

Exploring entertainment in public service media

Culture between politics, technology, and commerce

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All errors, mistakes, typos, are mine. Any result is the product of a collective effort.

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Alexander Barclay

Abstract

This thesis is a study of entertainment in public service media (PSM). The evolution of technology, government regulation, viewing practices and industrial organisation have significantly increased audiences' content choices. Consequently, public service media are confronted with the challenge of reaching their diverse audiences of citizens and thus fulfilling their role in contributing to the public sphere. Entertainment is a highly moralised concept with negative connotations; in this thesis, it is approached from the perspective of psychology and economics, building on an ecology of attention paradigm. Television studies have mainly addressed entertainment with a focus on programmes; by contrast, this study contributes a “pan-entertainment” view in the context of PSM. This exploratory study takes a mixed methods and multidisciplinary approach to entertainment in PSM.

PSM differ from commercial media in that they address the audience as citizens. This research proposes considering the entertained citizen on each of three following levels: co-decider, contributor, individual. Centred on the individual enjoyment experience, public service entertainment attracts an audience for hedonic or eudaimonic purposes. It is conceptualised as aiming to develop positive subjective emotions and positive individual traits, as well as to have a positive impact on the individual physical or psychological system or on the collective social system. The concept of public service entertainment is used both in a programme and portfolio approach, built on the five layers of public service media in a network era: connection, curation, creation, software and hardware.

A review of the history of Swiss PSM SRG SSR and its four member organisations offers a comparative view of the development of the mandate and practice in regard to entertainment in the context of evolving technological, economic and regulatory conditions. Eleven lessons are drawn from this history pertaining to entertainment, new technology, market dynamics, and Swiss policymaking and culture.

PSM face the constant evolution of technology and viewer practices, calling for the organisation and its offering to adapt. In this context, labs have emerged as a common instrument for PSM to drive innovation. In a comparative empirical study of innovation labs and teams at 12 PSM, this research reviews the mission, legitimacy and operational capabilities of labs and their evolution over time. The challenges and opportunities such teams offer their organisation are critically discussed, notably innovation transfer and performance measurement. This research proposes seven roles an innovation team may play within a public service media: the think tank, the strategist, the do tank, the coordinator, the facilitator, the interface, the editorialist.

The findings of this study contribute to research on PSM policy. It also provides policymakers and practitioners with both a conceptual contribution for public service entertainment and a framework for approaching innovation labs.

Overall, this thesis argues that entertainment is central to the future of PSM: to define, defend and execute its mandate; to have a positive impact on individuals and the society it serves.

Kurzbeschreibung

Diese Dissertation ist eine Studie über Unterhaltung in öffentlich-rechtlichen Medien (Public Service Media, PSM). Die Entwicklung von Technologien, staatlichen Regulierungen, Nutzungsgewohnheiten und industrieller Organisation haben die Auswahlmöglichkeiten des Publikums an Inhalten deutlich erhöht. Infolgedessen stehen öffentlich-rechtliche Medien vor der Herausforderung, ihre vielfältige Zielgruppe von Bürgern zu erreichen und so ihre Rolle als Beitragsleister zur Öffentlichkeit zu erfüllen. Unterhaltung ist ein stark moralisiertes Konzept mit negativen Konnotationen; in dieser Dissertation wird es aus der Perspektive der Psychologie und Ökonomie angegangen, aufbauend auf einem Paradigma der Ökologie der Aufmerksamkeit. Fernsehwissenschaft haben sich hauptsächlich mit Unterhaltung mit einem Fokus auf Sendungen befasst; im Gegensatz dazu trägt diese Studie eine "Pan-Unterhaltungs"-Sichtweise im Kontext von PSM bei. Diese explorative Studie verfolgt einen Mixed Methods- und multidisziplinären Ansatz zur Unterhaltung in PSM.

PSM unterscheiden sich von kommerziellen Medien dadurch, dass sie das Publikum als Bürger ansprechen. Diese Forschung schlägt vor, den unterhaltenen Bürger auf jeder der drei folgenden Ebenen zu betrachten: Mitentscheider, Mitwirkender und Individuum. Zentriert auf das individuelle Genusserlebnis, zieht die öffentlich-

rechtliche Unterhaltung ein Publikum für hedonische oder eudaimonische Zwecke an. Sie wird so konzeptualisiert, dass sie auf die Entwicklung positiver subjektiver Emotionen und positiver individueller Eigenschaften abzielt, sowie auf eine positive Auswirkung auf das individuelle physische oder psychische System oder auf das kollektive soziale System. Das Konzept der öffentlich-rechtlichen Unterhaltung ist sowohl auf einen Programm- als auch auf einen Portfolio-Ansatz ausgerichtet, der auf den fünf Ebenen der öffentlich-rechtlichen Medien im Netzwerkzeitalter aufbaut: Verbindung, Kuration, Kreation, Software und Hardware.

Ein Rückblick auf die Geschichte der Schweizer PSM SRG SSR und ihrer vier Mitgliedsorganisationen bietet einen vergleichenden Blick auf die Entwicklung des Auftrags und der Praxis in Bezug auf Unterhaltung im Kontext der sich entwickelnden technologischen, wirtschaftlichen und regulatorischen Bedingungen. Aus dieser Geschichte werden elf Erkenntnisse gezogen, die sich auf Unterhaltung, neue Technologien, Marktdynamik sowie die Schweizer Politik und Kultur beziehen.

PSM sind mit der ständigen Entwicklung von Technologie und Zuschauerpraktiken konfrontiert, was eine Anpassung der Organisation und ihres Angebots erfordert. In diesem Zusammenhang haben sich Labs als ein verbreitetes Instrument für PSM herausgestellt, um Innovationen voranzutreiben. In einer vergleichenden empirischen Studie über Innovationslabs und -teams bei 12 PSM untersucht diese Studie die Mission, die Legitimität und die operativen Kapazitäten der Labs sowie deren Entwicklung im Laufe der Zeit. Die Herausforderungen und Möglichkeiten, die solche Teams ihrer Organisation bieten, werden kritisch diskutiert, insbesondere der Innovationstransfer und die Leistungsmessung. Diese Forschung schlägt sieben Rollen vor, die ein Innovationsteam innerhalb eines öffentlich-rechtlichen Mediums spielen kann: der Think Tank, der Stratege, der Do Tank, der Koordinator, der Facilitator, die Schnittstelle und der Redakteur.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie tragen zur Forschung über öffentlich-rechtliche Medienpolitik bei. Außerdem liefert sie politischen Entscheidungsträgern und Praktikern sowohl einen konzeptionellen Beitrag für öffentlich-rechtliche Unterhaltung als auch einen Rahmen für die Herangehensweise an Innovationslabs.

Insgesamt argumentiert diese Dissertation, dass Unterhaltung für die Zukunft von PSM von zentraler Bedeutung ist: um ihren Auftrag zu definieren, zu verteidigen und auszuführen, und um einen positiven Einfluss auf den Einzelnen und die Gesellschaft zu haben, der sie dienen.

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Preface

This PhD project started well before the 2018 vote on *No Billag* in Switzerland. My original intention was for the findings to contribute to the public debate. I felt that attacks on entertainment were increasing and that its defence was not clearly articulated. Little did I know that it would take me so long to complete. Yet, even two and a half years after the vote, I am convinced that this project can feed into the necessary discussion around our need for media that address the viewer as a citizen, particularly in entertaining him or her, when our individual and collective attention are so sought after.

To conclude his cultural history of European public televisions, media sociologist Jérôme Bourdon (2011) writes: “Public service television today lacks defenders. It has constantly lost ground and reduced the territory of its ambitions” (p. 228).¹ There are staunch defenders of public service media (PSM), particularly in PSM policy research. Constructive criticism is necessary to make PSM better. In this spirit, this project is a defence of public service media as a political project. Building on Lord Reith’s triad of the early BBC’s mission to “inform, educate, entertain”, I essentially argue that today, public service media’s mission could be “to entertain in order to inform and educate”. The importance of entertainment in an attention ecology should be celebrated and proclaimed by those organisations that address their viewer as citizens, rather than as consumers. They are tasked with capturing people’s attention not to sell them products, but to positively impact their physical, psychological and social systems. While public service media are by definition national or regional, their professions are specialised and share challenges and visions across nations. PSM managers regularly meet, and the definition and evolution of the regulatory, economic, technological conditions in one country may impact all others. Public service media are at the forefront of a broader debate around publicly funded and owned utilities, in this case on a historic form of “attention utilities” (Harris, 2020) currently challenged by social networks and other players. These technologies and the societal developments they enable also offer tremendous opportunities to better reach every audience member in their diversity. In working on this project, I have had the privilege of exchanging with people at various PSM who are passionate about the mission of their organisation and who are working to ensure its survival for the next century in the service of the public.

¹ Original text in French: “La télévision de service public manque aujourd'hui de défenseurs. Elle n'a cessé de céder du terrain et de réduire le territoire de ses ambitions”.

As a consumer of media and entertainment, I enjoy both public and private media. There are shows that I love, others that I am indifferent to or that I dislike. I understand that we all have personal tastes and preferences, the result of complex processes. With this project, I wanted to better understand how entertainment, be it series, sports, game shows, infotainment, or other types of programmes, fulfils a publicly fostered purpose. I have worked on television series in public service media previously. I observed that the notion of gamification is taking over many fields of life. This project allowed me to work on developing a broader understanding of these issues. Stories and emotions help us imagine and build our world, individually, collectively and globally. In the face of numerous challenges for our planet, we collectively need to imagine and build futures we want. Fiction, and science fiction, have long structured our images of the future: consider Tintin's trip to the moon, long before Armstrong took his small step. The stories we are offered and choose to consume, individually and collectively, shape our world.

Lastly, in arguing for a defence of public service media, I am not so much arguing in defence of a specific organisation or of a cultural specificity, but rather for the political specificity of public service as a model of and an ambition for cultural and media policy. Many institutions, the national ecosystem and the public may contribute to this project. My hope is that the reader learns something unexpected in reading this thesis and that he or she is challenged in part of their thinking. Enjoy (hopefully)!

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List of abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AOL	America Online
AR	Augmented Reality
ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
ATS	Agence Télégraphique Suisse
AVMSD	Audiovisual Media Services Directive
AWS	Amazon Web Services
BAT	Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CDN	Content Delivery Network
ČRo	Český rozhlas
DAB	Digital Audio Broadcasting
DPR	Division Presse et Radio
DR	Danmarks Radio
DRA	Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv
DRM	Digital Rights Management
DVR	Digital Video Recorder
DW	Deutsche Welle
EBU	European Broadcasting Union
ENoLL	European Network of Living Labs
FAANG	Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, Alphabet (previously Google)
FET	Future Experience Technology
FONSART	Fondation pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine audiovisuel de la RTS
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GAFA(M)	Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, (Microsoft)
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDS	Government Digital Service
IMI	Initiative for Media Innovation
INA	Institut National de l'Audiovisuel
IoT	Internet of Things
IP	Intellectual Property

IPO	Initial Public Offering
Mbps	Megabits per second
MeCETES	Mediating Cultural Encounters through European Screens
MMO	Massively Multiplayer Online Games
MPAA	Motion Picture Association of America
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NPM	New Public Management
NPR	National Public Radio
NRK	Norsk rikskringkasting
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OKR	Objectives and Key Results
OPSI	Observatory of Public Sector Innovation
ORF	Österreichischer Rundfunk
OSR	Orchestre de la Suisse Romande
PBS	Public Broadcasting Service
POC	Proof of Concept
PSB	Public Service Broadcaster
PSE	Public Service Entertainment
PSM	Public Service Media
PSN	Public Service Navigator
PSP	Public Service Publisher
PTT	Post, Telegraph, Telephone
PVM	Public Value Management
R&D	Research and Development
RAI	Radiotelevisione italiana
RIPE	Re-Visionary Interpretations of the Public Enterprise
RSI	Radiotelevisione svizzera
RSR	Radio suisse romande
RTBF	Radio Télévision Belge de la Communauté Française
RTS	Radio Télévision Suisse
RTVE	Corporación de Radio y Televisión Española
SACEM	Société des auteurs, compositeurs et éditeurs de musique
SR	Sveriges Radio (chapter 5)
SR	Service de Radiodiffusion (chapter 4)
SRF	Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen
SRG SSR	Swiss Broadcasting Corporation
SVOD	Subscription Video on Demand

List of abbreviations

SVT	Sveriges Television
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VCR	Video Cassette Recorder
VOD	Video On Demand
VR	Virtual Reality
VRT	Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroeporganisatie
VSM	Verband Schweizer Medien
WTO	World Trade Organisation
YLE	Yleisradio Oy
ZDF	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen

Chapter 1: Introduction

To inform, educate and entertain. Lord John Reith, on the mission of the BBC

Entertainment and learning are not opposites; entertainment may be the most effective mode of learning. Herbert Marcuse

Entertainment is not politically neutral. John Lahr

Entertainment has to come hand in hand with a little bit of medicine. David Fincher

Getting upset about Netflix, to me, is like getting upset about the weather. It's just something that's happening, and we have to decide what we feel about it. Steven Soderbergh

Introduction

What is the first movie you ever saw in a cinema? For many adults, chances are good that the first movie they saw in a theatre as a child was produced by Disney. The release of a Walt Disney Pictures animation movie was a major event. The animated pictures reflect evolutions in society, for instance in gender roles, shifting from the prince saving the helpless princess in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) to an empowered young woman in *Frozen II* (2019). As Disney releases are combined with marketing deals across many consumer goods categories, its movies have been linked to commercialism in entertainment. Overall, entertainment is a highly moralised concept which is often viewed negatively.

