

Public value after the news

*A lifeworld-based approach to the
legitimation of content universality as
contribution to society*

CATHRIN BENGESSER

DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND JOURNALISM STUDIES, AARHUS UNIVERSITY, DENMARK

ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses a theoretical blind-spot around the societal contribution of non-journalistic public service content, caused by the academic focus on public service media's (PSM) role in facilitating democratic public spheres. To broaden the focus, I propose a lifeworld-based approach inspired by Habermas's *Legitimation Crisis*, as well as the differentiation of the economic and political system and the communicatively structured lifeworld in *The Theory of Communicative Action*. This basis enables a view of content universality as the precondition for PSM's contribution to integration, cultural reproduction, and sense-making processes in society. The ideal of PSM as a connector of lifeworld horizons is proposed to highlight their value and distinctiveness within a fragmented media market and pluralised societies. Using the example of the BBC facing the potential transformation into a subscription service, I discuss the necessity, feasibility, and practical challenges of PSM acting as connectors of lifeworld horizons.

KEYWORDS: public service norms, BBC, content universality, subscription, legitimacy, lifeworld

Bengesser, C. (2023). Public value after the news: A lifeworld-based approach to the legitimation of content universality as contribution to society. In M. Puppis, & C. Ali (Eds.), *Public service media's contribution to society: RIPE@2021* (pp. 47–68). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855756-3>

Introduction

John Reith's "inform, educate, entertain" has been the holy trinity of the public service remit pioneered by the BBC in Europe. Though there is debate about how public service media (PSM) like the BBC should inform and educate, it is difficult to question the value of these missions to democratic society. The societal value of publicly funded entertainment, however, is more difficult to pin down and defend at a time when fiction and reality shows of considerable quality are in abundant supply from global streaming services, while PSM face funding cuts. Even more urgently, the prevalence of subscription as the gateway to audiovisual information, education, and entertainment challenges the universal funding of PSM. Most prominent is the British government's proposition of transforming the BBC into a subscription service by 2027 – a centenary after its launch as a licence-fee-funded public corporation. Such a move will be a powerful signal to governments across Europe, renewing the urgency to rethink the justification for universal funding of PSM.

While PSM's contribution to democracy through its supply of news has garnered substantial theorisation and empirical investigation (Donders, 2021) and is commonly used in public defences of PSM like the *Public Service Media and Internet Manifesto* (IAMCR, 2021), their contributions to other aspects of society are less present. The broader public service ideal we are concerned with here is content universality, that is, the idea that PSM shall supply a mixed programme that encompasses all genres and has potential appeal to all members of society. This broad understanding of public service programming is an integral part of the remits of European PSM. As Brett Mills (2018) pointed out, however, the justification of content universality is a dimension of universal public service not sufficiently discussed by either academics or (national) public service policy-makers and regulators. In fact, the prevalence of democracy-focused arguments has led to the normalisation of a hierarchy of public service genres that prioritises news and current affairs over entertainment (Mills, 2018). Popular genres, also abundantly supplied on the private market, have instead been met with much academic scepticism as to their fit with public service ideals of rationality and enlightenment (Biltereyst, 2004).

Their role in providing citizens with high-quality, trustworthy information to facilitate democratic processes is an almost intuitive justification of PSM, not only in the face of disinformation on social media platforms, but also when we consider that popular private channels and globally operating subscription video-on-demand (SVoD) services offer hardly any news or current affairs coverage.¹ Yet, relying on the equation of public service and democracy may ultimately pay a disservice to the justification of the broad range of content offered by PSM in Europe, because it risks reducing PSM to a service for news, current affairs, and other forms undersupplied by the private market.² Competition in popular entertainment forms is increasing. Netflix is making

headlines with its large investments in original content in Europe (Dziadul, 2021), particularly in the region's biggest markets (Afilipoaie et al., 2021). When cumulating its investment in European fiction, it is amongst the national commissions of BBC, ARD, ZDF, and France Télévision (Fontaine, 2022).

The spread of subscription models and the vast content catalogues of SVoD services, plus their local investments, challenge the legitimacy of universal funding as a necessary condition for supplying high quality content that goes beyond information and education. In a publication of the Institute of Economic Affairs, which has already been instrumental in the push for subscription-funded public service broadcasting under the Peacock Committee (O'Malley, 2009), Philip Booth (2019) has argued in favour of a subscription-funded BBC on several levels: Technologically, subscription has done away with the problem of non-excludability previously used to justify universal funding. Economically, he argued, the internationalisation of the media market has made previously undersupplied genres financially sustainable. Politically, he proposed that the goal of sustaining domestic production could just as well be achieved through other means of policy than publicly funded media.

Such arguments challenge PSM to make the case for the value that a publicly funded universal service brings to society and differentiates it from what is offered by individual suppliers on the private market. Therefore, I ask the following research questions:

- RQ1. How can we theoretically conceptualise the societal contribution of PSM's universal content offer?
- RQ2. Which ideals for a universal public service can be postulated to meet the needs of contemporary societies?
- RQ3. How can such ideals be put into practice in today's media market and political environment?

The Habermasian public sphere has been a dominant theoretical framework for normatively assessing the contribution of PSM to society. It locates PSM's main function in facilitating rational deliberation as part of citizens' political-will formation. However, this equation of PSM and democracy does not easily stretch to genres of entertainment, which form an integral part of PSM's mixed programming. In this chapter, I seek to broaden the limited theoretical view on the public value of content universality by discussing PSM's role in the maintenance and reproduction of societies' lifeworlds. In the second section of the chapter, I detail current challenges to the ideal of content universality in the context of global SVoD services expanding in Europe, and national governments questioning public funding. In the third section, I use Habermas's *Legitimation Crisis* (1980) and *The Theory of Communicative Action* (2005) to consider the public sphere within the broader context of

the lifeworld. I do this for two reasons: First, it provides a framework for understanding the position of PSM at the intersection of the political and economic *system* and the cultural and communicative *lifeworld*, which allows us to see problems for PSM's legitimation emerging from this position. Second, it allows for abstracting normative ideals for a public service that acts as a connector of lifeworld horizons. In the fourth section of this chapter, I sketch such normative perspectives on PSM's contribution to societies' lifeworlds, and in the fifth, I discuss the feasibility of PSM living up to this ideal within the political, competitive, and economic constraints challenging their legitimacy. Throughout the chapter, the BBC serves as an example for the challenges to content universality. The BBC is a suitable case because many of the issues faced by licence-fee-funded PSM are already visible in the BBC's current situation. In the context of economic downturn and inflation, it faces a licence-fee freeze and intense competition from globally operating services on local territory, and it is looking towards potential transformation of the licence fee into a subscription. Many of these issues already affect or can be expected to hit other European PSM, particularly if the abolition of the licence fee in the UK moves forward.

