

When “everything” is still not enough

Expectations and realities regarding public service media’s contribution to twenty-first-century digitalised society

HILDE VAN DEN BULCK

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION, DREXEL UNIVERSITY, USA

ABSTRACT

Based on the chapters in this volume, an answer to the question of what constitutes the expected contributions of public service media (PSM) to contemporary society could be “everything”. Here at the conclusion of this volume, I set out to explore two related questions: How did we get here, and how can we tone the expectations of PSM down a bit without losing the core and historical responsibilities of these organisations? I explore these questions by discussing central notions including public sphere, public service, public value, and public interest, as their use and evolving meaning play a part in the power dynamics of defining both the problems and solutions that PSM should be involved in. I conclude by suggesting that, rather than focusing on the second halves of the portmanteaus, we should revisit writings about “the public”, for instance, in the work of John Dewey.

KEYWORDS: public service, public value, public interest, the public, public service media, John Dewey

Van den Bulck, H. (2023). When “everything” is still not enough: Expectations and realities regarding public service media’s contribution to twenty-first-century digitalised society. In M. Puppis, & C. Ali (Eds.), *Public service media’s contribution to society: RIPE@2021* (pp. 313–326). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855756-a>

Introduction

There are two potential explanations for being asked to write the concluding chapter of an edited volume, and both start from the external validation of the fact that you are old: The editors either consider you too old to have original ideas but do not want you to feel left out, or they think you are old enough to have had tea with Lord Reith, giving you a longer-term perspective. In this case, it is probably both. Although, I would like to point out that as far back as my undergraduate education in the 1980s, Lord Reith was already part of the history of broadcasting. Being young at heart, I decided to take up the challenge of finding the *filles rouges* through this book and how they relate to wider conversations in the field of public service media (PSM) studies. The latter is not a small feat, given that, at least in Europe, PSM are amongst the most-studied legacy media. There is not an aspect of PSM left unearthed, a PSM manager uninterviewed, a PSM stakeholder unidentified, or a PSM policy document unanalysed. And the more we PSM scholars know, the more questions we still have, also because of the ever-changing realities of PSM organisations. Having accepted the challenge, I decided to speak my mind at the risk of upsetting people – a prerogative of the old as much as the young.

But first, let me give a general appraisal of the book, the tenth in the impressive RIPE series encompassing many aspects of PSM. There are almost exclusively nice things to be said about this edition, a result of the quality of the diverse range of submissions and of the skills and efforts of the editors (yes, I know the editors quite well, so I may be biased, but the fact that you have read all the way to the final chapter speaks for itself). The book is well-organised, with a returning structure for each chapter and cross-references to other contributions that, together, create significant coherence. The book takes you from chapters regarding more theoretical to more empirical approaches, including a range of macro, meso, and micro issues. Next to the inevitable attention to the BBC, the “mother” of all PSM, there is an interesting range of PSM organisations being scrutinised, also from outside of Europe. Different theoretical perspectives are complemented by a range of methodological tools and empirical data. The result is a broad overview of current questions, fascinating findings, and worthwhile reflections, with a focus on PSM’s contribution to society. The overall quality of this edition is in keeping with the high standards of the series.

What follows are not evaluations of the individual chapters but thoughts and reflections that were triggered when reading through this impressive body of work. The contributions provide new insights, some help to question long-held beliefs, and others raise follow-up questions or suggest new trajectories – all are thought-provoking. In writing down my thoughts, I shamelessly break away from the neat chapter format the editors provided and from the more rigid rules of academic writing. I hide behind the tight deadline to limit referencing authors, publications, and data, very much appreciating

that I am in no way doing justice to all the amazing PSM-related work out there. Equally shamelessly, I use the deadline pressure to reference my own work – way more than is polite – mostly because, in them, I have built my arguments better than I can do here.

Contribution to what, exactly, in society?