In many European countries, original broadcast media were a public monopoly. First radio, then television, was provided by a public service broadcaster modelled on the BBC and tasked with informing, educating and entertaining. The broadcasting of American entertainment productions, such as Disney movies, in public service media was debated: do they really belong in the offering of a European national public service? In a digital era and with the rise of portals that may also fund local productions, public service media face the challenge of defining their public service mission in entertainment. It is important to understand what the rise of Netflix and other portals means for television; this thesis is a contribution to research on public service media policy with a focus on entertainment.

In the family context, Disney foreshadowed what Netflix would become: the brand associated with enjoying a good time with loved ones. There is one key difference: Netflix is personalised.² While there used to be one annual Disney film release for all,

² Netflix is an American technology company that provides a subscription-based video-on-demand platform. While it originally rented DVDs by mail, it has also moved into original programming, including in Europe.

Netflix is an individualised experience. In other words, Disney used to set stories for all: it spread an image of the princess around the world as a collective imaginary. Netflix allows everyone to find the princess they want. This major shift has been conceptualised by Amanda Lotz (2017) as mass customisation. Netflix is not alone in having facilitated this shift.³ Disney launched its own subscription video on demand (SVOD) streaming platform on November 12, 2019, building on its massive catalogue and yet entering this segment in the position of a challenger. Free, advertising-funded video on demand (VOD) offerings have long existed, evolving from a patchwork of random filmed moments⁴ to an important distribution and marketing channel for major broadcasters and public service media (PSM) alike. Alphabet's YouTube celebrated its fifteenth anniversary in February 2020. At the same time, its curation algorithm is criticised for allegedly fostering extreme views.⁵

In 2012, Netflix and Disney announced a multi-year deal starting in 2016 whereby the former gained exclusive licensing of the Disney catalogue, including first-runs, for US subscription television. At the time, Ted Sarandos, Netflix' Chief Content Officer, framed this as a major step for Internet television, not just for his firm: "Disney and Netflix have shared a long and mutually beneficial relationship and this deal will bring to our subscribers, in the first pay TV window, some of the highest-quality, most imaginative family films being made today. It's a bold leap forward for Internet television and we are incredibly pleased and proud this iconic family brand is teaming with Netflix to make it happen" (Netflix, 2012). This gave Netflix a competitive advantage on the US market in terms of catalogue compared to other streaming platforms and cable services. Yet the deal unravelled as Disney announced on August 8, 2017 that it was planning to launch a Netflix competitor and a separate service for sports under the ESPN brand.⁶ As Amanda Lotz (2017, p. 75) puts it, "studios have been frustrated by

³ Some argue that there is a risk of an entertainment monopoly, as analysts increasingly compare Netflix to Coca Cola or Walmart. The strategy then goes as follows: compete with low prices and a strong offering until the competitors are out of business; then reap a monopolists' rent or offer lower quality (Ellison, 2018). In other words, there may be a winner takes all dynamic at play here; or a "streaming war". Yet it is too early to call the final situation.

⁴ Website astronaut.io offers a view of the incredible diversity of uploaded content, presenting a few seconds of videos that have very few views and were uploaded in the preceding week.

⁵ This is the subject of academic research, particularly as it relates to terrorism and extremism. YouTube is described by Tufekci (2018) as follows: "Given its billion or so users, YouTube may be one of the most powerful radicalizing instruments of the 21st century" (p.1). She arrives at this conclusion based on research that shows the curation algorithms of YouTube tend to display increasingly extremist content, be it on political topics such as the campaign for the 2016 US election, or societal topics such as vegetarianism, or personal health topics such as jogging.

⁶ To do so, it was acquiring BAMTech, a technology firm, and pulling its catalogue from Netflix as of 2019. As Bob Iger, Disney CEO, put it: "The media landscape is increasingly defined by direct relationships between content creators and consumers, and our control of BAMTech's full array of innovative technology will give us the power to forge those connections, along with the flexibility to quickly adapt to shifts in the market" (Walt Disney Company, 2017).

the asymmetrical relationship in which the portals have extensive data about viewing behaviour that allow them to far more accurately value content”, an argument that therefore goes beyond the curation for the viewers, to also impact industrial relations; collecting viewing data allows a studio to better value any single content. This illustrates how fast the industrial organisation, practices and technology are evolving.

Adapting to post-television

Just as Disney adapts to a post-television world and fosters the vertical integration of its viewers' entertainment experience, television studies scholars face the challenge of redefining the boundaries of their field and the transformation of its main medium.⁷ Specificities notwithstanding, the broadcast entertainment industries have been transformed by digital technologies in five key dimensions: “the development of digital distribution channels with nearly unlimited capacity [...]; the introduction of global digital piracy networks [...]; the availability of low-cost production technologies [...]; the introduction of new powerful distributors [...]; the development of advanced computing and storage facilities [...]” (Smith & Telang, 2016, pp. 13-14). Netflix provides a convenient context to discuss each of these dimensions. In a short book,⁸ Amanda Lotz (2017) shows how Netflix reflects tectonic changes in television from an industrial perspective. In defining Internet-distributed television, Lotz (2017) states that “the most desired application for distributing video via internet protocol has been accessing legacy television content outside its linear distribution” (p. 8). She thereby argues that the prediction of a “new” media has so far not proven correct.⁹ Internet-distributed television includes scripted television based on a subscriber model, but also advertising funded Internet-distributed video content (such as YouTube)¹⁰ and live video distributed via social media (such as Facebook Live);¹¹ “[t]he distribution systems used to circulate media, however, evolve with considerable regularity, and different distribution systems possess different affordances that can introduce wide-ranging change to the production and consumption of media” (Lotz, 2017, p. 1).¹² Technology,

⁷ While studying television originally meant turning on the television set and watching what everyone saw, studying Netflix means logging in to a personal account and facing an individually curated experience. The shift was not that sudden; since the 1980s, the television experience was fractured as the viewer could zap across channels and some programmes were adapted for local geographies, notably advertising windows that could then be sold to advertisers relevant to this market. See also chapter four.

⁸ In her book, Lotz (2019) focuses on the case of the US from 2010 to 2017.

⁹ However, transformations made possible by a new medium can take time to fully deploy its effects as technological development, the competitive environment, regulation and user behaviour mutually shape each other.

¹⁰ There is a clear distinction between Netflix that secures intellectual property rights for each territory on a global scale and produces its own content as a “studio portal” (Lotz, 2017) and the platforms such as YouTube, whose contents are not bound to specific territories and are not primarily based on IP control (Cunningham & Craig, 2016).

¹¹ Facebook Live is a live streaming service with the social media's platform. This feature was introduced in August 2015, aimed at competing with services such as Periscope, which was acquired by Twitter in January 2015.

¹² For instance, broadcasters now produce shorter versions of their content, or snippets, to publish on social media.

industrial organisation and user practices mutually shape each other, in the context of government regulation.

Internet distributed television is more than just a new distribution channel; it changes ways of viewing and industrial dynamics. Developing knowledge about the user base is a game-changer, as platforms such as Netflix can move beyond the measure of market share to a detailed measure of preferences and consumer habits. This is an integral part of Netflix's value proposition for its subscribers: to improve its curation, it allegedly categorises content into over 75'000 micro-genres including "Christmas, Children & Family Films, Goofy" (code 1475071), "Action & Adventure starring Chuck Norris"(code 2321) and "Danish Movies Featuring a Strong Female Lead" (code 59937).¹³ Localised content, once the distinguishing factor of PSM in small nations, may now be challenged by deep-pocketed portals.

PSM versus portals

As Netflix localises its content and develops into a range of services (Lobato, 2019), public service media (PSM) are increasingly under pressure to show their value to citizens who may be tempted to subscribe to a streaming service such as Netflix, even though they are still paying the compulsory fee for their PSM. Paying for two services might lead them to question their funding of the PSM and challenge its legitimacy. In making the case for PSM, the quality argument alone is not sufficient anymore: in 2019 the Oscar for the Best Foreign Language Film was awarded to *Roma*, a Netflix production, marking its ability to produce world-class quality content.¹⁴

At the beginning of radio broadcasting, most European countries instituted a public monopoly operated by a public service media organisation serving the public with a programme to inform, educate and entertain the citizens. A public service mandate is typically characterised by the guiding principles of citizenship, quality and universalism (Born & Prosser, 2001). This implies both a content acquisition strategy and an audience strategy aiming to attract audiences within a territory. As audience behaviours change, the PSM's audience research department often finds that young audiences are not sufficiently addressed. One challenge in addressing this issue is

¹³ This means a new job: watching Netflix content to categorise it using tags to fit the numerous categories.

¹⁴ The discussion around Netflix and quality is a tricky one: Lotz (2017) describes the divide between the perception in scholarly and critical circles of the Netflix brand and its most watched content, based on sparsely revealed data from senior Netflix executives interviews. Critics praise the quality of content on Netflix, while the most watched content, based on limited statements by Netflix executives, would be considered low brow. This suggests that the personalisation of the Netflix portal is currently effective in presenting content that viewers in general, and critics in this case, value. As a note, the sheer value of such data for understanding the audience is key to Netflix's valuation. In fact, one may ask whether understanding audience viewing preferences has value in and of itself for a public service media and the public it serves.

the required organisational shift from a linear to a non-linear paradigm.¹⁵ While audiences spend ever more time online, the PSM's internal budget distribution may not adapt fast enough to reflect this shift in demand. In late 2019, while the British on average spent more time on digital media than on television, the BBC allocated seven times more budget to television than to digital services (Nielsen, 2020). This reflects the fact that the logic of scheduling still remains essential for programme production by PSM.¹⁶ Yet, audiences are not bound to scheduling and have the power to choose the programmes they want to watch, at the time and on the device that suits them best. This, in turn, may offer opportunities for creators. Portals such as Netflix are freed from the constraints of scheduling in terms of creativity for producers: number of episodes, length of episodes or scenario conveniently permitting an advertising break in the middle of the broadcast.¹⁷ Portals are understood here as the “crucial intermediary services that collect, curate, and distribute television programming via internet distribution” (Lotz, 2017, p. 8).

The competition of portals as well as the drive within PSM for the development of a portal strategy that is conceived as more than a distribution channel raises the question of whether public service media entertainment will effectively move away from the pre-eminent role of the schedule. Yet the point is not about abolishing the schedule; rather, these two paradigms must co-exist.¹⁸ Furthermore, PSM compete with organisations that may have more focused mandates and brands, which positions them more clearly and allows them to develop a more understandable value proposition. To put it simplistically: the press may be considered excellent for news; cable, for sports; portals, for entertainment

Any platform now has virtually unlimited shelf space, although not all have a broad catalogue. The Netflix case shows that in a networked age, both content and platform are crucial. Some PSM critics suggest that public service encompasses only content, and not the platform. Yet the different mandates (public service as opposed to commercial or subscriber) have important implications that go beyond who the catalogue is designed for. The digital divide¹⁹ is a good example of an issue a public service mission must seriously consider given its mandate, which typically requires it to reach everyone within the nation. Other platforms that are not held to a public

¹⁵ Linear refers to the broadcast schedule; non-linear, to the on-demand consumption of programmes.

¹⁶ Scheduling refers to the broadcast timeslot for which the content is being produced, which in turn depends on the targeted audience demographics, with certain audiences demonstrably tuning in at certain times of the day, in regard to the broadcast.

¹⁷ When it included the Spanish series *Casa De Papel* on its platform, and before producing its third series, Netflix recut the episodes of the first two seasons.

¹⁸ Indeed, a substantial share of the population is still served by linear broadcasts.

¹⁹ The digital divide refers to the gap in access to information and communication technology. This can impact social and economic development, both on an individual and societal level.

service mission may not consider the digital divide at all. The risk of a digital divide poses a substantial challenge to PSM managers (Burri, 2015).²⁰ Furthermore, the use of digital media does not mean digital literacy.²¹ This calls for broader digital acculturation and underlines the importance of empowering the individual in a networked society.

Hence, while the debate around the role of public service media in a digital era has largely been focused around the competition with local, private providers and the risk of crowding them out from a competitive perspective, it is key to consider the public interest in a digital era and determine relevant policy objectives (Barwise & Picard, 2014; J. Simon, 2013). In other words, the discussion ought to focus on the political project that is public service media, rather than on the economic reasoning that has dominated since the 1980s. This is particularly true in entertainment, an area in which PSM are attacked for arguably providing some programmes that the market could support.

PSM under pressure

In what was perceived as a test for European PSM, the Swiss population voted on the funding of its national PSM on March 4, 2018. 71.6% of voters refused the initiative, which would have abolished the licence fee. This fee is paid annually by the resident population and corporations; it is overwhelmingly used to fund the PSM. As the young have moved away from television, one could expect that they show little interest in PSM. And yet, a survey conducted after the vote showed that 80% of the 18-29-year-olds voted to support the PSM. The reprieve, however, is short-lived, and this initiative shows clearly that PSM must engage in the public debate, structure the argument to justify their existence and demonstrate the public value they provide.

On March 4, 2019, one year after the vote on the *No Billag* initiative, Swiss public broadcaster SRG SSR organised the first International Public Media Conference in Bern, Switzerland. This event brought together policymakers, the media industry as well as senior management from European PSM. In a recorded statement,²² BBC director-general Tony Hall described the challenges for the BBC as follows: first, “the market around the BBC has changed beyond recognition: where once we were

²⁰ In online activities, PSM must consider how the millions of citizens who are joining after early adopters may have different needs and preferences; or in fact, how digital natives' consumption habits may change as they age; for instance, the UK's Ofcom (2008) wondered whether digital natives would revert to linear television consumption as they aged.

²¹ Playing a game on FarmVille, an agriculture simulation game, does not mean one is capable of searching for jobs online, for instance (Cagé, 2015).

