charity Global Witness. SDGs 13 and 16 are of particular interest to MDC, which first established a relationship with Global Witness in 2015, when it ran a collaborative on-site symposium, 'Cultures of Denial'. This was supported by Global Witness and the MeCCSA Social Movements network. At this event, a senior representative of the organisation gave a keynote speech on Global Witness's 'Rubber Barons' investigative report, which described the 'land-grabbing', environmental destruction and social injustice caused as a result of the corrupt relationship between the government of Myanmar and the illegal logging trade. This contact has since produced two chapters for our edited books (*Sites of Protest* in 2016, and *Journalism, Power and Investigation*, 2019). The event exemplifies our work within the field of the SDGs.

Other major interventions that have used the Cultural Exchanges infrastructure, included a public discussion in 2017 on 'Journalism and the Public Good' with Dorothy Byrne (Head of Channel Four News and Current Affairs, and MDC Visiting Professor) and investigative journalist Greg Palast. In 2019, MDC hosted four Cultural Exchanges events, including 'Degradation' (on environmental catastrophe, which featured four speakers) and a screening and panel discussion of the documentary 'Generation Revolution', which included a talk by the novelist Will Self. In March 2019, the three Centres contributed to a public-facing Faculty Showcase. MDC ran a specialist seminar on confidential research techniques, led by a senior researcher from the investigative journalism group Bellingcat (40 attendees).

4.1.1 Research streams

In addition, the Unit has identified ten research streams which reinforce a commitment to the research base, economy and society:

1 Feminist theory, gendered identity and women in the public sphere

Havas (MCRC/CATHI member), **Palmer** (MDC and Stephen Lawrence Research Centre) and **Wright** (CATHI) analyse the academic interpretation of the female persona within mediated culture and politics, a current of research that informs the practical documentary and film production pursued by **Kubatta**, whose work includes a new documentary that forms part of a longitudinal study into gendered identity and behaviour.

2 New research in Journalism studies

Led by MDC, the Unit has formed another notable addition to our publication and public engagement activities. This development came to fruition with the establishment of a postgraduate Investigative Journalism course in 2016, run in conjunction with our partner Channel Four. **Tiripelli** organised MDC's December 2019 lecture event with Professor Jake Lynch, the founder of Peace Journalism. The publication in 2019 of *Journalism, Power and Investigation*, edited by **Price**, provided three full-time staff and two MDC PhD candidates with a platform for their research. The public dissemination of this current of research took place within both academic and public circles. In 2016 **Tiripelli** produced the monograph *Media and Peace in the Middle East*. **Tiripelli** was invited to produce a report on media in times of crisis for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

3 Philosophical inquiries into the impact of technology

Mills gave a number of invited lectures, including one on 'Culture & Technics', at the Centre for Critical Thought, Kent (2018). He also gave the keynote at the day symposium on Simondon held at Kingston University in 2017. In 2018, this strand of our research was further enhanced by the MCRC's conference *Big Data, AI and Robotics* (organised by the MCRC's **Lahiri** and **Mills**). **Mills** was also an invited speaker at the Simondon and Big Data event (2015), held at Werkkonferenz, the Exhibition Design Institute of the HS Düsseldorf University of Applied Sciences (HSD).

4 Political resistance, surveillance, social media, protest and social movements

The initiative on protest and media has encompassed the production of two books in the 'Protest, Media and Culture' book series (in 2015 and 2016, both edited by **Price**). MDC's International conference 'Surveillance, Social Media and Identity', held in October 2018 at DMU was attended by 50 delegates from Brazil, China, Cyprus, Portugal and the UK. Two keynotes were provided by our staff (**Harbisher** and one doctoral candidate), while other members (including Aujla-Sidhu, **Checchi**, Kamenou and **Lee**) and MDC research associates gave papers. **Price** is also a founding member of the MeCCSA Social Movements network and Visiting Professor at Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro and Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro.