Current debates about public service media's universality and public value

The European model of public service broadcasting is built on a broad remit for PSM as providers of a universal service that addresses everyone within a mostly nationally delimited society with a broad offer of content (see Hasebrink, Chapter 4 in this volume). This means that PSM are more than a mere counterweight to market failure, and their broad remit encompasses several ideals of universality. Drawing on the Broadcasting Research Unit's (1986) definition of universality for PSM, Barbara Thomass (2020) distinguishes between universality in 1) access and reach, 2) genres and services, 3) relevance and impact, and 4) financing with attendant obligations. Particularly the latter point is of key relevance at a time when the licence fee or other forms of public funding are challenged, since the legitimacy of funding by the entirety of society depends on the availability and relevance of the service to all. As charted in the RIPE@2019 volume (Savage et al., 2020), the idea of public service broadcasting's universality has been eroded by a proliferation and fragmentation of services in the globalised and competitive media market. While universality in reach is common to other public services, universality in content offered is unique to broadcasting – and the object of contest (Goodwin, 2020). Debate about content universality concerns normative questions, including which ideals of taste, quality, value, and choice should guide the content offers, as well as pragmatic questions for programme makers concerning how to adequately reach diverse sets of

audiences and meet their needs across genres. The cultural paternalism of the early years of public service broadcasting (Scannell & Cardiff, 1991) has given way to an acknowledgement of popular tastes and choice, but at the same time exposed PSM to criticism (Biltereyst, 2004). More recently, policy-makers and PSM have developed a greater awareness that the remit of catering to everyone in society also requires the production of content that serves minorities and diverse interests with the goal of integrating them into broader society (Horsti, 2014).

With the rise of commercial competition, the question of how the broad spread of PSM should be differentiated from the private offer became a key concern of policy-makers, challenged with balancing the interests of private actors with PSM's contribution to society. In the British context, policy discourse around PSM saw the rise of the concept of "public value" as the measurable contribution to PSM to society through their reach, impact, quality, and "value for money" (Collins, 2007), which also spread across Europe in the form of public value tests for new digital services (Donders & Moe, 2011). Another prominent discourse is that of PSM's "distinctiveness" from the offer of private media (Goddard, 2017), prevalently discussed in strategy papers from the 2010s (BBC Trust & BBC, 2011). Both concepts set limits to content universality in that they deem only offers that are distinct from that of the private market to offer sufficient value to society to warrant public funding. How to define distinctiveness and public value, however, is a matter of ongoing negotiation between governments, broadcasting institutions, regulators, and ultimately the public.

Today, on-demand viewing, pay-per-view, or subscription models, and their personalised services, challenge the very legitimacy of universality in financing, reach, and content. The rise of pay-VoD services has accustomed audiences to only paying for that which they intend to consume and to expect a service adjusted to their individual interests and needs. The idea of an opt-in subscription model, as proposed by the BBC Licence-Fee Abolition Act (Bone, 2022), transfers this individualisation of media consumption to PSM and effectively does away with universality in financing and reach, with likely consequences for content universality as well as relevance and impact across society.

The individualisation and personalisation of on-demand viewing has triggered discussions about how public service algorithms could safeguard the fulfilment of the universality remit (Van den Bulck & Moe, 2018; see also Lassen & Sørensen, Chapter 5 in this volume). The production boom coming with the investment of globally operating SVoD services in Europe also complicates the ideal of content universality, particularly in the British market, where the BBC's commissioning of original content worth GBP 1.2 billion (BBC, 2021) is not far removed from Netflix's spending of USD 1 billion annually in the UK (Sweeney, 2021). Across the EU, investment obligations

and content quotas are imposed on global SVoD services, showcasing that public service policy is indeed not the only way for sustaining local production (Komorowski et al., 2021). These investments by global players in local markets weaken the justification of public service as a necessary support for the creative economy, and safeguard for the supply of domestic content across all genres – particularly when combined with programme cuts in response to PSM’s funding crisis.

Despite these challenges to content universality, the idea still permeates public service policies. The Royal Charter’s public purposes, for example, task the BBC to “provide high-quality output in many different genres and across a range of services and platforms” which are “distinctive from those provided elsewhere” and demands it to “ensure that it provides output and services that meet the needs of the United Kingdom’s nations, regions and communities” (British Government, 2016: 5). These overall principles are necessarily vague, and problems can emerge when they become operationalised by regulators like Ofcom, tasked with assessing the BBC’s fulfilment of these purposes through measures like standardised audience surveys (e.g., Ofcom, 2021a). Those yardsticks for PSM performance, however, cannot replace a more fundamental debate about the norms and ideals for publicly funded universal contents’ contribution to society. The following section traces how the normative debate about the contribution of PSM has come into focus on their role in the democratic public sphere, and I explain how this focus is ill-suited for a defence of content universality. I then discuss how this narrow focus can be broadened by considering PSM’s role within the lifeworld of a society.

From a public sphere to a lifeworld-based approach to public service

The normative debate about the legitimacy of PSM in the UK has been dominated by 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 (e.g., Garnham, 1983, 1986; Murdock, 1992) and applied to PSM at a time where market deregulation and the ensuing spread of private broadcast corporations threatened its legitimacy. The public sphere-inspired perspectives on the legitimacy of public service broadcasting consider PSM as a facilitator of the debate and discussion culture that is necessary for the public’s political-will formation in democratic societies. Nicholas Garnham (1983, 1986) conceptualised public service broadcasters’ role in their contribution to shaping an open and egalitarian public sphere that enables the nation’s democratic processes by facilitating rational deliberation. Georgina Born (2006, 2018) returned to ideals of the public sphere when scoping norms for PSM in the digital age. Such applications of public-sphere