²² The full event can be viewed here : https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/business/4th-march-2019_livestream--international-public-media-conference/44774866. Tony Hall's statement starts at 36:23.

considered a big player, now we are much smaller compared to the big giants”, referring to foreign technology players moving into content production, or production companies moving into technology. He issued a call for an adaptation to this new environment both by the organisation and by the regulation that frames it. “Second, technology has transformed the behaviour of audiences”, in particular in regard to consumption online and mobile. “Third, these trends are fastest among younger audiences”. He wrapped up by making a pitch for public service media: “I am convinced that we also have a major opportunity. Audiences need us now more than ever for trusted and impartial news and information. For programmes and services about British people and British culture. To reflect and represent every part of the UK, reminding us of everything we have in common as well as celebrating what makes our communities different, and, by the way, bringing the world to the UK. What PSPs [Public Service Publishers] offer has always been unique. Today, I believe, it’s priceless”.

When discussing competitors, Tony Hall was naturally referring to Netflix, amongst others. In 2018, Netflix spent on content globally more than double the total revenue of the BBC.²³ While Netflix CEO Reed Hastings once said that his firm’s main competitor was sleep, the BBC’s mission is perhaps less focused on its competition: the BBC is “to act in the public interest, serving all audiences through the provision of impartial, high-quality and distinctive output and services which inform, educate and entertain”. This current mission echoes the institution’s original political project: *to inform, educate, and entertain*. Through this simple motto, Lord John Reith, the first director-general of the BBC, summarised the spirit and mission of the British public service broadcaster. This concise statement has come to represent the essence of public service media, remaining constant throughout the rise of radio, television and the Internet. However, the distinction between the three missions is blurred, while technological developments change the way media content is produced, distributed and consumed.

Of these three missions, entertainment is perhaps the most often questioned: why should citizens pay a special tax or licence fee for entertainment provided on a public service mandate? After all, the scarcity of broadcast frequencies is not as relevant as it once was; neither the frequencies nor the programmes are the scarce resource constraining this cultural market anymore, as other distribution technologies were

²³ According to Statista, Netflix spent USD 12 billion on content globally in 2018, up from USD 9 billion in 2017, compared to the BBC’s total revenue of GBP 5 billion in 2018 (approximately USD 6.8 billion), of which GBP 3.8 billion came from the licence fee (approximately USD 5.2 billion). While the BBC focuses on the British market and Netflix is global, these figures give a sense of the latter’s financial might relative to PSM.

introduced and production costs are falling, leading to a plentiful offering. Furthermore, foreign media are increasingly willing to fund local productions as they aim to localise their catalogue. Rather, the scarce resource is now attention.

The disproportion in the ratio of available content to our limited ability to pay attention is not new. In fact, as early as the 1970s, Herbert Simon, Nobel-prize winner, wrote that “a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention, and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it” (Simon, 1971, p. 41). Technology fosters media convergence, as newspapers, broadcasters and pure players compete for audience members’ attention online, as well as the market entry of players from neighbouring industries including tech and telecommunications. Tremendous amounts of data and content are made available every second throughout the globe. In 2019, over half the world’s population was online, while Americans spent, of their time on media, 33% on mobile, 18% on desktop, 34% on television, 12% on radio and 3% on print; this translates to 6.3 hours spent by American adult users per day on digital media, across mobile, desktop and other connected devices (Meeker, 2019). The competition is thus no longer solely in the production of content, it is about capturing the *attention* of users, individually or collectively.

At its core, entertainment aims to capture an audience’s attention. Storytelling is one tool to keep the audience’s attention, perhaps most famously illustrated by Scheherazade’s survival strategy in the famed Middle Eastern tales of *The Thousand and One Nights*: facing the promise of being killed in the morning, she captured the king’s attention, and saved her own life, by telling a new story every night, interrupting the narration before its end. The crucial importance of attracting and keeping an audience’s attention has in fact long been known: rhetoric, or the art of persuasion, theorised and practiced since Antiquity, aimed to capture the emotions and attention of an audience in the pursuit of political goals.

While public service media organisations are perhaps not as urgently threatened as was Scheherazade, they are under strong pressure.²⁴ To summarise: one specific area of public intervention in media systems is PSM, which are increasingly under competitive, technological and political threat. Originally introduced in an era of content scarcity, public service broadcasting in radio, then in television, was provided by the public sector. These public service media are now being challenged, in their

²⁴ Amongst other factors, digitalisation is disrupting the media as it has other sectors. Changes affect not only the offering, service or product, but also the value chain, organisations, industry structures and interactions with staff, customers, creators and competitors. Digital technology is driving the evolution of work, and in particular the blurring of the line between the inside and the outside of a firm, the employees, freelancers, and customers.

legitimacy, in their funding, and in the worldview on which they are based, which some describe as paternalistic. While millions watched the final season of *Game of Thrones*,²⁵ public service broadcasters face increasing challenges to justify their financing model, their practices and their sheer existence. Why do we pay a licence fee to our public service media, when we can pay a fraction of this to Netflix and get all the content we want, curated to our preferences? Do we even need a PSM for entertainment? This is the core question this thesis addresses.

If PSM may appear lagging in entertainment, it has been a pioneer in the past. Consider the following: what do the original television series *House of Cards*, the hit podcast *Serial*, the first TV reality show, the first Football World Cup broadcast and the Eurovision Song Contest have in common? They were all imagined or first produced by public service media organisations. In their diversity, they represent the range, and success, of public service entertainment.

Public service media are both a mission and an organisation. In a post-television world, an organisation founded around broadcasting faces fundamental challenges. It must in particular profoundly rethink its mission, both internally and externally. Yet PSM are the product of a political vision; they are mission-oriented organisations, as defined by Mariana Mazzucato (2018). Changing conditions call for rethinking the mission.

This mission is then operationalised. In the context of the rise of international portals and their success with domestic audiences, PSM managers are left to ponder strategic questions such as: whether they should distribute their content through these portals to connect with their audiences; which content to push to these competing platforms and which to maintain on an own platform for curation purposes. They also had to ask themselves how to reinvent radio using podcasting and video to respond to the use of smartphones and commutes, to gain access to new time slots in their users' lives while exploring the voice command as a new means of interaction. New forms of content have filled these new times in users' lives. Audiences and creators alike navigate an ecology of attention in which each can increasingly find content he or she enjoys. This new golden age of content is an exciting one, full of challenges for public service media.

Disney represented the epitome of entertainment empires. The convenience, curation and catalogue of Netflix's portal makes it a digital era challenger, as the two companies now compete for subscribers' attention. The rise of the portal is a product of the digital era, in an ongoing transformation at the interplay of technology, industrial organisation,

²⁵ Fantasy television series broadcast by HBO.

practices and regulation. Public service media are challenged by the rise of the portal, as they are not fully responding to the needs of a portion of their citizens and must reorganise internally to better serve the public. Their programmes are challenged as paternalistic and outdated. Entertainment is a field in which this is particularly visible, as it is the territory of portals. This introductory chapter presents the research topic, defines key concepts, addresses the research question, discusses the research gap and introduces the structure of the dissertation.

1.1. Research topic and concepts

I now turn to framing the research topic, defining key concepts and introducing two models to discuss the future of public service media.

1.1.1. Research topic

Storytelling is the cultural and social function of sharing a story, either orally or in a recorded form. These narratives have shaped communities' self-understanding and imagination for millennia. There have always been people who enjoy creating, telling or enacting stories, while other people enjoy listening to or watching stories. However, how a storyteller reaches an audience has evolved with technologies, industrial formations, government policies and practices of looking.²⁶ The discussion of Netflix and Disney illustrated this point. I now focus on public service media.

PSM face a crisis. PSM face disruption. This could be the title of a presentation at any media studies conference over the past few decades, although the focus evolves. A report from the consulting firm BCG described the crisis of the public broadcasting industry as "the perfect storm" with changing media consumption patterns, financial pressure and a constantly evolving regulatory framework (Mei-Pochtler & von Merey, 2013). Scholars argue this point as well: some ask whether PSM are facing "the beginning of the end, or a new beginning in the 21st century" (Jakubowicz, 2006). Yet such changes have been the norm rather than the exception throughout the history of public service broadcasting.

There may be a crisis of audience interest in PSM, which may turn into a crisis of legitimacy. Attacks from competitors focus on entertainment. Users are changing their media consumption patterns through multi-screen media consumption, on the go and on demand. The broadcasting schedule is of decreasing importance in reaching an important share of its audience, even though public service broadcasters have long

²⁶ Practices of looking refer to consumption mode, for instance linear schedule or on demand but also to the viewing context, individually or as a group.

built their programmes around the schedule. Furthermore, these modified media consumption patterns broaden the range of competitors for PSM: as *The Economist* puts it, “[f]irms like Google and Facebook have taken over the role of disseminators of information that governments once claimed” (“On the stump”, 2016). Financial pressure is increasing on PSM as the public becomes weary of paying a substantial licence fee for it, given the large market offering of information and entertainment, part of it perceived as free. This fits in the context of decreasing state budgets, and of governments questioning whether funding for PSM is a good investment in terms of its economic impact and political, social and cultural outcomes (Lowe & Martin, 2014). The regulatory framework is adjusting, in particular in regard to digital offering, competition and trade in cultural goods and services.

The question of PSM’s mission in a “post-television” world (Strangelove, 2015) is highly topical. Indeed, many countries are undergoing a public debate regarding the offering of their PSM online and its strategy in relation to other players, both domestic and foreign.²⁷ The discussion around PSM takes place within a larger debate around the sustainability, role and financing of media and the continuation of a public sphere in the face of an increasingly fractioned and personalised media offering,²⁸ as well as around the broader public service.

Challenges for PSM are on several levels and concern a range of stakeholders. Public service organisations face:

- Deregulation and more intense competition;
- Technological innovation;
- New players and new competitors;
- Rising demands from the public and politicians for accountability;
- A general shift towards entertainment.

All these challenges are strongly relevant to PSM’s entertainment programmes. Competition is particularly strong in providing entertainment, as streaming makes entertainment content immediately and easily available through alternative channels. This illustrates the impact of technological innovation and the new competitors, as discussed previously in the case of Netflix. The entry in European markets of this American portal, among several offerings, including Disney+, raises questions as to the added value of PSM entertainment, and hence its obligation to answer demands

²⁷ On the one hand, some argue that PSM should only use the Internet in a support function for broadcast shows (for example a simple webpage for each show, as well as replay), while others argue for an online offering as the “third pillar” of PSM, beyond radio and television (Moe, 2009); by 2020, the latter position has largely become dominant.

²⁸ For an example of propositions for rethinking the governance and financing of media organisations in France, see Cagé (2015).

for accountability by demonstrating its impact.²⁹ Additionally, the increased supply in programmes, and hence in viewers' choices, may appear to foster the viewers' consumption of entertainment content and their choice of immediate gratification.

Regulators and the political arena, for their part, must control:

- Industry convergence, in particular in media and telecommunication industries;
- Transnational activities conducted by multimedia groups;
- Regulation of cultural industries with divergent policy objectives,³⁰ including pluralism, diversity and access.

This last point includes the political objective of supporting the local cultural industries with the purpose of defining and shaping a shared identity and the public sphere.

The mission of public service media is politically defined and periodically updated. Due to its public financing, PSM must increasingly account for its programming, in particular in regard to the fulfilling of its public service mission. In this context, there is a common confusion between the concept of public service and the PSM organisation providing it; it is important to recognise this difference in order to rethink public service in media and to go beyond a defence of a *status quo*. For example, some call for provision of public service content by private providers through the introduction of subsidiarity in public service;³¹ the underlying issue is one of fair competition and financing, as private content providers are still largely dependent on advertising revenue while PSM can rely on public funding. In an article based on Open Society's 56 country survey of public service broadcasters and state broadcasters (Dragomir & Thompson, 2014), Tambini (2015) describes digitalisation and increased competition leading to a catch-22 situation for PSM: either they compete with commercial providers with the risk of delegitimising their public service remit with an offering similar to that of private providers; or they maintain their public service remit with the risk of being perceived as dull, and losing their audience. A PSM supplying entertainment content that solely appeals to elderly people will see its public support wither as it will de facto not fulfil its universal mandate, let alone the citizenship principle. As Jérôme Bourdon argued in his cultural history of European public service television, "an American-style marginalisation seems to be beginning: the public service would lead to the production

²⁹ The context is one of dominance by the economic argument, whereby the main argument for PSM is the absence of provision by the market; PSM opponents argue that there is no absence of provision of entertainment platforms.

³⁰ Policymakers can view media policy objectives from a range of perspectives, including competition policy, industrial policy, cultural policy, and media pluralism (Picard, 2017).

³¹ The notion of subsidiarity in public service suggest that public service content can be provided by actors other than the public sector. In this model, the PSM must only provide what private actors do not.

of different programmes but would lose its large audience and therefore its significance as a major cultural policy project” (2011, p. 14).³²

Tambini (2015) describes four broad options to redefine the PSM mandate:³³

- Maintaining a remit focused on public service broadcasting in information, culture and education;
- Diluting the remit, hence leading PSM to compete with commercial providers with the long-term risk of undermining the current financing model;
- Developing a new remit allowing for innovation and the launch of digital services;³⁴
- Redefining the monitoring framework.

Burri (2015) asks “whether, in a transformed information and communication environment, it would be apt for new PSBs [public service broadcaster], regardless of their precise organizational design, to assume the role of ‘public service navigator’ (PSN)” (p. 1342). Redefining the mandate is called for to respond to new cultural practices: the liberation from the broadcasting schedule, for the user, started with the recording technology of the VCR, then digital DVR and later VOD in the early 2000s (Lotz, 2017). New cultural practices emerge around the Internet distribution of video; for example the practice of binge-watching, which relies on the quality television found in the streaming platforms that are a “haven in the digital pandemonium” (Wu, 2016, p. 333). Such entertainment calls for new forms of creation, connection and curation to fulfil the fundamental mission of citizenship, diversity and universalism. This does not mean the PSM ought to be the only provider or platform.