After reading this edited volume, the short answer to the question of what constitutes the expected contributions of PSM to contemporary society seems to be “everything”. Both in theory and practice, PSM is supposed to instigate, create, articulate, maintain, amplify, rectify, curb, and generally help with “everything” in society. In that regard, PSM’s relevance is absolute in expectations, reflected in the breath and width of the topics in this edited volume: Demands regarding technological innovation, be it by extending existing media like radio (as discussed by Lindeberg & Ala-Fossi, Chapter 8) or by moving into personal mobile communications (elaborated on by Rashid & Simpson, Chapter 9); meanwhile trying to balance universality with personalised PSM, as in the case of PSM in Taiwan (analysed by Lin & Tsai, Chapter 7), Denmark (discussed Lassen & Sørensen, Chapter 5), and Flanders (treated by Raats, Chapter 6); the push for innovation in management (as explained for the Swiss case by Künzler, Fehlmann, & Autenrieth, Chapter 12); a multitude of expectations with regards to content as PSM are expected to provide all forms of information, inspiration, and entertainment, but increasingly also to recommend and curate, mostly with a dominant focus on news and journalism, as in the case of ARD’s pressures to innovate (as discussed by Eichler, Chapter 13) and on combating misinformation (as analysed with regards to automated PSM accounts by Pedrazzi & Oehmer-Pedrazzi, Chapter 10), but also with regards to other types of content (discussed by Bengesser, Chapter 3); the need for diversity in reach, aiming to affect the individual as well as society at large (something Hasebrink interestingly tries to capture, Chapter 4); the push to improve transparency, visibility, and accountability, increasingly by involving the audience (as discussed with regards to *ex ante* tests by Rodríguez-Castro & Campos-Freire, Chapter 11, or with regards to online practices, as in Speck’s analysis of the German case, Chapter 14). Together, these expectations are part of a continued push to secure PSM’s legitimation (as discussed by Fehlmann, Chapter 2).

Elsewhere, Tim Raats and I have recently observed a similar trend in how policy-makers write into PSM management contracts ever-growing lists of responsibilities, often to be accomplished within a shrinking budget, while hardly ever considering a responsibility as obsolete (Van den Bulck & Raats, 2022). Certain stakeholders continue to expect PSM to balance “doing everything” with “nothing that upsets the market”, an impossible tightrope walk. However, current media ecosystem thinking emphasises less

PSM's potential as disrupter of the level playing field and more its role as a crutch for commercial players (channels, production companies, newspapers, etc.) in national media systems struggling to survive the onslaught of global streaming services and platforms. I share the editors' concern (expressed by Puppis & Ali, Chapter 1), that this is part of a neoliberal view of PSM that contributes to the problem of, rather than the answer to, what should constitute PSM's contribution to society.

Like Atlas in Greek mythology, PSM organisations carry not just the weight of the world but of the celestial orbs on their shoulders, it seems. This is deeply ingrained in almost all writings on PSM (including my own!), from the paradigmatic to the empirical, the theoretical to the pragmatic. If we are to acknowledge the criticism that PSM studies suffer from normativity, then, to me, this is where that is located. Apart from a few staunch neoliberals for whom the market makes PSM obsolete – think James Murdoch's (2009) MacTaggart Lecture – even the average critic of PSM would see a place for PSM in contemporary media landscapes.

These exhaustive expectations set PSM organisations up for failure and criticism, even the most well-funded, agile, and adaptable ones. Two related questions come to mind: How did we get here and how can we tone the expectations down a bit without losing the core and historical responsibilities of these organisations? In the words of music royalty, Madonna: "When you're trying hard to be your best could you be a little less?" In my mind, this is a struggle over the power to define both the problems and the solutions that PSM should be involved in. Aiming to reflect on this, I start from the theoretical rather than the empirical.

Public sphere

Bengesser (Chapter 3), reminds us that the normative position and the decades-long debates around the important role of PSM to a very large extent go back to "the ideal of the universal public sphere as the basis for deliberative democracy ever since Habermas's concept of the public sphere was discovered by British academics". This, not surprisingly, coincided first with the translation into English of Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

To return to my opening comments one final time, I am indeed old enough to remember when PSM were not discussed through the lens of the public sphere. In my years as a candidate (undergraduate), Habermas's public sphere was a difficult chapter (in German) in a course on social theory, while PSM, its inception, and core tenets were discussed "unrelatedly" in a course on social responsibility theory of media. In Europe, the introduction of public sphere thinking about PSM also coincided with the breakdown of their monopolies as the result of a "perfect storm" of technological (spectrum scarcity supplanted

by cable and satellite), political (neoliberalism), economic (creatives' demand for media "industry" and advertisers for commercial vehicles for advertisements), and cultural (evolving tastes and audience expectations) developments. This perfect storm forced PSM "believers" from government, media, and academia to build a strong, defensive case for PSM – a position that continues to this day (note how very few of the contributions in this volume are openly critical of PSM, reflective of this protective attitude). As a result, the notions of public responsibility and public sphere became conflated in the thinking about PSM, leading to the above-mentioned idea that PSM should do "everything" because, otherwise, democracy itself will fail.