5 Race, the media, and forms of political and cultural 'invisibility'

MDC, in collaboration with DMU's Stephen Lawrence Research Centre (REF5a), and the MeCCSA Network, ran a conference on Windrush and Political Discourse, which included papers from Aujla-Sidhu (MDC Researcher-in-Training), Briscoe-Palmer (MCRC Researcher-in-Training), **Lahiri** (MCRC) and **Price** (MDC). **Lahiri** holds an Associate Fellowship with the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London.

6 Sport and the media

A strong current of work is produced by **PSmith**. His journal article ('The Next Big Match', *European Journal of Communication*, 31(5)) was awarded a prize for the best research contribution published by that journal. In addition, he is a member of the

International Journal of Digital Media and Policy and a board member of *Communication and Sport*.

7 Study of 'subcultural' music scenes

Work in the Unit has included extensive studies of 'subcultural' music scenes, enabling us to collaborate with external bodies. The Punk Scholars Network (PSN), founded by MCRC's **Gordon**, is an international network that contributes to the annual subcultures conference KISMIF (Keep It Simple, Make It Fast), held at the University of Porto, Portugal, and **Gordon** has organised keynote papers. The PSN produces the journal *Punk & Post-Punk*, while **Gordon** curated and introduced a week-long exhibition on Crass at Leicester's Light Gallery. The innovative PSN/MCRC conference *Doing Metal, Being Punk* was organised by **Gordon** in 2018.

8 Political culture and controversy

The Unit's interest includes in-depth critiques from MDC of far-right politics, dependent on both empirical data and cultural/political analysis. Kamenou's analysis of female adherents of Golden Dawn was disseminated in 2018 at a Panteion, Athens event (at which **Price** also delivered an invited paper). **Price** produced work on the mediation of austerity and organised two one-day events on Brexit (in 2016) and on Election 2017.

9 Media and health

A subgroup founded within the MDC area, devoted to media and health and led by **Lee**, has organised events including a public lecture and Q&A on addiction, and an MDC symposium on Mental Health, addressed by health professionals and the DMU mental health team (both in 2019).

10 Festivals, 'festivalisation' and international film projects

The Unit's interest is expressed in its impact case studies, produced by **Acciari**, whose work explores South Asian Cinema and its cultural and historical relevance to public communication in Leicester, and by **Porter**, whose studies of Silent Cinema in the UK have underpinned the work of this Unit and which has secured major funding to support public dissemination. **Acciari**'s case-study work (the Cultural Impact on the South Asian Communities in Leicester) exemplifies the Unit's determination to promote global forms of diversity: the practical outcomes of this project are evident in the creation of new partnerships with the UK Asian Film Festival which, though previously based at core sites in London, was brought to Leicester for the first time. **Acciari** ran community screenings and, since 2017, has brought the UK Asian Film Festival to Leicester. This impact on local and national film organisations extended to an exhibition 'Restoring India', resulting in a major archival loan to DMU by London's Cinema Museum. **Acciari** has also facilitated a new film festival course at EFL-University, Hyderabad, where she established the Kinaara Student Film Festival.

This research runs in concert with **Jordan**'s work on festivalisation, the Black Film Festivals and events initiated in 2019 by MDC doctoral candidates, and **Harbisher**'s SDG Film Festival series, run with our partner in Jakarta. **Porter**'s case study has also reinforced the place of Leicester in the public dissemination of movies, focused on Silent Film. This long-standing intervention has run since 1998, and has directly influenced BFI digital policies and UK independent cinema exhibition. The reputation of the British Silent Film Festival (sponsored by the BFI), has had a global impact, contributing to similar events in Italy and the USA, and led to the launch of the Scottish silent film festival, HippFest.