While public service media operate for the most part within pre-networked age frameworks, they face competition from technology platforms, nimble actors who emerged during the networked age and are able to use its mechanisms to their advantage. This threatens the public service media both in their mission fulfilment and, as a direct consequence, in their sustainability.

What do portals mean for entertainment specifically? Consider Netflix and the type of content it provides. Information is a flow business; entertainment on the other hand is

³² Translated from the original French: “une marginalisation à l'américaine semble s'amorcer: le service public conduirait à produire des émissions différentes mais en perdant sa large audience et donc sa signification de projet majeur de politique culturelle”.

³³ Rethinking the remit to fit the mission in the current world should allow PSM to adapt all relevant processes; programming is still largely developed with the broadcasting schedule in mind and content still largely prepared for a specific broadcasting time slot and with a specific audience group in mind.

³⁴ This aims to reduce the potential disconnect between offer and demand.

not;³⁵ rather, it builds a catalogue³⁶ and as such is substantially more impacted by non-linear consumption³⁷ (Lotz, 2017). How does non-linear consumption impact media? On-demand or non-linear consumption of content modifies the way it is produced, in the liberty creative agents are afforded and in the audiences it reaches. Beyond consumption mode, the portal itself is both a brand³⁸ and an investment for financial markets. Thus, we must rethink the role of public service media entertainment for a non-linear consumption specifically. In fact, a public service portal may require substantial technological investment to be successful and to compete with private portals,³⁹ which are funded largely by venture capitalists or the public capital markets.⁴⁰ To face these important financial investments in technological development, joint projects by PSM groups, such as those piloted or coordinated via the European Broadcasting Union, are exemplary.⁴¹

Technology, practices, tools, and content co-evolve and shape each other. Major innovation, such as binge-watching and SVOD, appears to be more readily enabled or developed by private companies.⁴²

Yet PSM came under attack for extending their activities to provide a platform through which to distribute their content. This expansion was progressive and faced competitors' resistance, including not only commercial broadcasters, but also publishers and telecommunication providers. The debate focuses on the relative importance of public service in content or in platform.⁴³ By 2020, several PSM are in the process of launching their own streaming platform or have done so, on the model of the BBC's BritBox. New technologies expand the horizon of possibility for storytelling. However, the societal developments it facilitates and enables are not neutral; the way technology is implemented and used carries values and political

³⁵ Although, as I show in chapter three, entertainment content can be both catalogue or flow, depending on its timeliness. A series is catalogue; a football match is flow.

³⁶ To the extent that one will gladly watch a classic film or a great series that came out a few years ago. A flow business refers to the content being time-bound. Generally speaking, information content is more time-bound than entertainment content. Sports broadcasts are one notable exception, for which results share characteristics with a news item.

³⁷ Non-linear consumption refers to consumption outside of a broadcast schedule; this includes catch-up portals online among other forms of Video On Demand (VOD).

³⁸ Users are subscribers of Netflix; own productions have benefitted from the portal's own brand.

³⁹ Competition is on both portal interface and on catalogue, or content.

⁴⁰ In the case of Netflix specifically, the firm has been listed since its IPO on May 29, 2002. Other portals or tech startups typically benefit from venture capital funding, which allows them to operate at a loss while gathering users.

⁴¹ The European Broadcasting Union provides a platform for sharing technological expertise, notably, and for public service media organisations that wish to co-develop and co-finance technology solutions.

⁴² For example, on April 6, 2020, industry veterans Jeffrey Katzenberg and Meg Whitman launched Quibi, a mobile platform aiming to take advantage of smartphone viewing habits and technology to develop new forms of storytelling. Six months after the launch however, they announced that the firm was closing down and returning the remaining capital to its investors.

⁴³ The debate around the relative importance, political and economic, of the content and platform is not limited to PSM; the dispute exists in entertainment more broadly, opposing Hollywood's "Content is King" to Silicon Valley's "platforms rule" (LaPorte, 2016).

choices. In other words: does public service mean providing a platform that includes content, or is it the content itself?⁴⁴ This discussion must be placed in a larger perspective on the role, mandate and scope of PSM in relation to other mass media over time, starting with the early days of the radio broadcasts. It must also consider how technology, culture and mandates evolve and shape each other.

PSM are understood as belonging to the media sector, largely regulated with competition in mind, rather than to the knowledge sector. In broadcasting, the regulator plays an important role in allocating frequencies, providing licences, regulating both content and advertising; so far, the role of the regulator online is less clearly defined, including such issues as whether the media regulator should audit algorithms. The challenges PSM face and that I addressed above clarify the need to rethink our understanding of PSM for a networked age, and particularly in regard to developing a coherent view of public service entertainment, the topic of this research.

1.1.2. Concepts and definitions

Before addressing the field that this research operates in, it is essential to offer clear definitions for key concepts addressed in this research project. In the following section, I define the concepts of cultural and creative industries, public service media, entertainment, digital era, convergence, and ecology of attention.

Cultural industries, creative industries

Policymakers can consider public service media as fitting within an industry. Two wordings are typically used: “cultural industries”, or “creative industries”. These industries must be placed in the context of a broad shift to an information economy powered by technology, in which the creative industries represent a rising share.

In the broadest sense, every industry is a cultural industry inasmuch as it produces culture, for example, transport contributes to the perceived reality of a territory. A more restrictive definition considers as cultural industries only those involved in the production of social meaning (Hesmondhalgh, 2013).⁴⁵ For Havens and Lotz (2016), it is “the sector of jobs involving the production, collection, processing, analysis, and

⁴⁴ The argument against a broad PSM mandate goes as follow: the market undersupplies certain types of content, which the PSM must provide; however, there are enough platforms; therefore PSM ought to provide their public service content to private platforms.

⁴⁵ Hesmondhalgh (2013) uses the term “cultural industries” to describe the critical political economy of communication. For an analysis of the policy implications in the semantic shift from cultural industries to creative industries, the latter linked to the information society policy in the UK, see Garnham (2005): cultural industries focus on the production of social capital, while creative industries focus on GDP contribution, employment, etc. The literature contains a range of case studies of the development of creative industries; the video games industry was studied by Aoyama and Izushi, in the cases of the UK, Belgium, and Japan (2003).

presentation of information and entertainment” (p.16). These industries include: broadcasting; film industries; music industries; print and electronic publishing; video and computer games; advertising, marketing and public relations; web design. Beyond these industries, the sector’s frontiers are not clear; Hesmondhalgh (2013) places sport industries and fashion on the margin of this category. Cultural industries share the role of production of symbolic artefacts, but also jointly compete for consumer income, advertising revenue, consumption time and creative and technical staff (Garnham, 1990). For Hesmondhalgh (2013), cultural industries have an important social function based on three key roles they play:

- “their ability to make and circulate products that influence our knowledge, understanding and experience (texts);
- their role as systems for the management of creativity and knowledge;
- and their effects as agents of economic, social and cultural change” (p. 4).

In other words, “[m]edia and media industries are important because of their central role in the production and circulation of culture” (Havens & Lotz, 2016, p. XIV).⁴⁶ These three key roles suggest the importance that may be attached to cultural industries and the interest in public intervention.

In the book *Creative Industries: Contracts between Art and Commerce*, economist Richard Caves (2002) describes seven key features of creative production, when taking an industrial organisation approach:

- *Nobody knows*: consumer behaviour in reaction to a creative product cannot be predicted
- *Art for art’s sake*: creative producers care profoundly about their work, and are willing to work even at a low revenue
- *Motley crew*: creative work often requires a team of qualified specialists
- *Infinite variety*: creative workers can use an endless range of means of expression
- *A list / B list*: talent working on a creative project is vertically differentiated
- *Time flies*: time coordination in both production and distribution is usually key
- *Ars longa*: copyright may be required to allow the creative workers to collect rents over an extended period of time

⁴⁶ Franck considers the function of cultural markets to be the production of the catalogue of classics; in his view, any work goes through four steps: attention on the relevant sub-market; being fashionable; inflationary distribution; reaching the status of a classic (Franck, 2009).

These seven features have important implications for the economic dynamics of these industries,⁴⁷ as well as for public service content.

Cultural products are particular inasmuch as their consumption is not necessary for survival, unlike food; it is their non-utilitarian dimension. However, cultural products are often considered central to one's understanding of a fulfilling life, and many scholars view them as central to public life by providing common information and a public forum. Using Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs model, cultural products contribute to fulfilling psychological needs and to self-fulfilment needs. On an individual level, we spend both time and money on cultural goods.

To summarise, cultural and creative industries play a central role in the creation and circulation of culture and are characterised by key features of creative production. Next, I turn to PSM.

Public service media

Public service media started as public service broadcasting with radio, before adding television and, later, the Internet.⁴⁸ Public service refers to the remit, or mandate. However, the concept of public service in media is of a dynamic nature and has evolved over time; “[m]oreover, not only the concept of public service (broadcasting) is up for multiple interpretations, similar difficulties arise when defining, operationalizing and empirically measuring some of the key values and moral standards of public broadcasting: quality, diversity, universality, public value, etc.” (Raats & Pauwels, 2011, p. 19). Furthermore, public service media are complex to study, inasmuch as they are both an evolving concept and a reality; “Public broadcasters, and all media institutions, processes and products [...] possess a cultural, political, social and economic component. They are embedded in a complex environment and are both structuring reality, as well as being subject to the structure of reality” (Raats & Pauwels, 2011, p. 18). Nonetheless, key characteristics shared by PSM can be identified; while each national context contains variations of the following, a public service broadcaster is generally characterised by the following features, according to Hesmondhalgh (2013, pp. 137-138):

- Accountability to the public;

⁴⁷ The business model of majors in creative industries is largely similar to that of venture capitalists; indeed, both industries see large players invest small amounts in many projects, most of which fail. Successful investments in turn must generate enough profit to cover all other losses (Smith & Telang, 2016).

⁴⁸ Arguably, the Internet as a third pillar actually includes a range of channels, namely online (the website), social, and apps.

- Public financing;⁴⁹
- Content regulation;⁵⁰
- Universal service;⁵¹
- Audience considered as citizens rather than as consumers.⁵²

In a study reviewing policy and sociological studies of PSM, Born and Prosser (2001) find three central principles guiding public service media: citizenship, universality, and quality of both services and output.⁵³ In a study on the TV quality discourse of television professionals, Meijer (2005) describes the three main objectives of PSM to be “making quality programmes, supplying good information and involving people in a democratic culture” (p. 28), thus linking back to the notion of citizenship.

Universal service, or universalism, can be divided into four dimensions: first, universal access and reach; second, genres and services; third, impact and relevance; lastly, financing structure and the obligations this financing includes. These dimensions of universalism are relevant to consider the evolution of PSM. Technological development means that the dominating programming logic, long based on a schedule and linear consumption, is increasingly becoming subject to on-demand, mobile, multiscreen consumption, a phenomenon which some describe as “post-television”;⁵⁴ this challenges the universalism of PSM as they struggle to reach younger audiences. As the audience’s habits evolve, particularly those of younger audiences, this raises the question of reach across generations.

The discussion relating to younger audiences illustrates the tension that exists between the discourse around PSM and its practice, which some have called a rising disconnect between the concept and the reality of PSM (Donders, 2019). Furthermore, there is a confusion between the public service mission and the organisation mandated with the mission; the latter may need reform to fulfil the former.

The principles of PSM described previously are regularly used in public discourse around PSM while their actual reality is debatable. In fact, some scholars argue that the notion of public service has been used mainly as a rhetorical tool: “[c]oncepts such as ‘public service’ have, since their establishment, been incarnated to serve strategic or political purposes and have been adapted and translated to legitimize activities or

⁴⁹ Licence fee, or other public financing mechanism; may be combined with commercial revenue such as advertising or sale of formats or programmes; no profits distributed.

⁵⁰ Exclusion of certain types of content, as well as rules about balance, impartiality, etc.

⁵¹ Both geographical availability throughout the territory, as well as satisfying the interests of all categories of the population.

⁵² The notion of citizen in entertainment is discussed in chapter three.

⁵³ Citizenship is arguably the fundamental principle, the following principles contributing to citizenship.

⁵⁴ The show *SKAM*, a teen drama series produced by Norway’s NRK (2015-2017), was particularly successful at moving beyond the traditional boundaries of a medium and to develop its storytelling across several platforms and through social media.

to oppose these very activities. The public service media concept, as coined by media professionals, scholars and regulators as a successor of the public service broadcasting, could also be considered a rhetorical instrument, aiming to legitimize multi-platform and full-portfolio strategies” (Raats & Pauwels, 2011, p. 20).⁵⁵

There are three models for broadcasters: public service media, commercial media, and subscriber media.⁵⁶ Public service media and commercial broadcasters are fundamentally different in two aspects: their aim and the way they view their audience. In its simplest expression, commercial viewers are consumers; public service viewers are citizens (Moe, 2009).⁵⁷ One cause of this difference is their financing model: funded by advertising, commercial broadcasters aim for the largest possible audience⁵⁸ by aiming for the common denominator; advertising represents only part of the funding, if any, of PSM, leading commercial considerations to play a lesser role in its decision as it fulfils its mandate.⁵⁹ A second fundamental difference between PSM and commercial broadcasting resides in their mission: the former aims to include all groups of viewers in their diversity (socio-economic, regional, language, demographic, etc.);⁶⁰ the latter caters to the most commercially interesting audiences (Meijer, 2005).⁶¹ Cable television, primarily funded through subscribers, is a third model and the archetype of the subscriber model. It has since been developed online by Netflix. Its aim is to increase the number of subscribers while retaining the existing subscriber base.

PSM is only one form of government intervention in the media markets. Indeed, public service media regulation fits in broader media regulations, aiming notably to offer a variety of programmes and preventing a monopoly. Policy objectives then include issues such as user rights and consumer protection, but also health protection in the context of technological developments.