theory to PSM have also been critiqued based on the delayed reception of *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* in the Anglophone study of (public service) media (Collins, 1993; Lunt & Livingstone, 2013). Moreover, the Habermasian public sphere ideal itself has been critiqued in the light of unequal and polarised societies (Fraser, 1990; Mouffe, 1999), which also affects the application of public-sphere ideals to the case of public service broadcasting. Elizabeth Jacka (2003), for example, criticised the orthodoxy of the alignment of PSM and democracy by building on literature that questions the existence and idealist status of an egalitarian and universal public sphere (e.g., Mouffe, 1999). Jacka (2003) argued that private media also fulfil aims that are supposedly unique to PSM and pointed out that the public-sphere inspired defence of public service privileges journalism above all other, supposedly lower, forms of content. Ultimately, Jacka used these arguments to question the legitimacy of public service broadcasting altogether. But even if one does not follow along to that conclusion, her critique raises an important point: Equating public service broadcasting with the defence of democracy via the Habermasian public sphere is problematic, because it rests on ultimately unattainable and possibly outdated ideals and because it narrows our focus to the legitimacy of news and current affairs. If we centre the discussion of the legitimacy of PSM on just their role in facilitating a nation's public sphere, legitimising PSM entertainment or fiction becomes, at best, a stretch. In the worst case, a democracy-focused justification of PSM can be turned into a market-failure argument against universal public service, restricting PSM to news and current affairs.

The concepts of the “cultural public sphere” (McGuigan, 2005) or “civic cultures” (e.g., Dahlgren, 2009) have been used to capture the role of forms of communication other than rational political deliberation in society. Both are developments from Habermas's idea that a “literary” public sphere had formed the precondition for the emergence of a political public sphere, bringing the public together in the first place and exercising its members in discussion of shared topics. This instrumental function has also been applied to PSM's non-news content. Georgina Born (2018: 132) frames it as facilitating “cultural citizenship”, which Karen Donders (2021) also uses to discuss PSM's function in nation-building and developing shared identities. The citizenship frame, however, puts non-news content in the instrumental position of providing the space and personal formation for participating in deliberative democracy and thereby ultimately continues to look at entertainment, drama, or popular talk shows through the lens of the public sphere. This is not to say that these forms cannot contribute to debate within the public sphere and play an essential role in the cultural formation of citizens, but rather, it is to point out that this view limits us to a justification of popular entertainment on PSM through their contribution to democracy. Moreover, the equation between political and cultural citizenship contains a national frame, inade-

quate for challenges of contemporary society resulting, for example, from migration and globalisation (Fraser, 2014; for a more detailed discussion on how PSM can facilitate transnational connections of national cultural spheres, see Antoniazzi & Bengesser, 2022).

An alternative approach that allows us to address these shortcomings of the cultural public sphere or cultural citizenship concepts as a basis for PSM norms is, in fact, provided by Habermas's later work, which has been less thoroughly received and discussed in the British academic sphere (Lunt & Livingstone, 2013). In *Legitimation Crisis* (1980) and the *The Theory of Communicative Action* (2005), we find a broader perspective on the public sphere that enables us to 1) understand why it has become increasingly difficult to legitimise public service broadcasting as a state intervention in the media market, and 2) to think of PSM not merely as facilitators of a public sphere, but as connectors of lifeworld horizons within and beyond diverse national societies.

Habermas (2005: 124) defined the lifeworld as “a reservoir of taken-for-granted, of unshaken convictions that participants in communication draw upon in cooperative processes of interpretation”. He characterised the function of sense-making in the lifeworld as serving to “transmit and renew cultural knowledge”, contributing to the social integration and solidarity of a group, and aiding the formation of personal identities (Habermas, 2005: 137). Though building on Schütz and Luckmann (1974), he criticised their approach to the lifeworld for being too focused on individuals and their perceptions, which makes it impossible to use the lifeworld concept for sociological theorisation and empirical analysis beyond a reformulation of trivial everyday knowledge and blinds it to external forces that impact human actions and communication (Habermas, 2005). This criticism makes it clear that Habermas's use of the lifeworld concept goes beyond a phenomenology of everyday life experience, and instead considers it as an element within the broader workings of societies. But contrary to systems theory, Habermas considers the lifeworld as more than another “cog in the system” of society. He presents the boundaries between system and lifeworld as the following:

The subsystem of the economy and the bureaucratic state administration are on the one side, while on the other side, we find private spheres of life (connected with family, neighbourhood, voluntary associations) as well as public spheres (for both private persons and citizens). (Habermas, 2005: 310)

Hence, Habermas locates the public sphere *amidst* the lifeworld, which also contains everyday life within the various sub-communities of which individuals are part of. So, the first contribution of a lifeworld-based approach to the question of public service legitimacy is that it enables us to see the public sphere embedded within and not elevated or detached from the private sphere of everyday life. The lifeworld becomes the horizon of attitudes, experiences,

identity, and relationships that shape the interactions of individuals with the world – political deliberation in the public sphere being just one of those interactions. The other functions of the lifeworld include cultural reproduction, community building, and making sense of contemporary experience. This broadening of perspectives allows us to ask the normative question of how PSM can and should contribute productively to the maintenance and reproduction of the lifeworld as the gateway to our understanding of the world. But before delving into the terrain of norms for PSM's contribution to the lifeworlds of the societies that finance them, there is a second – possibly more important – issue to address: namely, the relationship between the economy and state, and the private and public spheres.

The administrative system is differentiated from the economic one, in Habermas's work, yet both are considered distinct from the lifeworld. This distinction provides two different perspectives on society. Habermas (2005) explained that a lifeworld point of view conceives of society from the perspective of its participating subjects, while a systems perspective observes a society as a system of institutions, whose actions ensure the society's continued existence. His analysis of the relationship between system and lifeworld focused on the process of their "uncoupling", which Habermas (2005) presented as characteristic for modern societies. As a result, the administrative and economic system becomes increasingly complex, abstract, and detached from the values, meanings, and motivations that circulate within the language- and culture-based lifeworld (Habermas, 2005). This process of uncoupling materialises in increasing bureaucratisation that makes the system more and more independent and detached from the lifeworld. But still, the system stays dependent on the supply of legitimation from the lifeworld which it cannot generate itself (Habermas, 1980).