I do not have the intention or knowledge to discuss decades-long debates about Habermas's theory of the public sphere. However, all relevant criticism (e.g., Fraser, 1999; Mouffe, 1999; for an overview, see Rauchfleisch, 2017) notwithstanding, the suggestion that we have reached a "post-public sphere" era appears preliminary (Schlesinger, 2020). Rather, I agree with Bengesser (Chapter 3) that conflating the defence of democracy with the defence of PSM through the public sphere concept has been a key factor in creating unattainable goals and, thus, pushing PSM towards disappointment, if not outright failure, given that the concept of the public sphere cannot be limited to one particular media organisation.

What is more, PSM are not just expected to guarantee the communication and exchange of ideas that are central to democracy, complementing efforts of democratically chosen governments in other areas of society; PSM organisations are also roped in to correct the failures of governments in critical areas including the economy (e.g., the idea that PSM first and foremost must sustain the national media market, as Raats describes in Chapter 6), the social fabric (PSM is to promote inclusion while social policies too often sustain exclusion; see also Hasebrink, Chapter 4), culture (compensating for cuts in cultural budgets and failing cultural policies), and education (PSM needing to take the lead in flashing out misinformation, as discussed by Pedrazzi & Oehmer-Pedrazzi in Chapter 10, and creating media literacy in that regard to compensate for governments' unwillingness or inability to curb "big tech"). Can we really expect these, often poorly funded, PSM organisations to do all that? Or are there other conceptual ideas that can give direction to a more realistic idea of PSM's contribution to society?

Public service, public value, public interest

Between the abstract notion of the public sphere and the specific objectives described in legislation and management contracts are a range of terms that are employed to typify the functions of PSM organisations. The above-mentioned struggle over the power to define both the problem and the solution is very much a matter of establishing a characteristic terminology.

Public service

The longest running term is public service. In its most basic interpretation, the portmanteau refers to a service set up – usually by the government or a government agency – to address particular needs of (the aggregate members of) a community. In relationship to media, the notion of public service was developed in the early twentieth century under a specific set of technological, political, and social conditions (Van den Bulck, 2001). Throughout time and space, the perspectives on this relationship changed, however, “an overlapping consensus on certain core normative criteria” remained (Born & Prosser, 2001: 671). Born and Prosser (2001) categorised these criteria into three main principles, the latter two deriving from the first: 1) enhancing, developing, and serving social, political, and cultural citizenship; 2) universality; and 3) quality of services and output. Various chapters of this book *de facto* deal with contemporary interpretations hereof, either quite specifically, as in the case of the Danish PSM organisation DR’s decision to focus on three types of content (even though the policy-makers use the term public value, see Lassen & Sørensen, Chapter 5) or in the discussion on distinctiveness (as mentioned by Raats, Chapter 6).

One long-standing aspect of public service – which has been pushed to the forefront of conversations again by new opportunities created by artificial intelligence and which was the central topic of the ninth book in the RIPE series (Savage et al., 2020) – is universalism (Van den Bulck & Moe, 2018). From the start, it was considered a dual ideal (Van den Bulck, 2001) of both universal access – which is realised more easily since cable, satellite, and digitalisation made scarcity of airwaves an obsolete issue – and public appeal. The latter means that PSM must provide a range of programmes that inform, inspire, entertain, and appeal to the diverse interests of the young and the old, the higher and less educated, across the community and, catering to every taste, also outside of the mainstream. This should contribute to democracy’s informed citizenry and the nation-state’s imagined community of shared cultural background and identity, realised through a careful selection and combination of programmes that encourages people to engage with a bit of everything, even programmes that appear to be not to their taste or interest. Traditionally realised in linear scheduling, today, several chapters in this volume refer to curation as an “emerging” (but, I would argue, not fundamentally new) service in a world of “too much” content, especially information. At the same time, scholars and PSM alike struggle with how to evaluate the new opportunities for “personalised PSM” offered by artificial intelligence. Views differ but tend, again, to go for a maximalist interpretation of public service as a combination of universality of basic supply and universality as a full portfolio of services (Jakubowicz, 2007), some for a general audience, others for niche tastes, through new, personalised consumption practices. As

such, current interpretations of public service seem to continue the “everything” interpretation of universality and PSM’s contribution to society.