⁵⁵ Additionally, to understand PSM, it is useful to consider the broad strokes of their development. Beyond differences in context, public service media have similarities in their historical development and context, such as “politicization and establishment of a public broadcasting monopoly based on the spectrum scarcity argument; trends to liberalization and introduction of competition; autonomous and independent public institutions; the introduction of independent regulatory bodies; introduction of mixed financing; etc.” (Raats & Pauwels, 2011, p. 23). This thesis addresses this with a focus on entertainment in the case of Switzerland in chapter four.

⁵⁶ These are archetypes; mixed models exist.

⁵⁷ It remains to be seen whether this principle is true and perceived as such by managers at PSM.

⁵⁸ Particularly in the demographics most desirable for advertisers.

⁵⁹ For the sake of simplicity in the argument, I limit the point here to this clear case. Naturally, as described in the definition of public service media, the situation is more complex, as some PSM have mixed financing, and one must always make the distinction between the discourse around PSM and the practice.

⁶⁰ In the discourse around PSM; whether that actually is the case is open to discussion.

⁶¹ However, these broad perspectives must be analysed more closely, as private portals such as Netflix may have stronger incentives and be more effective at serving the long tail than a PSM. The long tail refers to the products or services that sell in small quantities, as opposed to the small number of products or services that sell in large quantities (best-sellers).

Entertainment

Entertainment is central to this project. While chapter three extensively discusses the concept and scholarly research on entertainment, I briefly introduce it through four ideas. First, entertainment is centred around the subjective state of enjoyment, while also being a type of programme created to generate that state; this reflects the tension in conceptualising entertainment between features of a programme and its subjective reception. Second, in the context of media, entertainment is often opposed to information, although the line blurs when taking an ecology of attention approach. Third, entertainment is a moralised concept. Fourth, entertainment is argued by some to be taking over the world.

First, while some products and services are created with the aim of generating enjoyment, entertainment is a subjective experience: in other words, it is the notion of “media effects rather than media genres” (van Zoonen, 2004, p. 9). Chapter three presents a discussion of the psychological literature on entertainment.⁶² Bosshart and Hellmüller (2009) categorise the impact of entertainment on the three levels of the physical system, the psychological system and the social system. Entertainment is audience-centred culture (McKee et al., 2012). While Jonathan Gray (2008) defines television entertainment specifically as “programming designed with entertainment as the primary goal” (p. 3), I consider a broader definition with the public service mandate in mind, accounting for the subjective reception of content by citizens as enjoyable; a programme may thus be perceived by an individual as entertaining although it may not mainly have been conceived with entertainment in mind.

Second, entertainment is increasingly being considered in research on the public sphere and mass media, as entertainment programmes are recognised to reflect dominant ideologies and to shape worldviews, as argued by media scholars Timothy Havens and Amanda Lotz (2016). Historically, most work on the public sphere centred on information in mass media,⁶³ to the exclusion of entertainment. Recently there has been a slight shift to include entertainment. The politics of entertainment, or the values and ideologies it carries, have been studied by Parenti (1991) and in a collection of essays edited by Wayne (1998). Scholars working on entertainment in media draw on the works of both Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, with a focus on popular culture.

⁶² It builds on a lengthy tradition which includes Thomas Aquinas. He reflected on passions and saw four categories of pleasures: senses, (ego-)emotions, knowledge and (socio-)emotions.

⁶³ German social scientist Jürgen Habermas (1989) proposed the concept of public sphere as the space for public discourse and debate that mass media provides societies with. According to him, a functioning democracy requires a public space to both express and debate major ideas, while mass media represent a means to contribute to realising this public sphere. A lot of research on PSM fits within the tradition of normative public sphere theory, which I discuss in chapter two.

Entertainment programmes attract attention and through this attention shape worldviews, inform and educate. One specific field of convergence between entertainment and information is the “infotainment”⁶⁴ in late-night shows discussed by Jonathan Gray (2008).⁶⁵ Media scholars focusing on journalism have also researched the interaction of political discourse and entertainment, such as Geoffrey Baym (2005, 2007) and Jeffrey Jones (2005, 2009) on political satire. Research has looked at the evolution of political culture and its mediation, notably through the lens of consumerism, popular culture and celebrity culture (Corner & Pels, 2003), popular journalism (Hartley, 1996), entertainment and politics (van Zoonen, 2005).

Beyond the context of PSM, the blurring of the line between entertainment and information can be illustrated by current social network platforms. The Facebook “news feed”⁶⁶ is arguably a symptom of the disappearing barrier between information and entertainment.⁶⁷ This is symptomatic of the evolution of consumption by audiences; with newspapers, one paper contained separate sections on local news, international news, sports, culture, etc. Stories were clustered; they are now mixed in a continuous, personalised “timeline”; the algorithms curating the timeline favouring content that fosters engagement, and thus tends to be more dramatic, leading to emotional reactions. In a digital era, companies that were started around entertainment and social networks act surprised to be impacting society in its democratic institutions: when addressing the role Facebook plays in the public sphere, its co-founder Chris Hughes argues: “[w]hat started out as lighthearted entertainment has become the primary way that people of all ages communicate online.” (Hughes, 2019).⁶⁸ Nonetheless, Facebook’s organisation of information is built around a “timeline”, a “newsfeed”, terminology that largely comes from the vocabulary of an information flow, rather than of a cultural stock such as the “gallery”.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Infotainment is a neologism combining information and entertainment. It is usually used with a negative connotation.

⁶⁵ As an illustration of this strand of argument, Bosshart and Hellmüller (2009) identify 18 forms of information and entertainment merged, and discuss in particular the following: advertainment, charitainment, edutainment, evangelitainment, militainment, politainment, sportainment. For a practical experiment on infotainment and the effect of entertainment for political learning, see Mattheiß et al. (2013).

⁶⁶ On Facebook, users scroll through an endless personal “news feed” or list of updates posted either by: 1) the users contacts (“friends”); 2) the pages that the users subscribed to; 3) advertisers, who pay to have their content displayed.

⁶⁷ As the user flicks through his or her personal news feed, a display of links, texts and pictures selected among recent posts by his or her friends, pages he or she follows, and advertising content, he or she sees a mix of live news broadcast by media outlets, updates from friends, memes, and light entertainment such as cat videos or fail compilations. Thus, on Facebook, the distinction between news and entertainment largely disappears in a flow of continuous stories that equate a major earthquake to a minor event in one’s cousin’s life.

⁶⁸ In Gabler’s (2000, p. 6) words: “[t]his is what we really mean when we call entertainment ‘escapist’: We escape from life by escaping into the neat narrative formulas in which most entertainments are packaged. Still, with movies there was always the assumption that the escape was temporary. At the end of the film one had to leave the theater and reenter the maelstrom of real life”.

⁶⁹ While Facebook uses the term of “gallery”, it does so in the continuation of other Internet services.

Third, as argued by Jonathan Gray (2008), entertainment is “one of the most automatically moralized concepts” (p. 4). He shows that entertainment in the context of television is criticised along three key arguments: it is considered powerful, an ill to be fought; it is addressed in opposition to information and education;⁷⁰ it is argued to be addictive or have negative side-effects.

Finally, some argue that entertainment is ubiquitous and has taken over all spheres of life. An extreme illustration of this view is Jim Carrey’s character in *The Truman Show*. Bertolt Brecht wrote that “*Unterhaltung ist alles, was nicht langweilig ist*” (entertainment is all that is not boring) – a very broad definition, if eminently subjective. Some cultural critics go as far as to state that entertainment has taken over life.⁷¹ Entertainment can be argued to be taking over the public sphere, while storytelling techniques dominate politics and entertainers compete with politicians for attention (Salmon, 2008): in this view, information is best provided through entertaining “infotainment”. Gabler (2000) argues that the merging of entertainment into life is the ultimate escapism. One can go a step further through our ever-present technology, the smartphone serving as an interface to reality; or as Jurgenson (2019) writes, “[a]s video becomes more like seeing, we begin to experience seeing more like an immersive, real time, total video. [...] The line between what is media and what isn’t is harder to locate” (p. 43). This line of argument is often used to complain about the role of television in society, or more recently, the reach of social media and its implications for individual attention spans. Gabler (2000) argued presciently that we are now beyond the escapism into a cinema theater, but that life itself has become escapist; in other words: “[t]he result is that *Homo sapiens* is rapidly becoming *Homo scaenicus*-man the entertainer” (p. 8). Entertainment in a public service media context is further conceptualised in chapter three.

The development of programmes, practices of looking and regulations cannot be viewed as distinct from technologies. Altogether, they shape the so-called digital era, which I discuss next.

Digital era

PSM face the challenge of serving the audiences that consume linear programmes, and those that consume on their own schedule. This fits within a broader issue, that

⁷⁰ For example, Pierre Bourdieu (1996) viewed television as fundamentally detrimental to culture due to its focus on entertainment.

⁷¹ As an example, in 1998, Neal Gabler, a cultural critic, published an essay entitled *Life: The Movie. How Entertainment Conquered Reality*. In the context of Lady Diana’s passing and the O. J. Simpson trial, he argued that news, politics, religion and culture had, in America, effectively turned into a big entertainment show.

of the digital era; in other words, "[t]o say there has been a deep change in how we communicate is by now boring" (Jurgenson, 2019, p. 11). As this phrase appears regularly, it is useful to define what I mean by "digital era" and its implications.

While some link all things digital to technology, the understanding of this concept in this thesis goes beyond that. I follow a definition proposed by Greenway, Terrett, Bracken and Loosemore (2018): "digital is about applying the culture, practices, business models and technologies of the internet era to respond to people's raised expectations" (p. X). Jurgenson (2019) does not consider social photography as purely technology-centric, but also as a "cultural practice; specifically, as a way of seeing, speaking, and learning" (p. 10). Likewise, I consider entertainment in a digital era not only as portals, but as a way of conceiving the world we live in and as a means of sharing with society.

However, there is no separate "real" world and "digital" world, a view that Jurgenson (2019) terms "digital dualism", stating that "[t]he notion of the offline as real and authentic is a recent invention, corresponding with the rise of the online" (p. 68). This is not to say that digital has no impact; but rather that the pre-digital does not exist anymore: "[t]he power of 'social' is not just a matter of the time we're spending checking apps, nor is it just the data that media companies are gathering; it's also that the *logic* of the platforms burrows deep into our consciousness" (p. 63), whether we are actually using a digital device or not.⁷² This is the product of a range of developments: "with the rise of large commercial platforms, the end of online anonymity, the massification of network usage, the desire to capture data on user behaviour, it has become increasingly difficult to support the idea of a split between the real and the virtual, between the online and the offline world" (Cardon, 2019, p. 63).⁷³

This is not specific to digital technologies; it is similar to an observation Roger Silverstone (1994) made about television: "[w]e take television for granted in a way similar to how we take everyday life for granted. [...] Our experience of television is of a piece with our experience of the world: we do not expect it to be, nor can we imagine it to be, significantly otherwise" (p. 3).

Indeed, in the spirit of an ecology of media, a digital technology is not isolated from other media; or as Postman (1993) puts it: "[a] new technology does not add or subtract something. It changes everything" (p. 18). Consider changes brought to practices and

⁷² There is no digital, cyber-world parallel to the real world; rather, there is one world, one reality largely shaped by digital technologies. When picking a restaurant, one will look up online in real-time for recommendations for nearby, open restaurants that suit one's preferences, and potentially book with a discount.

⁷³ Translated from the original French : "sous l'effet de l'essor des grandes plateformes marchandes, de la fin de l'anonymat en ligne, de la massification des usages du réseau, de la volonté de capturer des données sur le comportement de l'utilisateur, il est devenu de plus en plus difficile de soutenir l'idée d'une coupure entre le réel et le virtuel, entre le monde en ligne et le monde hors ligne".

texts through the Internet. Series increasingly resemble long films that can be watched as episodes or binged one season at a time; the radio becomes visual as programmes are filmed for catch-up consumption online. Boundaries and silos within and across organisations are blurred. Strict, economy-driven barriers are dropping, allowing creative and consumption practices to evolve.

The digital era leads to new social norms that carry contradictions: on the one hand, open access to information and freedom of expression, on the other mass surveillance and control (Cardon, 2019; Doueihi, 2011). It has been argued that PSM are at the intersection of both of these tensions. The digital era leads to a personalisation of the world, which may bring challenges to a common public sphere.⁷⁴ The issue of trust in an infrastructure one does not understand is important. While one could deconstruct and rebuild an early radio device, that is not the case with a smartphone. Or, as Tim O'Reilly (2017) puts it, in a digital age, it is about whose black box you are going to trust; "a black box, by definition, is a system whose inputs and outputs are known, but the process by which one is transformed to the other is unknown" (p. 224).⁷⁵ Furthermore, the notion of privacy evolves over time and is contextual, as Jurgenson (2019) shows in the context of social photography: he refers to the "so-called Zuckerberg law of information sharing-that each year we'll personally share twice as much information as the preceding year" (p. 65); this is an example of a social value that evolves as the result of technological change.

One other effect of the digital era is the convergence of industries, which I now discuss.