Hence, the administrative system cannot itself generate the meaning that motivates citizens to support and thereby legitimate their interventions. The sense that generates meaning must come from *within* the lifeworld, but since the economic and political system have become detached from it, it becomes increasingly difficult to foster support for their actions within the lifeworld. Legitimation problems in late-capitalist societies thus present themselves as a consequence of a growing disconnect between the money- and power-based actions of the administrative system and its subjects' communicatively structured lifeworld horizons, which fail to make sense of the system's actions (Habermas, 1980). This lack of meaning can lead to a withdrawal of legitimation. This process of uncoupling between system and lifeworld described by Habermas is further complicated by the fragmentation and deterritorialisation of the lifeworld that were already observed in the early second half of the twentieth century (Luckmann, 1970; Shibutani, 1955), but became accelerated with the digitalisation of communication technology and processes of cultural globalisation (Volkmer, 2014).

So, what does this mean for PSM? The fundamental crisis dynamic of system and lifeworld drifting apart is also at the heart of PSM's legitimacy crisis, because PSM *are* an administrative intervention into the private market and society. From a system's perspective, increasingly complex remits, regulations, and accountability seek to balance the interests of the state and the economy and to demonstrate an effective output of policy. To retain their systemic legitimacy as an effective intervention into market and society, PSM must demonstrate to governments and regulators how they fulfil their remits. They do this in annual reports or commissioned research that adhere to the bureaucratised language and measurements required by the administrative system, such as "distinctiveness" or "public value". Yet, these arguments have limited traction among the public that experiences society as their lifeworld.

Television has been acknowledged and analysed as a medium that has integrated itself into the home and people's everyday life (Scannell, 2014; Silverstone, 1994). But beyond audiovisual media's unquestionable prominence in our everyday life, they also contain the abstract meaning strata inherent in the lifeworld, because they contain narratives. Habermas (2005) argued that narratives make visible and circulate taken-for-granted in a society, because they are used to maintain and make sense of communities' internal structures in the face of new events, aimed at managing the situation at hand. This is exactly where content universality becomes crucial for achieving lifeworld proximity, because different forms of narratives process life differently.

Public service broadcasters in Europe have a rich tradition of issue-led social realism, which has distinguished their drama productions from commercial competitors as far back as the 1960s, but already then, they were accompanied by more popular serials to regularly attract audiences (MacMurrough-Kavanagh, 1997). Popular programming, as argued by Biltereyst (2004), is in fact essential to PSM's positioning as central reference points in a fragmenting society. Narrative traits of popular forms like soap operas or genre conventions of melodrama also facilitate the sort of "emotional realism", which Ien Ang (1985: 45) has identified as the key for the arguably socially unrealistic television programme *Dallas* to become relevant and relatable to audiences around the world, discussed and understood in relation to their individual lifeworld horizons (Katz & Liebes, 1990). Emotionality and argumentation based on individual identity are key to popular talk show formats and thus stand in opposition to the rationalist ideal of debate in the public sphere (Lunt & Stenner, 2005). Entertainment formats like reality or nature programmes allow PSM to travel around the respective country and thereby represent and take audiences to different regions (Thompson, 2010). But content perceived as relevant to audiences' lifeworlds is also not necessarily that which originates from within "their" national or local culture. As demonstrated by Eichner (2020) and Jensen and McCutcheon (2020), non-domestic content can also achieve high levels of lifeworld proximity and

allow audiences to work through issues like gender roles and to take a critical look at their own societies. Therefore, the relevance of a programme to the lifeworlds of viewers cannot be determined through hierarchies of genre, aesthetic qualities, or groundedness in specific national cultures. All of television's cultural forms, not just news, provide narratives that help organise and explain events, actions, and relationships in the lifeworld.

The importance of television in helping people make sense of their experience has been stressed by Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge (1993) in their critique of *Structural Transformation*, originally published in 1972. They described television production as a means for expressing, organising, and reproducing societal experience. Negt and Kluge claimed that failing to do so in an adequate manner with programmes close to the interests and needs of the public will cost public service broadcasting its legitimacy in the competition with private media. With this proposition that public service programmes should be close to the interests and needs of the public, we enter the debate of concrete norms for PSM's role in the reproduction and development of the lifeworld of the society that finances it. The following section sketches ways in which a lifeworld-based thinking about PSM can help us to avoid an instrumentalist and nationally delimited view and to formulate the inherent value of public service programmes beyond the news, which allows for determining norms for a universal public service.

Normative perspectives on public service media's contribution to societies' lifeworlds

If we follow Habermas's proposition that the legitimacy for political intervention into market and society can only originate from within the lifeworld, the lifeworld-relevance of public service programmes becomes key to achieving the public support necessary for retaining PSM's legitimacy. Thomas Bauer (2011) offered a lifeworld-based approach to the public value of entertainment programmes, which play with possibilities as well as in offering relief, alternative views, and new perspectives. An "emancipatory media culture", as proposed by Bauer, should aim for the development of individual and lifeworld horizons. This ideal entails that programme offers should meet viewers within their own lifeworlds, but in doing so, aim at getting them out of limitations posed by a lack of perspectives originating from everyday despair, provincialism, or self-sufficient opinions (Bauer, 2011). When programmes achieve such an emancipatory value, their public funding is justified, according to Bauer (2011).

For the normative legitimacy of public service broadcasting, this means that PSM should strive for facilitating exchanges of perspectives that enable audiences to critically examine the taken-for-granted that compose their lifeworld horizons and structure their experience. Following from this, tele-

vision (and other PSM) is relevant within the lifeworld when they provide narratives that help people make sense of the world around them by offering new perspectives and locating or integrating them within their social communities. This approach views programmes as an intervention into the collective interpretation of societal experience. In contemporary pluralised societies, reaching collective interpretations necessitates bringing people together across political, cultural, or demographic divides.

Georgina Born's (2006, 2018) model of reciprocal connections between minority and majority groups takes membership of different societal communities as a starting point for determining whose experiences should be connected by public service media. This model is also applicable to a lifeworld-based consideration of PSM, but only when these identities also motivate the difference in experience, for example, regarding issues of racial discrimination. Yet not all differences in experience of society can be reduced to exclusive identity markers that create clear majorities and minorities in a society. Moreover, taking the individual and the groups they are part of as starting points for connecting different lifeworld horizons quickly spirals into an infinity of difference, where common denominators become scarce and tenuous.