Public value

An alternative term, which appears in various chapters in this book, is public value. The sixth edition of the RIPE book series (Lowe & Martin, 2014) was dedicated to public value as a “new” concept to capture the contribution of PSM to society. Back then, Hallvard Moe and I argued that the term has the characteristics of a buzzword (Moe & Van den Bulck, 2014): a term that originates in one area with a very particular meaning, gets picked up and transported to other areas, often for ideological reasons (as a new means of legitimisation), and becomes increasingly popular but loses or changes meaning along the way. Several authors have described how public value, under the influence of a neoliberal and neoclassical public management doctrine, moved from British policy-making to BBC strategic communication to the European Commission’s deliberations and, thus, into use in various countries and languages, changing and diversifying in meaning along the way, while remaining vague. Our comparative analysis of the use of the term at the time revealed that the concept invoked a redefined remit for PSM, incorporating an economic variable and pushing PSM beyond traditional broadcast radio and television.

While the term has the advantage of simplifying something unusually complex, it loses depth of meaning and, as a simplification, can be mystifying. I also agree with the point, made by Puppis and Ali in Chapter 1, that introducing new terms does not necessarily add much to the conversation. Reading through the chapters in this volume, it seems that public value has become a more generally used term in discussions of PSM’s contribution to society. Note, though, the continued use of public service to identify the organisations, even in contributions that otherwise speak of public value, suggesting confusion. Moreover, few explicit definitions of public value are provided. As “accepted terminology”, it cannot be expected that every contribution defines it, which implies that it is now considered self-evident that PSM must be justified mostly from a market logic and comes with a related call for accountability instruments. As written by Moe and Van den Bulck (2014: 71), “‘Buying into’ the buzzword therefore implies buying into a whole paradigm of economic rationality”. As such, the term does not add to a renewed thinking about PSM as a democratic endeavour in its own right, regardless of market conditions, meaning that the identification and solution of problems that PSM should help solve through the notion of public value is ultimately determined by the market rather than the citizenry.

Public interest

A final term is public interest. In its applicability to media, the term predates the early twentieth-century idea of public service, and it was and remains a main basis for media and communication policy in the US (Napoli, 2001) and elsewhere. It has been associated more with a “free press” than with PSM; however, PSM is one element of media policy expected to contribute to the realisation of the public interest (as Puppis & Ali discuss in Chapter 1). Put simply, the public interest is relevant for a majority of people that together make up society. This is not the same as interest groups, seen mostly as groups that are driven by profit and, in a media context, by audience maximisation. According to the ideal of media for the public interest, these media may be public or private in ownership structure, and either can defend or act in the public interest, including by challenging those in power.

However, the reality is, historically and up to today, that PSM by and large are mainstream media. Elsewhere, I analysed the origins of PSM as a project of modernity (Van den Bulck, 2001). As such, PSM were given an important role in the homogenisation of audiences around the nation and around bourgeois intellectual ideals. For instance, inclusion was mostly about “seeing how the other half lives”, and “universality of content” was rooted in middle-class notions of taste, interest, and decency – maybe not unlike the bourgeois nature of Habermas’s public sphere. While very much evolved with the times, PSM organisations have not changed much in that regard. They are not grassroots or activist media organisations (Mouffe, 1999). So, while diversity and inclusion appear as key objectives in many management contracts, it is unlikely to expect the radical change that is required in most countries to make PSM in itself, and in its contribution to society, truly diverse and inclusive. The latter would require a public interest quite radically removed from the powers that be. This is not to say that PSM are by nature conservative, nor are they obsolete, but rather that it is impossible for PSM to remain loyal to the broad public interest and contribute overnight to a radically more inclusive and equitable society.

