• **Barnett and Weymour** argue the quality of TV has been undermined by commercial pressures (e.g. large audiences to satisfy advertisers)
• TV has been ‘dummed down’ over the last 20 years. News and documentary programmes have been replaced by trivial and crowd-pleasing soap operas and reality programmes.
• There are more gambling and home shopping channels. Despite having hundreds of channels, there is not more choice, just more of the same thing.
• **Curran** notes a similar pattern in newspapers. Serious investigative journalism has been replaced by cheque-book journalism, paparazzi photographers and mobile phone hacking.

**Globalisation and a global popular culture**

• Globalisation refers to the interconnectedness of societies: what happens in one locality is shaped by distant events in other countries and vice versa.
• Globalisation has many causes, including cheap air travel, deregulation of financial markets, spread of new technology and influence of global mass media.
• Advances in technology mean today's media operate a global marketplace.
• The digital world has broken down the cultural distance between countries.
• This has led to the development of a global popular culture. It is a culture that is dominated by American brands and values, e.g McDonalds, Coca-cola, Nike, Starbucks etc.
• The whole world ends up with the same film stars, the same video games, the same music and the same TV programmes.
• This is a form of cultural imperialism. American culture has undermined and swept away many local cultures. The same products are sold all around the world. This has made some multi-national companies more important than democratically elected governments.
• The world is becoming increasingly the same. It is becoming culturally homogenous as a result of the actions of big businesses and their control over the mass media.
• **Marxists** are worried about this development. It is giving too much power and influence to the forces of capitalism.
• **Pluralists** believe globalisation and the ‘new’ media have given consumers more choice. They believe consumers are smart enough to select the products which are most appropriate to suit their needs.
• **Postmodernists** argue globalisation creates greater choice with regard to lifestyles and identities.