Convergence and its impact on PSM as cultural intermediaries

What do media industries do? According to Gillian Doyle (2013), "the general aim is to make intellectual property, package it and maximize revenues by selling it as many times as is feasible to the widest possible audience and at the highest possible price" (p. 20); this definition is applicable to commercial media, and focused on an economic perspective. However, as industries converge, the distinction between media

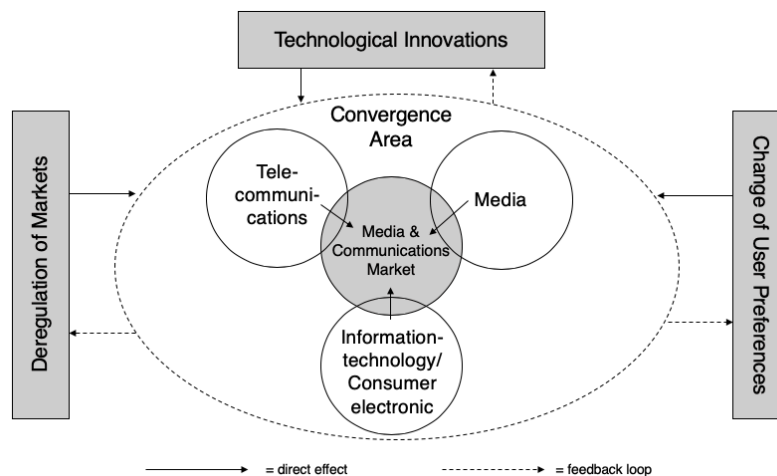
⁷⁴ Today, we all see a different, individualised world. Maps on the smartphone are an example of this. Your maps will show different reference points, including restaurants you have been to, theatres you enjoy. The map effectively adapts to the user, and each map is personalised. Likewise, every user's consumption is a personalised experience. One exception is a couple sharing a Netflix account; they will share a space and recommendations. Each person's Facebook timeline, Twitter timeline or personalised newspaper website is a unique experience.

⁷⁵ "Sometimes that trust is given because we ourselves don't have the knowledge to understand the algorithm, but we believe that someone else does. Sometimes that knowledge is denied even to experts capable of understanding what is inside the black box; it is kept from them as a trade secret" (O'Reilly, 2017, p. 224).

organisations, technology companies such as Alphabet or Facebook and infrastructure providers such as telecoms is blurring.⁷⁶

In the simplest form, digitalisation leads to a convergence of industries, because it permits different categories of content to be transmitted through a same technology. Wirtz (2001) proposes a description of key drivers of industry convergence of media and communication. The three key drivers of industry convergence are: technological innovation;⁷⁷ deregulation of markets;⁷⁸ and demand-related drivers, such as changes in user preferences.⁷⁹

Figure 1: Drivers of industry convergence



From Wirtz, 2001, p. 493

This convergence of industries poses special challenges to public service media,⁸⁰ since the licence fee largely financing PSM is strongly linked to broadcasting⁸¹ and

⁷⁶ Havens and Lotz (2016) argue that, given the technology groups' focus on providing technological infrastructure and interfaces rather than on creating content, they are still in separate industries. I do not share this view, because all these players vie for attention, the scarce resource determining this market. In this project, I argue for using the main source of revenue as the determinant for the industry to which one belongs. In that sense, Facebook, which earns over 90% of its revenue from advertising (the small remaining percentage stems from payments and other fees), is a media company; using this reasoning, Amazon is both a retailer, an infrastructure provider and a media company. The redefinition of industries often means convergence; regarding content, networks and hardware, the music industry has shown the great power that Apple and Amazon have gained over previously separate industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2013).

⁷⁷ The basic Internet infrastructure itself is one such innovation: network architecture and its standards lower barriers to entry and thus contribute to the convergence of media and telecommunications industries (Goodman & Chen, 2010).

⁷⁸ In regard to deregulation, he states in particular the liberalisation of vertical integration. Vertical integration refers to the integration throughout the value chain within one organisation. A vertically integrated firm is one that produces a product and acquires both its parts supplier and its distributor. Additionally, industry convergence leads to an increased first mover behaviour, or a perceived first mover advantage, which in turn increases competition (Wirtz, 2001).

⁷⁹ In regard to user preferences, the author refers to personalisation in particular.

⁸⁰ In television, the convergence between content providers and telecommunications is notable as the incumbents, usually the largest player in European national markets, both previously were owned by the state; competition and privatisation are in this regard politically sensitive topics. The increasing convergence of broadcasting, telecommunications and computing technology leads to questions about the structure of organisations and partnership opportunities. Competition policy remains key in this regard.

⁸¹ The licence fee was typically linked to the possession of a television (Starks, 2013).

PSM face increasing pressure to both expand activities beyond broadcasting or become irrelevant to a large share of their target audience, as well as to invest in digital infrastructure in a context of tightening budgets. Also, some PSM have expanded their activities to distribution online before their mandate was adjusted, hence exposing them to accusations of over-reach.

Beyond the rise since the 1980s of the information economy, which led to an increase in the share of the economy to which the media sector belongs, the key issue of data and personalisation are central. By collecting data on each user and their digital traces,⁸² content providers can shift from a strategy of mass production to a strategy of mass customisation (Havens & Lotz, 2016): the personalisation of content for everyone. This further strengthens the convergence of these industries, as more user data enables better personalisation and hence increased use, and again more user data; this feedback loop strengthens the competitive advantage of the player with the most data on users. In fact, beyond media, these firms are entering virtually all industries by leveraging data. Media is an attractive industry for its role in shaping culture and society, yet it may sometimes be a loss leader.

In this context, the notion of convergence culture was introduced by Henry Jenkins (2008): it moves beyond a technological focus and considers digitalisation as a flow of content in the face of active audiences.⁸³ In turn, convergence has impacted PSM as cultural intermediaries.⁸⁴ Scholars elaborate ideas to deal with this new reality while pursuing media policy objectives: Burri (2015) explores the notion of a new PSM, a public service navigator (PSN), defined as “a new type of editorial intelligence that links users with content in a way that advances conventional media objectives and in particular that of exposure diversity” (p. 2); in other words, this approach would provide algorithms that curate to pursue media policy goals. As I explain in chapter two, the ability to select media content rationally is limited for two reasons: media products are experience goods, and the tremendous offering means one cannot know all options available; this means the replacement of a historically supply-driven economy of culture to a demand-driven economy of culture. To deal with this, viewers use recommendation or curation systems, which are not neutral (Burri, 2015; Cardon,

⁸² The type of content he or she watches, when, from what device, from which location, etc.

⁸³ One driver of convergence culture is the smartphone, an ultraportable computer. The notion of the crowd has been used to describe an active audience.

⁸⁴ Technological change disrupted the cultural intermediaries, such as cinema critics; formerly established critics mediating between production and consumption have been challenged and partly replaced first by user reviews, then by algorithms. While the public broadcaster used to compete with commercial broadcasters, it now competes online with search engines; it is a large curator that broadcasts its contents under its own brand. On the level of one organisation, a PSM is a bundle of content for the widest range of audiences, for which a licence fee is usually paid. However, the trend in television is first to unbundle as users move away from cable and to rebundle by using portals such as Netflix.

2015; Webster, 2014). Recommendation systems shape audiences as users adapt their behaviour based on other users' feedback. Hence, the case can be made for a PSM as a public service navigator (Burri, 2015).

Regarding convergence, the discourse by practitioners and in scholarly research is largely focused on a limited range of global actors, Netflix in particular (see Lobato, 2019; Lotz, 2017). While in television competition is somewhat localised, Netflix follows a global "conglomerated niche" strategy (Lotz, 2017, p. 26). In VOD, the bar is set by the best globally; in this category, the best, apparently, is Netflix.⁸⁵ In the race to personalise recommendations by tech giants (Alphabet, Amazon, Netflix), it is possible that, when fully implemented, personalisation may largely go unnoticed by users, meaning one would not be aware that what one sees is personalised (Pariser, 2012). In the words of Cass Sunstein, "the unifying issue throughout will be the various problems, for a democratic society, that might be created by the power of complete filtering" (Sunstein, 2007, p. 11). In the digital era of content abundance, and in the context of audience fragmentation, choice intermediaries allow the audience to find content and content producers to reach an audience.

Thus, a PSN would function as a link between public service content and audiences ensuring exposure to diversity (Burri, 2015). This, while keeping in mind that "[i]n a well-functioning democracy, people do not live in echo chambers or information cocoons. They see and hear a wide range of topics and ideas" (Sunstein, 2007, p. IX). The role of PSM as a cultural intermediary is challenged but may remain relevant to maintain a public sphere. This opens up the topic of attention, which I now turn to.

Ecology of attention

Attention has long been studied and can be defined, as proposed by William James (1950) in his 1890 *Principles of psychology*, as "the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought. Focalization, concentration, of consciousness are of its essence. It implies withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others, and is a condition which has a real opposite in the confused, dazed, scatter brained state which in French is called *distracted*, and *Zerstreuung* in German" (pp. 403-404). The notion of attention relates to the practices of viewing considered in television studies. It relates to the multiplication of screens one uses to consume media content, although it is not limited to screens. A lot of the vocabulary around attention relates to economics

⁸⁵ It is therefore relevant to study this case, both as an example to learn from, as a potential partner, and as a key competitor for citizen's attention, as any local PSM is competing with Netflix in entertainment.

(“paying” attention), which in turn is reflected in the notion of attention economy discussed in chapter two. Yet in an era in which neo-liberal arguments discuss attention as an economic good on an individual level, this research places the discussion around public service media within the broader scope of an ecology of attention, as introduced by Yves Citton (2017).

Attention can be studied at one of two levels: the individual level, studying the stimuli and our reaction to them; and the “social or economic implications of widespread *public* attention” (Webster, 2014, p. 7). In a broader approach, Citton (2017) argues for a reframing from “economy of attention” to “ecology of attention”. He argues that discourses around attention too often focus solely on the individual, rather than the collective. Yet, “[t]he intra-cerebral attention nano-economy, modelled in terms of zones, synapses, nerve impulses and neurotransmitters, only makes any sense if it is re-situated within the microeconomy of small groups in which we develop on a daily basis (family, office, business) and the macroeconomy of great media flows which take up and captivate our consciousness.” (p. 19). The economic toolbox is insufficient to study attention for three reasons, according to Citton:⁸⁶ first, economics rest on a study of individualist reception, thereby foregoing the communal reception;⁸⁷ second, economics is essentially about the optimisation of the distribution of scarce resources, yet attention is not only a question of resources; third, he argues that the concept of “ecosophy”, introduced by Arne Naess, is better suited to the study of attention. Specifically, “[a]nalyzes elucidating the mechanisms of an attention economy certainly warrant our interest as they reveal the new dynamics that are superimposed on the traditional economy, focused on the mercantile production of material goods. But these analyses must be reframed in the broader perspective of an attention ecosophy, which alone is capable of articulating the five levels of ecological reorganization necessary for the reproduction of the life forms that we value. The *biophysical* ecology of our environmental resources, the *geopolitical* ecology of our transnational relations, the *socio-political* ecology of our class relations and the *psychic* ecology of our mental resources all depend on the *media* ecology that conditions our modes of communication” (Citton, 2017, pp. 22-23). To deal with this ecology, Citton (2017) analyses attention on three levels: collective attention, joint attention, and individual attention.⁸⁸ Collective attention stresses that an individual is only attentive to what the

⁸⁶ “Our classical tools of economic analysis and conceptualization, while they may help to explain the (re)production limits of our material goods, are largely inappropriate for the situation of overabundance which now characterizes the circulation of cultural goods” (Citton, 2017, p. 4).

⁸⁷ As an example of the dangers of a focus on individual reception, Citton (2017) discusses the societal approach to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

⁸⁸ When considering attention, I do not discuss collective attention, and the shortening attention span, as a variable. Rather, it is a contextual given, and PSM must accept it as a fact. This does not mean that the public sector should

collective pays attention to, a notion analysed by Dominique Boullier (2016) as attentional regimes. Joint attention describes the relational dimension of attention: two people will share attention, notably in a care relation. Finally, individual attention is the most common level of analysis. To summarise: “[w]ithin the double framework provided by that to which we pay attention collectively, in the first place, and then by that to which *you* pay attention jointly with me, it is of critical importance to understand to what extent – and above all how – *I* can redirect the attention that gives direction to what I become” (Citton, 2017, p. 19). As a long-time broadcast monopolist, PSM was the centre of national collective, joint and individual attention prior to the multiplication of offering.

1.1.3. Two models to analyse public service media

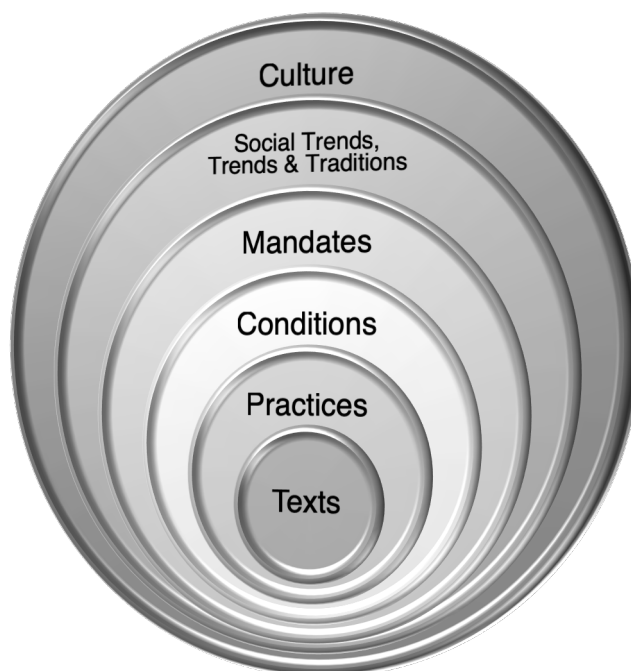
To structure the approach to PSM, two models are particularly relevant: the Industrialisation of Culture Framework and the Layers Model of PSM. In the following section, I introduce the two models.

Industrialisation of Culture Framework

In their textbook about media industries, Timothy Havens and Amanda Lotz (2016) propose a framework to analyse and understand media industries: the Industrialisation of Culture Framework. This framework is useful in analysing fast-moving media industries, as it makes explicit the context within which these industries evolve: the authors refer in particular to the two trends of globalisation and digitalisation. I use this framework to identify the levels of analysis to study PSM, and to structure my work in the subsequent chapters. With this in mind, I present this framework in detail.

not consider this a variable and aim to lengthen attention spans, through education for instance. This is beyond the scope of this research.