What public?

So, how to move forward? I want to encourage us, PSM scholars, to think in different directions when trying to understand the contemporary contribution of PSM to society and to move away from the idea of solving “everything”. While we seem preoccupied with the second part of the portmanteaus (service, value, interest), we pay less theoretical attention to the first part: the public. This was the topic of the fourth book in the RIPE series (Lowe, 2010), but much has happened since its publication. Here are three reasons why it may be worth renewing our attention to the public.

First, several chapters in this book and other recent work appreciate “public” in relationship to PSM mostly in terms of “ownership” and “funding”, and thus in opposition to privately owned and commercially funded media. Today, however, this equation is not at all self-evident. To start with funding, it is well known that almost all PSM organisations have a mixed funding model of a levy or tax combined with various commercial revenue and, meanwhile, many private media receive subsidies (Puppis et al., 2020). Even the BBC, while continuing to fly the non-commercial flag within the UK, is commercialised in its international operations, most obvious in its subsidiary BBC Worldwide, an aggressively competitive global player. Moreover, in PSM policies – dominated by notions of market failure and media ecosystem – we witness public funding being “commercialised” or “privatised”. This happens in several ways, touched upon in chapters in this book, for instance, through contractual obligations that force PSM to invest a considerable portion of their public funding in private production, forgoing in-house production for external commissioning. As such, PSM public funding *de facto* becomes a form of indirect subsidy for private corporations, such as production companies that, all too often, are subsidiaries of global companies whose shareholders (and dividends) are located outside of the countries whose taxpayers funded this in the first place. In this regard, one can wonder to what extent PSM is still thought of first and foremost as a publicly owned organisation with an aim in its own right or as a “front” through which public funding gets passed on to private enterprises. As such, limiting or equating the understanding of public to ownership and funding alone seems insufficient.

Second, recent developments have attracted attention to the notion of public in opposition to private. We see this mostly in discussions of “emerging” responsibilities of PSM regarding the protection of privacy of audiences in relationship to Big Data and artificial intelligence, mentioned in several chapters in this book. PSM are invited to take on a responsibility in a domain (the protection of private data of its audiences) that previously was not considered relevant to their public task (Sørensen et al., 2020). Discussions on how to deal with this centre heavily on a sense that audiences’ and users’ data should be treated differently or, at least, more conspicuously by PSM than by commercial media. Some suggest this points to ethical obligations that cannot necessarily be captured by legal approaches to privacy, while others have pointed to possible shifts in the distinction between the private and the public that require conceptual rethinking and practical realignment. The *de facto* acceptance by large sections of audiences and users of the trade-off between giving up their “private” data to commercial trade and analysis (also by PSM) in return for more personalised and user-friendly offerings, seems to confirm the need to rethink the public–private dichotomy in certain regards. PSM can figure centrally both in the more abstract reflections, as benchmarks and cases, but also in the practical realisation of evolving understanding of the public and the private.

A third issue with the public, as it relates to the contribution to society, revolves around the relationship between the public as the individual citizen, or PSM user (micro level), and the public as society as whole (macro level). This tension between micro and macro level is a returning issue in the book that pays much attention to the audience. From a policy perspective, the public – as an aggregate of individual audience members – is the most important stakeholder of PSM. However, it is not really a policy actor because, as the least-organised stakeholder, it is hard to be heard by policy-makers (Van den Bulck, 2019). Media translate their interest mostly from listening, viewing, and click ratings. Some important exceptions notwithstanding (see, e.g., Hasebrink, Chapter 4), audience researchers tend to show little interest in translating their findings into policy advice (Livingstone & Lunt, 2011). Policy researchers, however, increasingly pay attention to the audience, as several chapters in this book illustrate. Fehlmann (Chapter 2), makes a strong case that legitimacy cannot just be seen as a property or a process: “Only through a perspective that understands legitimacy also as the *perception*, or attribution of individuals [...], can one identify which contributions create tangible values for citizens”. Likewise, Rodríguez-Castro and Campos-Freire (Chapter 11) point to the importance of citizens having a voice in ex ante evaluations but conclude that “ex ante tests can hardly achieve citizen participation through their public consultations, and thus constitute a missed opportunity for public service media organisations to enhance their contribution to society by opening their decision-making structures to structural participation”. When thinking of successful contributions to society, there is an assumption that PSM must reach every member of the audience in hopes of having the societal effect on the entire public and, thus, society. Hasebrink’s contribution in this book (Chapter 4) deals with this issue most directly. Identifying social integration as one of the key societal contributions of PSM, Hasebrink shows how we can empirically try to bridge this gap between the individual and the public as an aggregate. The question that remains unresolved, it seems, is whether PSM need to affect each individual audience member (each member of the public) to contribute to society, that is, to the public.