4.2 COLLABORATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE RESEARCH BASE: NETWORK MEMBERSHIP AND EDITORIAL ROLES

The esteem in which our staff are held was confirmed by their memberships of the editorial boards of a number of academic journals, a function that MCRC has taken to heart. **Mills**, for instance, has reviewed work for *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Sociological Review*,

Information, Communication and Society, Convergence, Contemporary Political Theory and Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology. **Checchi** of MDC has reviewed work for *Organisation Studies, Theory and Critique* and *Urban Studies*.

Other activity includes **PSmith**'s work as a reviewer for *European Journal of Communication, Communication and Sport, Journal of Digital Media and Policy, Journal of Sports Economics, Journal of Media Business Studies, Journal of Information Policy, Digital Sports Journalism* and *Convergence*. **Jordan**, who is an expert in the study of festivals, has conducted reviews for *Cultural Trends*, and for the *International Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society*. **Havas** has produced reviews for *Television and New Media*, for Sage, and for Taylor & Francis. **Price** is co-editor of the Rowman & Littlefield book series, 'Protest, Media and Culture'.

In addition, **Lee** was appointed to the International Editorial Advisory Committee of *The Caribbean Press*, and is founding editor of the international journal and book series, *Transgressive Culture*. His second book series has been established with the publishing house Glyphi. **Price** and **Harbisher** are founding editors of the open-access *International Journal of Media Discourse*. **Havas** and **Price** have both given talks at the BFI, **Havas** at the 'Broad Strokes: Trailblazing Comedy Screenwriters' event, on the comedy of Tina Fey, and **Price** on security and the war on terror. **Price** was also invited keynote speaker at the 2015 'Conference on Conflict, Terrorism and Society', Kadir Has University, Istanbul, and in 2019 was keynote at four conferences/symposia in Brazil and Portugal. Other forms of engagement include academic blogging, an approach employed by **Havas** to disseminate work for *Critical Studies in Television Online* (2015–2016), an example of which was published by the *Women's Film and Television History Network* blog in 2017.

MDC has an active affiliation with the national association, Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA). **Price** was a founding member of the MeCCSA Social Movement Network, while Aujla-Sidhu is a member of the Radio Network and was also involved in the reformulation of the Race and Post-Coloniality Network in 2019. **Harbisher** runs the Practice Network and is on the MeCCSA Executive.

Price is an AHRC and ESRC peer reviewer.

4.2.1 International links and activities

In addition, new on-site research initiatives have helped reinforce the Unit's reputation, particularly with regard to international links. MCRC has created links through **Mills**'s keynotes on new media and technology, while **Lahiri**'s grant for the research project 'Mental Health Literacy in Urban and Rural Communities in Kerala, India' represents global impact. MDC has established links with Panteion University, Athens, through Alexandra Halkias, its Visiting Professor in Media Discourse and Gender Studies, and has a Memorandum of Understanding with Babylon University, Iraq. MDC is part of a consortium of research institutions in Rio de Janeiro. **Harbisher** ran a combined research/documentary film trip to Bali in 2019, in order to establish links with overseas partners. This encompassed the first 'Bali Microdoc' film festival in Jakarta, Indonesia, and included a one-day film-making workshop in Jakarta, hosted by the London School of Public Relations (LSPR), and a one-day conference on SDGs and the media (organised by **Price** and **Harbisher**). This was followed by another SDG event, held in Leicester in September 2019, and two more online events run by LSPR Jakarta in December 2020.

Internal links include MDC's collaboration with CURA (the Centre for Urban Research into Austerity) and both Centres' links with the Stephen Lawrence Research Centre (REF5a). In conjunction with this development, the work of the Documentary Media Centre is helping the Unit to initiate community-facing projects, which then map onto its global ambitions. Where these have moved online, owing to the coronavirus outbreak, the Unit has still managed to reach a global audience. The DMC, for instance, ran a 24-hour online news event on Conflict and Reportage for UN World Press Freedom Day (40 attendees), while the Media Discourse Centre presented a Webinar on Covid-19 and propaganda for its LSPR partners in Jakarta, attracting over 200 participants. Both events took place in May 2020.