A different starting point outside the identity of individuals is offered by Habermas's consideration of the lifeworld as the realm in which communication happens. While Benita Luckmann (1970) looked at different lifeworld horizons centred by the subject, Habermas looked at lifeworld horizons meeting in particular communicative *situations*. He described a situation as "a segment of lifeworld contexts of relevance" (Habermas, 2005: 122). These "contexts of relevance are concentrically ordered and become increasingly anonymous and diffused as the spatiotemporal and social distance grows" (Habermas, 2005: 122–123). Habermas thereby acknowledged the fragmentation of the lifeworld, whilst providing a way for analytically dealing with it by looking at specific situations as points that anchor and connect diverging horizons in a particular moment.

Centring relevant segments of lifeworld horizons around particular communicative situations offers an opportunity for connecting different perspectives to make sense of a situation. For the project of facilitating an emancipatory development of lifeworld horizons through PSM, this means that programmes should provide situations in which potentially limiting segments of lifeworld horizons become relevant and lifted from their taken-for-grantedness and subsequently become thematised and critically assessed. The task for PSM is to create communicative situations that encourage connections between the lifeworlds of the viewers to provide new or challenging perspectives for making sense of their experiences. For this task, programmes across all genres and modes of presentation on broadcast and VoD become relevant.

Another normative question concerns whose experiences should be presented and connected to render a comprehensive picture of a situation deter-

mined by the issues raised in the programmes. Nancy Fraser (2014) proposed using the concept of co-imbrication as the factor that determines who should be included in a public sphere within globalised society. Her concept of co-imbrication presents a development of the idea that all those affected by a political decision, and not just those who are citizens of a specific state, should ideally be involved in the deliberation about the decision. This helps break the link between the national delimitation that comes with ideals of civic and cultural citizenship as underlying ideals for PSM practice. Broadening Fraser's approach to the ideal of inclusivity in the public sphere to the lifeworld, programmes should make visible the experiences of those co-imbricated in the situation about which public service programmes speak.

How different experiences are depicted and linked on PSM can be guided by the ideal of an emancipatory development of societies' lifeworld horizons, as implied in the work of Negt and Kluge (1993) and explicitly proposed by Thomas Bauer (2011). An emancipatory development of lifeworld horizons aims to challenge the taken-for-granted circulating in the lifeworld by enabling people to question them and see their own horizons in relation to others. In the process of connecting relevant experiences, the ideals of parity (Fraser, 2014) and multilevel reciprocity (Born, 2006) between the perspectives presented on screen help work against preconceived hierarchies between different points of view. These ideals proposed for public spheres in pluralised and globalised societies can be expanded to a lifeworld-based approach by arguing that PSM's contribution to a society's lifeworld lies in connecting the horizons of different groups.

Still, there is one important difference between the public sphere and the lifeworld that needs addressing. In contrast to the ideal of the public sphere – in which different opinions on a matter are exchanged, detached from the participants' personal background (Habermas, 1991) – a lifeworld-based ideal of public service broadcasting is interested in exactly these particular interests emerging from their diverging experiences of the world. While according to Habermas's original public-sphere ideals, participants in a debate can agree or disagree with each other's arguments based on their empirical or normative validity only (Habermas, 1980), there is no ground for disagreeing with another person's experience emerging from their personal lifeworld horizon. A dialogue between (genuine) experiences is not a teleological process in which consensus over the most convincing argument can be reached; instead, it provides a portfolio of different perspectives that challenge and complement each other. Therefore, a lifeworld-based conception about the role of PSM is closer to Chantal Mouffe's (1999) ideal of "agonistic pluralism", which acknowledges that oppositions cannot be resolved and passions not eliminated. Instead, the subjectivities and individual interests are what becomes central in the way PSM represent the diverse experiences that exist within the society that finances them. Programme forms like drama, talk, or reality

– built around the subjectivities and passions of individuals – can achieve a representation of such agonistic pluralism. While consensus becomes impossible, the ultimate goal of the juxtaposition of different subjectivities still aims to address shared communicative issues revolving around fundamental questions of how to live together in plural societies facing global challenges.

To sum up, a lifeworld-based normative approach to PSM seeks to provide representations of experience and emancipation from limited individual horizons of understanding these experiences. Such emancipation can be achieved by connecting people across different lifeworld horizons – that is, connecting different perspectives. The difference in the perspectives that are to be brought together is not necessarily grounded in differences of individual identities, but in the individuals' relation to a specific communicative situation. In contrast to the ideal of the rational public sphere, the outcome of the communication is not aimed at resolving difference through consensus, but at a form of connection between diverging lifeworld horizons that allows for challenging taken-for-grantedness contained within them and thereby facilitating emancipation. Whose lifeworlds should be connected is not determined by shared political or cultural citizenship, but by co-imbrication in communicative situations of shared concern, which may make it necessary to connect PSM audiences across borders (Antoniazzi & Bengesser, 2022). The crucial question remaining, however, is how to implement these ideals using the full spectrum of content universality within constraints posed by the political and economic contexts in which PSM operate.

Challenges to the ideal of public service media as connectors of lifeworld horizons

PSM are challenged in their fulfilment of universality in reach and content by the diverse and often conflicting needs or interests of individual members of society, as well as by the ways in which their fulfilment of universality ideals is assessed. Ofcom's (2021c) measurement of the BBC's performance reveals that groups such as viewers over 65 years of age, people with disabilities, or those belonging to lower socioeconomic strata have a higher tendency to feel that the content offered is either not relevant to them or that their experiences are not sufficiently presented on-screen. Ofcom's (2018) more in-depth study on the representation and portrayal on BBC television has audiences voicing concerns over stereotypical images of members of Black communities seen predominantly as struggling or disadvantaged, or thematically skewed, for example, sensationalising transgender or gay experiences. In his argumentation against a universal licence fee for the BBC, Booth (2019) pointed to niche providers often being better at catering to minority tastes than the BBC. And indeed, the BBC's competitors like Netflix, as well as US-American content, are mentioned by members of Black and LGBTQ+ communities as services

managing to create greater relevance through the variety of portrayals offered (Ofcom, 2018). But the challenge to PSM goes beyond losing these audiences to the competition.