Conclusion: The public and its problems

I wish I could finish with some sweeping insights that will guide us pronto towards solutions for a more pragmatic yet fundamental role for PSM contributing to society. Alas, that is not the case. Looking for the *filles rouges* throughout this book, I observed that stakeholders, including academics, overwhelmingly expect PSM to do “everything”, with new responsibilities added to existing ones. Trying to come to grips with where this comes from, I revisited – all too superficially and broadly, for sure – some of the key concepts that underpin these expectations, as conceptualisations and their

evolution towards “accepted knowledge” play a major part in the ideological battle over who gets to define the problems and solutions when it comes to PSM’s contributions to society. I guess, at best, that I have contributed a little to dissecting the problem.

Two more considerations. First, if reading this afterword has made you suspicious that behind my criticism of inflated expectations towards PSM is some warped “leave it to the market” message, I’m afraid you have not paid attention (or I really am a terrible writer). No, I am not. Quite the opposite. What I am trying to argue is to stop discussing PSM from an explicit or implicit market perspective and, instead, return to considering PSM in their own right. In my mind, PSM have a rightful place in society and the media landscape, and they can and should build their own agenda based on the needs of society regardless of media market offerings. As Puppis and Ali indicate in Chapter 1, even if media markets function well, as part of a healthy democracy, PSM would still have their place. If I am frustrated by the fact that we expect so (too) much it is because PSM’s remit (and expected spending of its budget) increasingly is defined in support of the market rather than the public, and because we do not pay proper attention to what exactly society and the public’s main needs are today and how PSM can support them. Discussing concepts and theories that deal with the fundamental relationships between the individual and the public and the state, and between the public and the private and other relevant conceptualisations, in my mind, can contribute to this – regardless of the market. This does not mean that we must think of PSM in isolation. In that respect, Puppis and Ali’s suggestion in the opening chapter to think of how PSM can collaborate with other public institutions like libraries and museums and, indeed, with the public, could be a fruitful way forward.

Second, am I implying that we need a clean sweep and to come up with new concepts and theories to understand PSM’s contribution to society in a way that is more realistic and more focused on its role *sui generis*? Not necessarily. Puppis and Ali argue quite rightly in Chapter 1 that “contribution to society” is not the new “wonder concept” it is sometimes presented to be. A more inspiring route can be to revisit the literature on the public. Recently, I started reading John Dewey’s *The Public and Its Problems* (1927/2016). In Europe, Dewey’s philosophical writings have not received much attention beyond his work as an educational reformer (no mention of Dewey in my philosophy-heavy undergraduate, in case you are still wondering about my younger years). His absence from discussions on PSM could be related to European perceptions of the American tradition of the “invisible hand of government” in all things media (although that overlooks several periods in American media policy). Dewey writes extensively on the position of media and communication in society and has specific ideas regarding the role of the state when it comes to the public. With regards to the former,

like Habermas, Dewey considers thinking, discussion, and debate as the most important aspect of a democracy, which must come before democratic voting. Discussion and debate, association, and interaction are the basis for an individual's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural being, the development of which makes the individual a social animal. Dewey offers interesting ideas about what constitutes the public, the relationship between individuals and the public, and how it relates to the private. He starts from the fact that individual human actions have consequences for others. In some cases, actions only affect the parties that are involved in the interaction, while in other instances, they affect those that are not directly involved. This is what distinguishes the private from the public, with the latter consisting of all individuals who are impacted by indirect consequences of interactions. This is where the state comes in. For Dewey, the state as an aggregation of funds, infrastructures, and institutions – I would argue, including PSM – must act in those instances where indirect consequences to the public are such that they require systematically being cared for. Dewey's notion of state intervention is moderated by criteria to evaluate whether the indirect consequences of interactions warrant state interference: Are the consequences far reaching across time, space, and groups affected? Do the consequences affect the most vulnerable individuals? Are consequences systemic, recurrent, and ingrained?