Figure 2 : Industrialisation of culture framework



From Haven & Lotz, 2016, p. 24

The two fundamental levels of this framework are first culture (represented by the largest circle), and second social trends, trends & traditions; media industries and their workers operate in a larger context that structures their labour. On a third level, the authors address the mandate of the organisation, namely its primary goal. Media often have a commercial mandate, and thus make decisions in order to maximise expected profit. Non-commercial mandates can be of four kinds: public, community, alternative, governmental.⁸⁹ Public service media typically have a public mandate, whereby they must ultimately serve the needs of citizens.⁹⁰ A key role of a public sector manager in this regard is to manage stakeholders to defend the public service remit.

The fourth level of the industrialisation of culture framework addresses conditions. These include regulations, economics, and technology. Regulation typically includes considerations reflecting the specific political and social role of media industries. Economic norms include considerations such as industry structure and the current global trend to conglomerisation, or payment modes for consumers (subscription, advertising consumption, etc.). Technology impacts production, distribution, and

⁸⁹ A community mandate serves a specific community or group, while an alternative, or do-it-yourself, mandate serves primarily the self-expression of authors. Lastly, a government mandate aims to propagate government information, typical of authoritarian regimes.

⁹⁰ The needs of the citizens are not necessarily those directly expressed; in fact, in a paternalistic tradition, the mandate is to provide content for the good of society as a whole. Some argue that this is a device for social control.

consumption. These three dimensions of conditions interact and impact each other, as well as the higher levels of the framework. They are key to this research.

The final two levels are practices, and texts. Practices refer to all the organisational roles that are operated daily at media organisations. Practices thus cover both roles and processes or activities. Texts are the produced content (programmes, shows, etc.).

This framework is a strong tool to analyse the industry in which PSM operate. In particular, its presentation of conditions makes it a timely tool, highlighting the interplay of regulation, economics and technology. Digitalisation implies changes in organisations and processes beyond the sheer technology; it restructures the economics, and in the case of PSM implies regulation changes. Thus, when considering PSM in particular, the ways in which cultural content is “produced, distributed, accessed, consumed and reused have changed; social patterns of participation, engagement, community building and cohesion have also been modified” (Burri, 2015, p. 5).⁹¹

Next, I review the layered model by Goodman and Chen for public service media policy, a model relevant to deconstruct the layers and functions of a PSM.

Thinking the future of PSM: the five layers model

Beyond the environment in which a PSM operates, it is useful to address the organisation’s functions. Digital technologies make it possible to unbundle services, which in turn can be provided by different players.⁹² This analytical framework forces the researcher to define precisely what the public service function is on each level.

Goodman and Chen (2010) propose a conceptual framework for public service media policy reform.⁹³ To do so, they follow the layered model of the Internet, or the computer networking model first developed in the 1970s. They theorise a four-layer model for the future of public service media consisting of: physical infrastructure; creation; curation; connection. The three functions of creation, curation and connection are thus based on physical infrastructure, which is a necessary condition.⁹⁴ This model is

⁹¹ For instance, convergence between new and old media, as well as broadcast and the press question the distinction of producer and consumer, professional versus amateur. In fact, PSM may act as an enabler for viewers to participate and create using digital technologies, for instance by providing access to archive material (Burri, 2015; Jenkins, 2006, 2008).

⁹² As an illustration, the debate around platform as an infrastructure versus contents of public value shows that both are interlinked and cannot be considered fully independently. The sum of messaging systems, platforms, and data collecting systems are used by individuals to share personal information as well as to consume media products, all relevant to a public service mission.

⁹³ While their paper is focused on the United States, their analysis can be applied more broadly.

⁹⁴ Infrastructure can be considered in a very broad perspective as the Internet overall. The discussion around “splinternet”, or the open Internet its inventors envisioned to be broken down in national or regional Internets

relevant, as these same functions can be found in early discussions around radio broadcasting policymaking.⁹⁵

Table 1: Layers of public service media networks

Connection	Engaging the public with public service media content across platforms
Curation	Identifying content and applications of particular value and supporting broad access to the public
Creation	Creating content and applications the market does not support
Infrastructure	Transmitting public service media content and applications

From Goodman and Chen (2010, p. 128)

Building on Benkler's (1999) notion of layers within a communications system, Lessig (2001) stresses the difference between three layers, namely: the physical infrastructure layer (cables); the logical infrastructure layer (software); and the content layer.⁹⁶ Building on Goodman and Chen (2010), I divide the infrastructure layer into the two layers of hardware and software that Lessig (2001) discussed.

The model in the following table structures the approach to the mandate of public service media, thinking beyond the existing organisation. It will support the discussion on public service entertainment.

Table 2: Five layers of public service media networks

Connection	Engaging the public with public service media content across platforms
Curation	Identifying content & applications of particular value and supporting broad access to the public
Creation	Creating content & applications
Software	Logical infrastructure used to transmit public service media content & applications
Hardware	Physical infrastructure used to transmit public service media content & applications

Building on Goodman and Chen (2010, p. 128), Benkler (2000, p. 562) and Lessig (2001)

carrying different values, is relevant: see O'Hara and Hall (2018). This suggests we need to pay attention to the Internet's underlying infrastructure of protocols, hardware, standards and organisations. The authors find four Internet philosophies. The "open Internet", in line with the libertarian original view, was tempered by concerns around illegal content. The "bourgeois Internet" is Europe's view, valuing dignity over liberty, carrying notions such as the right to be forgotten promoted through regulation. The "commercial Internet" is the US model, whereby the interest of private operators supersedes that of users. Lastly, the "authoritarian Internet", while it stops abuses of the open Internet, also led to more government control on the domestic Internet.

⁹⁵ See chapter four.

⁹⁶ In his book about commons, Lessig (2001) theorises that each layer can be free or not, thus in effect distinguishing the infrastructure – though for the purposes of this thesis this distinction of hard and software may not be key.

While previous models assumed a bundling of content creation and distribution within one firm,⁹⁷ the layered model conceptually supports a web of digital public service media actors working together.⁹⁸ Using such a model enables scholars and policymakers to develop regulation based on functionality rather than on specific temporary service boundaries, as did regulation in the 20th century, linking for instance the service of voice transmission through telephone to cable technology, while radio was linked to wireless transmission (Goodman & Chen, 2010).⁹⁹ This poses increasing challenges to the application of mandates that are channel-specific while content consumption is not necessarily linked to a specific medium. Furthermore, creation must increasingly be thought of and conceived across a range of channels.¹⁰⁰ The two key characteristics of this model are, thus, adaptability and modularity. By choosing to base the model on functions instead of services, such networks can easily adapt to changes, a key advantage in the current technological environment of fast-paced change and industry convergence. Modularity refers to the unbundling of functions; currently, it cannot be expected for a content producer to control transmission infrastructures, for instance.

How is this model relevant to public service media policy? Some legacy regulation surrounding public service media is technology-specific, with a reliance first on radio, then on television. These previous models do not reflect user practices or the current practice of PSM in a networked age; the layered model solves this issue.¹⁰¹ I now turn to discuss each layer.

First, the hardware infrastructure layer, which describes the physical infrastructure.¹⁰² Content was originally broadcast through transmission towers usually operated and owned by the PSM or the national telecom. Currently, content is also transmitted

⁹⁷ Policymakers typically use a two-layered model, separating physical infrastructure from services provided over the infrastructure; in fact, the debate around net neutrality principles reflects the use of a layered network model (Nuechterlein & Weiser, 2005).

⁹⁸ Its modularity allows us to focus on functions rather than on entities, as functions can be operated by a range of entities interconnected with common technical standards. The layered model is a good reflection of the mode in which information moves across digital networks, and has been used by many legal scholars and technologists to propose policy reforms, including Benkler (2000) and Lessig (2001).

⁹⁹ This is country specific. In the case of US regulation, the Communications Act, while it was updated, kept a technology-specific structure. Switzerland made radio available through both broadcast technology and telephone networks.

¹⁰⁰ A concept coined as transmedia storytelling by Henry Jenkins (2008).

¹⁰¹ The network version of public service media described by the four layers presented by Goodman and Chen (2010) fits neatly with the American view of public broadcasting and its network of local television and radio stations connected through the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR). While networks relations used to be vertical, they can now be horizontal as well, as local stations can directly partner to distribute their content, or use social networking, distributed computing power, and new legal rules that encourage collaboration (Goodman & Chen, 2010).

¹⁰² Media studies have seen a renewed interest in infrastructure, which some have called a turn to “infrastructuralism”. For example, Peters (2015) addresses physicalities of data centres, platforms, software, as well as the processes and politics of cultural labour.

through broadband networks, fibre optics, and other means operated by private actors. This illustrates the shift in public discourse around universal service from telephone connection to broadband connection, and a shift in the ownership structure of such infrastructure.¹⁰³ In this layer, the media policy objective appears to require broadband availability, a policy objective that converges with a range of other policy objectives in the telecommunications space or policies related to education and the digital divide,¹⁰⁴ or economic development.¹⁰⁵ Hardware infrastructure is thus the condition for public service media in a networked era: without broadband, the other layers would not be available, when excluding broadcast technology.

Second, along with Benkler (2000), I consider the software layer. It comprises the combination of programmes (as in software), in other words the code that allows information to be transmitted using the hardware. The use of portals comprises both hardware and software implications. For example, the implementation of a content-distribution network will make content load faster, effectively permitting a better user experience. The code implies numerous choices that follow and guide the practices of viewing, with features such as auto-play next, subtitles or the possibility to comment and share content. Together, the two layers of infrastructure describe the control over the means of promotion and distribution of content.

Third, the creation layer.¹⁰⁶ This includes all media content including audio, video, gaming, mobile apps, and other forms of expression. Originally produced by the PSM, there is a broad trend towards working with independent producers, in line with local film policy.¹⁰⁷ With a network structure, one can imagine an even broader and more diverse supply of content. The creation layer thus offers opportunities for PSM collaboration and openness.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ In Europe, this mostly happened after the liberalisation of the telecommunications markets and the privatisation of the public incumbent.

¹⁰⁴ In fact, Goodman and Chen (2010) argue for including an offering of broadband connectivity to regional community anchor institutions such as universities, museums, libraries, or hospitals; in particular, they see this mission between a broadband service provider and the local institutions. Such a recommendation reflects the role of the state in relation to communication infrastructure in the United States and is of limited relevance to this research.

¹⁰⁵ Broadband connectivity is a common goal for public policy. For example, the European Commission adopted in September 2016 its strategy on “Connectivity for a European Gigabit Society”, including 5G coverage for urban areas and major transport paths, and connectivity of at least 100 Mbps for all households.

¹⁰⁶ Goodman and Chen (2010) implicitly build on the notion of subsidiarity in creation, in the American tradition whereby PSM ought to only provide what the market does not support. I take a broader view of the PSM mission. See also the discussion in chapter two.

¹⁰⁷ In the case of Switzerland, this is best illustrated by the *Pacte de l’audiovisuel*, a written agreement that describes how the PSM will work with local professional interest groups to fund and distribute independent productions; see chapter four.

¹⁰⁸ Digital technology has substantially lowered the cost of producing media content, and made collaboration easier; in this sense, content can be produced by independent agents, or in co-production with the PSM. Independent agents can be citizens, or education institutions, think tanks, or minority groups. Including such content allows continuous adaptation in a networked age. A networked community allows individuals to build upon each other’s work in collaborative spaces (Lessig, 2008). Beyond this modularity in completed content, a content project such

Fourth, the curation layer, which may include two functions.¹⁰⁹ First, curation means aggregating and promoting public service content. Second, curation means creating or supporting open platforms allowing third parties to offer public service content. Aggregation is the business of any broadcast channel. While digital technologies reduced the importance of the broadcast schedule, curation remains key in a marketplace of attention. In an era of information overload, the curator's role helps select and guide consumption choices. Curatorial authority is derived from algorithms, brands, or social capital; the latter takes the form of recommendations, and feeds into the algorithmic recommendation.¹¹⁰ This is where public service media play a key role; their authority is mission-driven.¹¹¹ The curation layer thus is in support of, and based on, the content layer.

Fifth, the connection layer. Connection refers to the function of engaging users with public service media content.¹¹² The connection layer is particularly important for distributional or exposure purposes, when the media policy aims to reach certain segments of the population. In particular, Goodman and Chen (2010) argue for partnerships with institutions such as museums and opinion leaders to distribute a shared message across a range of channels. In short, without connection PSM are not fulfilling their mission. The extent to which entertainment content is used as a connection tactic will be addressed in this research.¹¹³

Building on a discussion of the topic, a definition of key concepts and two models, I turn to the state of research.

1.2. State of research

In this research, I address the topic of entertainment in public service media. Beyond the wide range of research streams and concepts I draw on and discuss in chapter two, this research builds specifically on existing research in media studies: public service media policy and television studies. I briefly address key traits of these two fields, while discussing them further in the relevant chapters.

as a news piece can also be broken down into elements, or tasks, such as fact collection, and analysis, which can be executed by different actors.

¹⁰⁹ It is worth stressing here that the curator and the content creator need not necessarily be the same organisation.

¹¹⁰ This point is discussed in more detail in chapters two and three.

¹¹¹ As such, PSM have the authority to play a curatorial role in promoting public service media content, whether they produced it or not. Goodman and Chen (2010) address archives as a service offered through platforms in a curatorial function, intellectual property rights notwithstanding.

¹¹² Branding, the paper magazine of programmes and goodies for children are tools to foster connection.

¹¹³ While elaborating on her proposal for a PSN, Burri (2015) discusses three possible scenarios for a PSN project: PSN as an add-on to PSB, for instance through labelling; PSN as a discrete service, in which trust plays a key role; and PSN as a broader media policy initiative, around curation and connection. These two functions correspond to the two last layers of the model.