For fulfilling the ideal of PSM connecting different lifeworld horizons, it becomes relevant to see whether the representation of specific experiences manages to challenge taken-for-granted held by broader society. Here, British PSM seem to fall short. A majority of Black respondents found representations of their ethnic groups to be fairly or very negative, while the overall public service audience did *not* see them as such (Puttnam, 2016). This gulf in perception evidences that British PSM not only fail to adequately represent certain experiences, but that they circulate negative images of minorities instead of facilitating an emancipation from limiting lifeworld horizons, for both the stereotyped groups and the viewers outside this group who perceive those representations as normal. This is where PSM could act as agents of change by exposing a broad audience to different lifeworld experiences instead of limiting minority audiences to the private “niche services” cited by Booth (2019).

Diversity benchmarks and monitoring schemes are supposed to help by making media institutions like the BBC more accessible (Ofcom, 2021c). However, this regulatory approach betrays a simplistic perception of creative input and output. Access to the industry by creatives from diverse backgrounds does not automatically translate into diverse experiences and stories on-screen. Limiting creatives from underrepresented backgrounds to write about “their” experiences risks perpetuating the very hierarchies it seeks to redress. This is not to argue against greater diversity on and behind the screen, but to highlight a problem with the underlying idea that PSM sufficiently fulfil the representational needs of a society if they only manage to hire, adequately represent, and reach individual societal groups defined by certain identity markers.

While instructive in highlighting the blind spots in the institution’s representation of contemporary society, the regulatory assessment of the BBC’s performance according to demographic subgroups presents a problem. The focus on how well the BBC does among different societal groups does not assess its performance in connecting people across different lifeworld horizons. Ofcom’s consumer-research paradigm (Lunt & Livingstone, 2013) focuses on the parameters set by the legislation, operationalising the public purposes from the Royal Charter in its standardised audience surveys (Ofcom, 2021a). These reports therefore paint a picture of public opinion tailored to fit the governmental system’s requirement to demonstrate publicly the efficacy of their policies, but in a bureaucratised way, removed from actual experience. Such modes of assessing PSM performance are thus unsuited for a broader debate about whether the way in which PSM’s contribution to society is phrased in current public policy even relates to the needs of the society. The

core issue is the disintegration of the systemic and the lifeworld perspective on PSM, of which the increased bureaucratisation and measurement of public value is symptomatic. When pressured by the administrative system through funding cuts and increasingly detailed requirements for demonstrating public value to maintain public funding, PSM will most likely orient themselves to these demands rather than broader, ultimately unmeasurable, norms for life-world relevance or emancipation through connection of different perspectives.

Another challenge for PSM acting as connectors of lifeworld horizons is the fragmentation of the lifeworld into self-selected “small life-worlds” (Luckmann, 1970), catalysed by the proliferation of offers on the media market, which has contributed to an individualisation of media repertoires (see also Hasebrink, Chapter 4 in this volume). This situation, on the one hand, emphasises the necessity of PSM acting as agents of societal integration, while on the other hand, it complicates the project, because they not only struggle to reach all parts of society equally, but their competing SVoD and niche services brand themselves on personalisation and addressing the interests of specific groups. Thereby, the personalisation and individualisation of media consumption is working against the ideal of exposing viewers to a broad variety of content or connecting them to experiences that may take them outside their own lifeworld horizons.

As shown by Van den Bulck and Moe (2018), PSM increasingly move towards algorithmic personalisation of their services, but still combine them with editorial curation. Kelly (2021) argued that the BBC does not offer large-scale personalisation on its iPlayer, as he estimates that 80 per cent of content offered will be the same for everyone. The question is how these 80 per cent are presented. Kelly’s two-year tracking of the iPlayer’s interface shows that the presentation of content through the categories is mostly led by genre, popularity, and the featuring of box-sets (Kelly & Sørensen, 2021) rather than a topical curation and combination of different genres around certain themes or issues. In contrast to this, the Danish DRTV (discussed in more detail by Lassen & Sørensen, Chapter 5 in this volume), applies a more flexible strategy to content curation which includes thematic categories (Kelly & Sørensen, 2021).³ Offering topical connections across the full range of genres is also a way to showcase the distinction of PSM interfaces from those of the commercial competition; not only in the way content is ordered, but also in the way it is embedded into a larger context of different forms and perspectives dealing with a shared issue.

The ultimate challenge to the ideals of lifeworld-relevance and connection of diverging horizons, though, is the transformation of public funding to subscription, because it entails an end to universality in reach – that is, to the idea that it is the purpose of PSM to serve and connect audiences across the entire society. With subscription funding, catering only to those who subscribe becomes acceptable and necessary for economic survival. This in turn has

implications for the range of content produced and the way it is presented. The customer relationship established through the transaction of subscription and the expectations derived from experience with different SVoD services' personalisation and niche content are likely to enforce an individualisation in the mode of address and content presentation. This may lead to a focus on the (small) lifeworlds and content preferences of those willing to subscribe, rather than a fulfilment of the ideal of a full range of programmes used to challenge such individualised lifeworld horizons.

Conclusion

For the theoretical debate about the contribution of PSM to society, the lifeworld concept provides us with a broader view on society than the concept of the public sphere, since it includes the societal processes of community building, sense-making, and cultural reproduction. Thereby, it becomes possible to adequately include the value of genres other than news and to understand them beyond their instrumental role in facilitating public spheres for democratic deliberation.

A public service practice which acknowledges that people living together in a society will have different experiences of issues that concern them accommodates the plurality as well as the agonistic tendencies in contemporary societies. Moreover, it makes public service's difference from the private sector more tangible. In contrast to private services, which can choose to focus on niches or the most lucrative strata of the audience, the universality principles of PSM charge them with striving to cater to all interests and societal groups. The key difference from the offer of the fragmented private market is that PSM are not simply catering to individual interests but aim to connect audiences across groups. From a normative point of view, bringing audiences together around issues in which they are co-imbricated is therefore the key contribution of a universal public service to society. To achieve this integrative function, PSM not only need the full range of audiovisual content but also must appear as a common provider for society.