Revisiting the thinking about the relationships between the individual, the public, and the state, along the lines set out by Dewey, may help to define a theoretical and *realistic* range of expectations of PSM as a crucial democratic instrument, regardless of the market and in answer to contemporary developments in media and society.

References

- Born, G., & Prosser, T. (2001). Culture and consumerism: Citizenship, public service broadcasting and the BBC's fair trading obligations. *The Modern Law Review*, 64(5), 657–687. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2230.00345>
- Dewey, J. (2016). *The public and its problems: An essay in political enquiry* (M. L. Rogers, Ed.). Swallow Press. (Original work published 1927)
- Fraser, N. (1999). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text*, 25/26, 56–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/466240>
- Jakubowicz, K. (2007). Public service broadcasting in the 21st century: What chance for a new beginning? In G. F. Lowe, & J. Bardoel (Eds.), *From public service broadcasting to public service media: RIPE@2007* (pp. 29–49). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-10003>
- Livingstone, S., & Lunt, P. (2011). The implied audience of communications policy making: Regulating media in the interests of citizens and consumers. In V. Nightingale (Ed.), *The handbook of media audiences* (pp. 169–189). Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444340525>
- Lowe, G. F. (Ed.). (2010). *The public in public service media: RIPE@2009*. Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-10002>
- Lowe, G. F., & Martin, F. (Eds.). (2014). *The value of public service media: RIPE@2013*. Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-10000>
- Moe, H., & Van den Bulck, H. (2014). Comparing “public value” as a media policy term across Europe. In G. F. Lowe, & F. Martin (Eds.), *The value of public service media: RIPE@2013* (pp. 45–74). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-10000>
- Mouffe, C. (1999). Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism? *Social Research*, 66(3), 745–758. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40971349>
- Murdoch, J. (2009, August 28). The absence of trust [MacTaggart Lecture at the 2009 Edinburgh International Television Festival]. *The Guardian*. <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Media/documents/2009/08/28/JamesMurdochMacTaggartLecture.pdf>
- Napoli, P. M. (2001). *Foundations of communications policy: Principles and process in the regulation of electronic media*. Hampton Press.
- Puppis, M., Van den Bulck, H., & Bürdel, E. (2020). Frozen 2: Communication rights and the thaw of public funding in small media systems. *Journal of Information Policy*, 10, 388–438. <https://doi.org/10.5325/jinfopoli.10.2020.0388>
- Rauchfleisch, A. (2017). The public sphere as an essentially contested concept: A co-citation analysis of the last 20 years of public sphere research. *Communication and the Public*, 2(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057047317691054>
- Savage, P., Medina, M., & Lowe G. F. (Eds.). (2020). *Universalism in public service media: RIPE@2019*. Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-9999>
- Schlesinger, P. (2020). After the post-public sphere. *Media, Culture & Society*, 42(7–8), 1545–1563. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720948003>
- Sørensen, J. K., Van den Bulck, H., & Kosta, S. (2020). Stop spreading the data: PSM, trust, and third-party services. *Journal of Information Policy*, 10, 474–513. <https://doi.org/10.5325/jinfopoli.10.2020.0474>
- Van den Bulck, H. (2019). Analysing policy making I: Stakeholder and advocacy coalition framework analysis. In H. Van den Bulck, M. Puppis, K. Donders, & L. Van Audenhove (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of methods for media policy research* (pp. 451–470). Palgrave. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-16065-4>
- Van den Bulck, H. (2001). Public service broadcasting and national identity as a project of modernity. *Media, Culture & Society*, 23(1), 53–69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016344301023001003>

- Van den Bulck, H., & Moe, M. (2018). Public service media, universality and personalisation through algorithms: Mapping strategies and exploring dilemmas. *Media Culture & Society*, 40(6), 875–892. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717734407>
- Van den Bulck, H., & Raats, T. (2022). Media policymaking and multistakeholder involvement: Matching audience, stakeholder and government expectations for public service media in Flanders. *European Journal of Communication*, 38(2), 132–147. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231221112199>