In short, PSM's unique contribution to the maintenance and development of a society's lifeworld horizon lies in *connecting* different experiences to question the taken-for-granted circulating in the small lifeworlds sustained by media targeting only specific groups. These taken-for-granted are the basis for processes of cultural reproduction, community building, and making sense of contemporary experience – that is, the basis for how societies deal with change. Yet, PSM are challenged in their efforts to live up to an ideal of acting as connectors of lifeworld horizons. The fragmentation of the media market and their existing unequal reach across diverse social groups interferes with PSM's opportunity to reach everyone co-imbricated in shared issues. Competition, particularly in entertainment content, gives rise to calls

for a narrowing of PSM remits to underserved programme forms, curtailing their opportunity to use popular genres as a way of working through societal challenges. Logics of personalisation and ranking followed by some PSM come at the expense of using interfaces to facilitate topical connections, suited for exposing users to diverging lifeworld horizons. Finally, the fulfilment of the ideal of PSM as connectors of lifeworld horizons is challenged by regulatory frameworks focused on fixed and measurable performance indicators for their contribution to society rather than their broader role in society coming to terms with internal and external change.

Acknowledgements

Parts of this chapter are based on the author's unpublished PhD thesis "Legitimising Public Service Broadcasting in Europe: Crisis Dynamics, Legitimacy Performances, Normative Perspectives" (2019) at Birkbeck, University of London, funded by a doctoral scholarship by Cusanuswerk. Further research was conducted in the framework of ScreenMe-Net project (EU Horizon2020, grant number 952156).

References

- Afilipoaie, A., Iordache, C., & Raats, T. (2021). The 'Netflix original' and what it means for the production of European television content. *Critical Studies in Television: The International Journal of Television Studies*, 16(3), 304–325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17496020211023318>
- Ang, I. (1985). *Watching Dallas: Soap opera and the melodramatic imagination*. Methuen.
- Antoniazzi, L., & Bengesser, C. H. (2022). Media-political inroads for Europeanising national cultural public spheres: EU-level obstacles and national public service perspectives. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 1–17. Online First. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2022.2043288>
- Bauer, T. A. (2011). Der öffentlichkeitskulturelle Wert von Medienunterhaltung [The value of media entertainment for public culture]. In M. Karmasin, D. Süssenbacher, & N. Gonsler (Eds.), *Public Value: Theorie und Praxis im internationalen Vergleich [Public value: Theory and practices in international comparison]* (pp. 57–73). VS Verlag.
- BBC. (2021). *BBC commissioning supply report*. <https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/site/bbc-commissioning-supply-report-2020.pdf>
- BBC Trust & BBC. (2011). *Delivering quality first*. http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/pdf/dqf_detailedproposals.pdf
- Biltereyt, D. (2004). Public service broadcasting, popular entertainment and the construction of trust. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 7(3), 341–362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549404044787>
- Bone, P. (2022). *A bill to abolish the BBC licence fee and make the BBC a subscription service; and for connected purposes*. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0080/210080.pdf>
- Booth, P. (2019). New vision: Liberating the BBC from the licence fee. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3852128>
- Born, G. (2006). Digitising democracy. *The Political Quarterly*, 76(s1), 102–123. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-923X.2006.00752.x>
- Born, G. (2018). Principles of public service for the 21st century. In D. Freedman, & V. Goblort (Eds.), *A future for public service television* (pp. 130–140). Goldsmiths Press.
- British Government. (2016). *Broadcasting: Copy of Royal Charter for the continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation* [UK Parliament Command Paper, session 2016/17: CM 93]. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/577829/57964_CM_9365_Charter_Accessible.pdf
- Broadcasting Research Unit. (1986). *The public service idea in British broadcasting: Main principles*. BFI Publications.
- Collins, R. (1993). Public service versus the market ten years on: Reflections on critical theory and the debate on broadcasting policy in the UK. *Screen*, 34(3), 243–259. <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/34.3.243>
- Collins, R. (2007). The BBC and “public value”. *Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft*, 55(2), 164–184. <https://doi.org/10.5771/1615-634x-2007-2-164>
- Dahlgren, P. (2009). *Media and political engagement: Citizens, communication and democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Donders, K. (2021). *Public service media in Europe: Law, theory and practice*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351105569>
- Donders, K., & Moe, H. (Eds.). (2011). *Exporting the public value test: The regulation of public broadcasters' new media services across Europe*. Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-10044>
- Dziadul, C. (2021, July 1). *Netflix takes lead in European scripted content*. BroadbandTVNews. <https://www.broadbandtvnews.com/2021/07/01/netflix-takes-lead-in-european-scripted-content/>
- Eichner, S. (2020). Lifeworld relevance and practical sense-making: Audience engagement with Danish television drama series. In P. M. Jensen, & U. C. Jacobsen (Eds.), *The global audiences of Danish television drama* (pp. 107–123). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-5897>
- Fontaine, G. (2022). *Audiovisual fiction production in Europe: 2020 figures*. <https://rm.coe.int/audiovisual-fiction-production-in-europe-2020-figures/1680a5d715>

- Fraser, N. (1990). 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>
- Fraser, N. (2014). Transnationalizing the public sphere: On the legitimacy and efficacy of public opinion in a post-Westphalian world. In K. Nash (Ed.), *Transnationalizing the public sphere* (pp. 8–42). Polity Press.
- Garnham, N. (1983). Public service versus the market. *Screen*, 24(1), 6–27. <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/24.1.6>
- Garnham, N. (1986). The media and the public sphere. In P. Golding, G. Murdock, & P. Schlesinger (Eds.), *Communicating politics: Mass communications and the political process* (pp. 37–53). Leicester University Press.
- Goddard, P. (2017). ‘Distinctiveness’ and the BBC: A new battleground for public service television? *Media, Culture & Society*, 39(7), 1089–1099. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717692787>
- Goodwin, P. (2020). Universal but not necessarily useful. In P. Savage, M. Medina, & G. F. Lowe (Eds.), *Universalism in public service media: RIPE@2019* (pp. 37–47). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-9999>
- Habermas, J. (1980). *Legitimation crisis*. Heinemann.
- Habermas, J. (1991). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (2005). *The theory of communicative action: Lifeworld and system: A critique of functionalist reason* (Vol. 2). Beacon.
- Horsti, K. (2014). The cultural diversity turn: Policies, politics and influences at the European level. In K. Horsti, G. Hultén, & G. Titley (Eds.), *National conversations: Public service media and cultural diversity in Europe* (pp. 43–60). Intellect.
- House of Lords. (2009). *Public service broadcasting: Short-term crisis, long-term future?* <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200809/ldselect/ldcomuni/61/6103.htm>
- IAMCR. (2021). *Public service media and public service internet manifesto*. https://ia902206.us.archive.org/5/items/psmi_20220127/psmi.pdf
- Jacka, E. (2003). ‘Democracy as defeat’: The impotence of arguments for public service broadcasting. *Television & New Media*, 4(2), 177–191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476402250675>
- Jensen, P. M., & McCutcheon, M. (2020). “Othering the self and same-ing the other”: Australians watching Nordic noir. In P. M. Jensen, & U. C. Jacobsen (Eds.), *The global audiences of Danish television drama* (pp. 21–37). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-5897>
- Katz, E., & Liebes, T. (1990). Interacting with “Dallas”: Cross cultural readings of American TV. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 15(1), 45–66. <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.1990v15n1a538>
- Kelly, J. P. (2021). ‘Recommended for you’: A distant reading of BBC iPlayer. *Critical Studies in Television: The International Journal of Television Studies*, 16(3), 264–285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17496020211024201>
- Kelly, J. P., & Sørensen, J. K. (2021). “What’s on the interface tonight?”. *MedieKultur: Journal of media and communication research*, 37(70), 66–90. <https://doi.org/10.7146/mediekultur.v37i70.122386>
- Komorowski, M., Iordache, C., Kostovska, I., Tintel, S., & Raats, T. (2021). Investment obligations for VOD providers to financially contribute to the production of European works, a 2021 update. https://smit.vub.ac.be/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Komorowski-et-al_2021_-A-European-comparison-of-investment-obligations-on-VOD-providers-to-financially-contribute-to-the-production-of-European-works_Report-2021_FINAL.pdf
- Luckmann, B. (1970). The small life-worlds of modern man. *Social Research*, 37(4), 580–596.
- Lunt, P., & Livingstone, S. (2013). Media studies’ fascination with the concept of the public sphere: Critical reflections and emerging debates. *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(1), 87–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443712464562>
- Lunt, P., & Stenner, P. (2005). The Jerry Springer Show as an emotional public sphere. *Media, Culture & Society*, 27(1), 59–81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443705049058>
- MacMurrough-Kavanagh, M. K. (1997). The BBC and the birth of ‘the Wednesday play’, 1962–66: Institutional containment versus ‘agitational contemporaneity’. *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 17(3), 367–381. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01439689700260781>

- McGuigan, J. (2005). The cultural public sphere. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 8(4), 427–443. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549405057827>
- Mills, B. (2018). Everything for someone: For an inclusive definition of public service broadcasting. In D. Freedman, & V. Goblott (Eds.), *A future for public service television* (pp. 161–164). Goldsmiths Press.
- Mouffe, C. (1999). Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism? *Social Research*, 66(3), 745–758. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40971349>
- Murdock, G. (1992). Citizens, consumers and public culture. In M. Skovmand, & K. C. Schröder (Eds.), *Media cultures: Reappraising transnational media* (pp. 17–41). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315511931>
- Negt, O., & Kluge, A. (1993). *Public sphere and experience: Toward an analysis of the bourgeois and proletarian public sphere*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Ofcom. (2018). *Representation and portrayal on BBC television: Thematic review*. https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/124078/report-bbc-representation-portrayal.pdf
- Ofcom. (2021a). *BBC performance tracker*. <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/tv-radio-and-on-demand/tv-research/bbc-performance-tracker>
- Ofcom. (2021b). *Media nations: UK 2021*. https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/222890/media-nations-report-2021.pdf
- Ofcom. (2021c). *Ofcom annual report on the BBC 2020–21: Including a performance assessment for the Charter period to date: 2017–2021*. https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0029/228548/fourth-bbc-annual-report.pdf
- O'Malley, T. (2009). Technology, politics and economics, 1962–84. In T. O'Malley, & J. Jones (Eds.), *The peacock committee and UK broadcasting policy* (pp. 45–65). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Puttnam, D. (2016). *A future for public service television: Content and platforms in a digital world: A report on the future of public service television in the UK in the 21st century*. <http://futureoftv.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FOTV-Report-Online-SP.pdf>
- 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>
- Scannell, P. (2014). *Television and the meaning of 'live': An enquiry into the human situation*. Wiley.
- Scannell, P., & Cardiff, D. (1991). *A social history of British broadcasting*. Blackwell.
- Schütz, A., & Luckmann, T. (1974). *The structures of the life-world*. Heinemann.
- Shibutani, T. (1955). Reference groups as perspectives. *American Journal of Sociology*, 60(6), 562–569.
- Silverstone, R. (1994). *Television and everyday life*. Taylor & Francis.
- Sweney, M. (2021, December 13). Streaming boom pushes big budget production spending in UK to record £6bn. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/dec/13/streaming-boom-pushes-big-budget-production-spending-in-uk-to-record-6bn>
- Thomass, B. (2020). Universalism in history, modern statehood, and public service media. In P. Savage, M. Medina, & G. F. Lowe (Eds.), *Universalism in public service media* (pp. 25–36). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-9999>
- Thompson, F. (2010). Is there a geography genre on British television? Explorations of the hinterland from coast to countryfile. *Critical Studies in Television: The International Journal of Television Studies*, 5(1), 57–68. <https://doi.org/10.7227/CST.5.1.7>
- Van den Bulck, H., & Moe, H. (2018). Public service media, universality and personalisation through algorithms: Mapping strategies and exploring dilemmas. *Media, Culture, and Society*, 40(6), 875–892. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717734407>
- Volkmer, I. (2014). *The global public sphere: Public communication in the age of reflective interdependence*. Wiley.

Endnotes

¹ In April 2021, the Netflix catalogue in the UK comprised just 5.8 per cent factual content, which includes documentary, news, and current affairs (Ofcom, 2021b), while between August 2018 and 2020, the catalogue of the BBC iPlayer contained on average 33.6 per cent factual content (Kelly, 2021).

² A move towards a content-based policy for public service has, for example, been advocated for in the House of Lords (2009: para. 13) recommending that PSM focus on the “provision of core elements including national and regional news, current affairs programmes, the arts, children’s programming, programmes dealing with religion and other beliefs and UK content”.

³ A recent example is the category “Greenland – History, nature and culture”, which explores Denmark’s relationship to Greenland across all genres reaching from historical documentaries and current affairs programmes to the fourth season of the fictional series *Borgen* and Greenland-related episodes of popular travel, food, and lifestyle shows (e.g., *Nak & Æd* or *Hammerslag*).