PSM policy

Public service media policy researches the media policy environment that provides the mandate for PSM. It is one of the main streams of research on PSM. Hallvard Moe (2009) describes three strands in public service media research: 1) policy research; 2) institutional studies; 3) studies of PSM and democracy. Since policymaking around PSM is largely national, research on PSM policy typically is case-based or comparative. Moe and Syvertsen (2009) identify four types of research on PSM: in-depth case analysis; studies focusing on European media policy issues; studies focusing on broad regulatory issues touching upon PSM; comparative studies.

Moe (2009) argues convincingly that, while the Internet poses strategic and operational challenges for PSM, “traditional practices of media policy do not suddenly change in the digital era. Rather, settings for public service are to a large extent still defined within well-established frameworks, and dependent on the conditioned legacies of each state’s political culture” (p. V). In this sense, the Internet does not necessarily bring up fundamentally new issues, but makes the debates more stringent, notably around the legitimacy of the mandate, scope and interaction with competitors and the ecosystem. While in earlier times scholars criticised PSM for being too high-brow in their programmes and not responding to audience needs (Ang, 1991), the contrary may be true today as PSM are accused of following their commercial competitors in programming. At the same time, “[i]t was the need for justification and the attacks on public television that led to a doctrinal effort on the part of academics in favour of public service principles and also trade unionists for whom the defence of professional interests coincided with the defence of institutional interests” (Bourdon, 2011, p. 13).¹¹⁴ Nonetheless, PSM policy scholars explore the issue of public service’s continued legitimacy in the face of audience evolution and the challenges of universalism (Savage et al., 2020), distribution strategies in a platform era (Michalis, 2018), PSM and social media (van Dijck & Poell, 2015), and enhanced citizen participation (Lowe, 2010). Corinne Schweizer and Manuel Puppis (2018) produced a comparative study of seventeen countries’ remit, funding and debates around their PSM in a networked society, based on a study for the Swiss regulator OFCOM.¹¹⁵ D’Arma (2018) demonstrated how the BBC evolved in the case it made for itself, increasingly arguing for its role in supporting the British creative industries. PSM response to evolving

¹¹⁴ Translated from the original French: “C’est le besoin de justification et les attaques contre la télévision publique qui ont conduit à un effort de doctrine, de la part d’universitaires favorables aux principes du service public et aussi de syndicalistes pour lesquels la défense des intérêts professionnels coïncidait avec celle des institutions”.

¹¹⁵ They propose three ways to apply the network paradigm to PSM: to analyse how the organisation embraces the Internet; to address the transformation of the PSM organisation; or to place the PSM within a network of stakeholders.

practices and participation by young audiences has been the object of research, for example Vanhaeght and Donders (2016).

Media policy scholars such as McMurria (2017) and Perlman (2016) have considered the interplay of technology and policymaking in mass media, contributing to media history, although largely focusing on the US-American case. This specific case is relevant, as that nation has driven much of the technological discovery in the second half of the twentieth century.

Thus, PSM policy considers comparative remits and their evolution in a digital era, regarding the regulation for strategic decisions relating to audiences, distribution and relation to competitors, domestic and foreign. While mandates evolve, there is an absence of a clear definition of public service entertainment specifically. I now address television studies, a research stream focused on a mass media that early scholars discarded due to its perceived focus on popular culture.

Television studies

Television is at the interplay of “technologies, industrial formations, government policies, and practices of looking” (Spigel, 2004, p. 2). In defining comprehensively the subfield of television studies, Jonathan Gray and Amanda Lotz (2019) argue that: “[a]s an approach, television studies either operates with at least two of programmes, audiences, and industries, or is premised on and conducted with an obvious acknowledgment of, sensitivity to, and critical awareness of more than just one. Regardless of focus, moreover, television studies takes great effort to specify the context of the phenomenon of study in terms of sociocultural, techno-industrial, and historical conditions” (p. 26).¹¹⁶ They thus argue that, while “television studies” comprises the name of a medium, it is characterised by an approach rather than a medium-specificity. Overall, television was considered early on with suspicion by scholars who viewed it with disgust and as only worthy of entertainment, in contrast to the public sphere pillar of information and news. Arguably, television studies were shaped by the cultural unrests of the 1960s, as the early media studies focused on newspaper and radio and their propaganda potential, and by disdain towards mass culture and television as its vector (Gray & Lotz, 2019). It attracted numerous scholars who looked into television studies to better understand a media that was largely the dominant cultural practice for decades.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ As such, not all scholarly research considers television as an object that fits in this definition. Rather, many disciplines come to study television as a support for another object.

¹¹⁷ For instance, sports broadcasting may be the most attention-drawing events.

However, Jonathan Gray and Amanda Lotz (2019) argue that television studies is best subsumed in the broader field of media studies; they expect a similar trajectory for the subfield of digital and internet studies. Even so, a television studies approach is highly relevant to discussing public service entertainment. While PSM offers both audio (radio) and audiovisual (television) programmes, television studies are relevant due to convergence and the visual turn of radio. Yet, “the story of contemporary television is not one of the transition from one norm to another so much as the development of a multiplicity of norms, all of which have substantially eroded the uniformity long perceived characteristic of television viewing culture” (Gray & Lotz, 2019, p. 3).¹¹⁸

Going one step further in a 2010 article, Jonathan Gray argues for considering cultural studies, media studies, digital media studies, television studies and numerous other fields under a shared, additional label of entertainment studies. To do so would allow to move beyond medium specificity, contextualise research within a broader history of entertainment and “honestly embrace the fact that we study entertainment” (p. 811).¹¹⁹ A particular focus point within television studies, is research on portals, which build on a catalogue of programmes; the most common case study is Netflix (Lobato, 2019; Lotz, 2017).

Television studies is a relevant approach for this research, as it typically considers television on at least two levels of programmes, audiences and industries.

Public service entertainment, an open field

Extensive research exists on information provision online and offline by PSM; entertainment is the object of some research, notably in television entertainment. While entertainment is discussed in passing when considering PSM, I find that there is a gap in the existing academic literature about the justification for entertainment in PSM specifically. A number of studies consider specific programmes, some of which I address below. Furthermore, I find a lack of a clear definition of public service entertainment. I address these issues with a view of an ecology of attention approach. Stressing that entertainment is relatively under-studied is a common theme for scholars within the field. As an example: “[t]here is simply no positive correlation between the amount of entertainment that is consumed and the amount of scholarly research in the field of entertainment” (Bosshart & Macconi, 1998, p. 3). Ten years later, when dividing programmes into the crude inform, entertain, educate (and sell, for

¹¹⁸ This is a key challenge for PSM and the object of the 2018 RIPE@ conference on universalism in the context of PSM. RIPE is a PSM scholars network.

¹¹⁹ I share this view, while respecting the historical reasons for the existence of different fields, including organisational within universities as described by Gray and Lotz (2019).

advertising) in his book on television entertainment, Jonathan Gray (2008) stressed that “[w]hat is odd, though, is how rarely entertainment is a distinct topic of discussion in the world of academic publishing and teaching” (p. 4). He went on to argue that television entertainment is either “macro-ized or micro-ized” (p. 4), as in either considered part of television overall, or studied with a focus on case studies of specific programmes, genres or audiences. Indeed, there is substantial research on specific programmes. Fiction content, for instance, is a major field of research, including on public service fiction. Eva Novrup Redvall (2013, 2016) takes a production studies approach to Danish drama series including *Borgen*, *The Kingdom* and *The Killing*, with the notion of a “prime-time public service crime”. Brunsdon, Johnson, Moseley and Wheatley (2001) research factual entertainment in British television, including on the BBC. In his cultural history of European PSM, Jérôme Bourdon (2011) analyses the evolution of fiction, game shows and reality television while considering the evolving understanding of audiences, the influence of American television and deregulation. Taking an industrial approach, Esser (2016) and Chalaby (2011) focus on the global trade in entertainment formats. Single programmes are studied: one specific programme for young audiences in public service media, NRK’s *SKAM* was analysed through different lenses; Lindtner and Dahl (2019) approach it through its impact on the public sphere; Rustad (2018) discusses the programme based on its reception on mobile devices; and Sundet (2020) analyses its global expansion.

Thus, there is a substantial literature on entertainment and some on entertainment in public service, yet not necessarily branded as such. Or, as Gray (2010) argues: “[i]nstead of being embarrassed by the fact that we’re studying entertainment, therefore, let’s be plainly honest about it and embrace it” (p. 814).

Therefore, the research gap in public service entertainment is in broader conceptualisation rather than in the specifics of programmes or audiences; this is what Jonathan Gray (2008) calls “pan-entertainment” (p. 4).

Given this research gap, I turn to the research questions.

1.3. Research questions and objectives

Having described the research gap and the main streams of relevant research, I introduce the research objectives and research questions.

1.3.1. Research objectives

This project pursues three key research objectives. First, by adding to the research on PSM, it aims to contribute to the conceptualisation of one aspect of public service mission: entertainment. Second, it aims to show how entertainment in public service

may support policy objectives and hence be a political project, rather than an economic imperative. Third, it aims to show how entertainment, technology and society mutually shape each other and how entertainment is increasingly relevant to the public sphere in an ecology of attention.

Overall, this thesis ought to provide both a theoretical contribution and practical recommendations for practitioners. This dissertation is not a comprehensive survey of entertainment in public service media but rather an initial contribution to conceptualising and mapping public service entertainment.

In line with approaches of television studies, it draws on several levels of analysis and is multidisciplinary by nature. This is required by the complex nature of the object of study; indeed, public service media is not limited to texts, namely the broadcasts, the website or applications one consumes. It also structures conversations, serves as a backdrop to our commute, and shapes the political discourse. Public service media have a history, a sociology, an economy, and politics; they are the product of the interplay of culture, technology and society.

In the current political discussions around the redefinition of the public service mandate in media, a clear understanding of the case for entertainment is necessary. This requires both showing the continuity in the PSM mission as well as the evolutions in technology and society and how PSM respond to these evolutions. Short term developments may be important for the next concession but positioning them in longer trends is key to ensuring the sustainability of the public service mission. Balancing continuity and innovation is complex. As Hesmondhalgh (2013) puts it: “[t]he point is not necessarily to defend PSB as it was (often under-funded, paternalist in tone and substance), but as it could be” (p. 140).¹²⁰

The increase in offering following the liberalisation of broadcasting markets implied a cultural shift since the 1980s from a “service meeting distinct political, social and cultural objectives connected with citizenship, to become more of a consumer product as economic and industrial priorities take precedence” (Iosifidis, Steemers & Wheeler, 2005, p. 1).¹²¹ This cultural shift in the understanding of television broadcasting must be placed in the broader context of the development in the understanding of the state’s role as a service provider to customers as proposed by the stream of New Public Management.¹²² However, it can be stated that technology and government policies

¹²⁰ In chapter four, I show the evolution of the understanding and practice of entertainment in Swiss PSM. In chapter five, I analyse how PSM re-imagine their current offering and practices to be fit for the future.

¹²¹ Citizenship here does not necessarily mean official citizenship, but rather participation in the local public sphere; it is therefore not necessarily linked to active political rights.

¹²² NPM is currently being challenged by proponents of the government as a platform paradigm, which considers a more limited role for government as a platform for services provided by private companies, the public sector, or civil society.

are only two of the factors structuring television: Lynn Spigel, quoted in Lotz (2017), describes television as characterised by four key dimensions: “technologies, industrial formations, government policies, and practices of looking” (p. 3). As technologies evolve fast, they impact industrial formations. At the same time, government policies must adapt to ensure policy objectives are achieved while practices of looking evolve. This requires an informed understanding of the technologies, the industrial formations and the practices of looking, or the use of technologies by users. While both practitioners’ and scholars’ discourse around PSM is increasingly centred on economic reasoning, I recognise that public service media, and entertainment in PSM, can be a political project. This raises the question of whether one is a citizen when one watches public service entertainment content. I discuss this in chapter three. This thesis aims to contribute to an informed political debate around government policies in the case of entertainment.

Furthermore, in an increasingly competitive environment for individual attention, collective attention is more and more relevant to the development of societies. While attention is often approached from a highly individualistic perspective, it is also collective experience – “I’ am only attentive to what we pay attention to collectively” (Citton, 2017, p. 17). Entertainment is a driver of attention and, as such, a system-relevant pursuit.

1.3.2. Research questions

I have addressed the topic, presented preliminary definitions of key concepts, the industrialisation of culture framework and the layers model. Industry convergence, its impact on entertainment industries and on PSM in particular as cultural intermediaries, and the illustrative case of Netflix completed this introductory overview. With this in mind, this thesis aims to answer the following simple yet important research question:

What is the public service mission of public service media in regard to entertainment?

In turn, this question can be specified in three sub-questions:

- *What is public service entertainment in PSM?*
- *How has the mandate and practice of public service entertainment evolved over time in the context of changing regulations, industrial organisation, practices of viewing and listening, and technologies?*
- *How do PSM use innovation units to explore and develop new formats, services, processes and technologies?*

The first sub-question introduces a conceptualisation of public service entertainment, considering both a type of programme and the viewer's subjective reception. The second sub-question places the research question in its historical, cultural and technological context. The third sub-question addresses the manner in which PSM fulfils its mandate in this field in an evolving world currently. The following section presents the dissertation outline.

1.4. Dissertation outline

This dissertation is divided into three parts. The introduction (chapters one and two) frame the topic and review relevant literature. The core (chapters three, four and five) present the centre of this research. The conclusion (chapter six) brings together the main research findings.

In chapter one, I present and contextualise the topic and research question, before discussing its relevance for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars. The context of convergence and digitalisation are briefly discussed.

In chapter two, an extensive literature review introduces the economic and public sphere arguments for public service media concerning entertainment. The sociology of culture, public management, the ecology of attention, television studies and research on portals are discussed.

In chapter three, I draw a definition and discussion of entertainment before conceptualising public service entertainment. I then propose a framework for mediated public service entertainment, independently of the channel (radio, television, Internet).

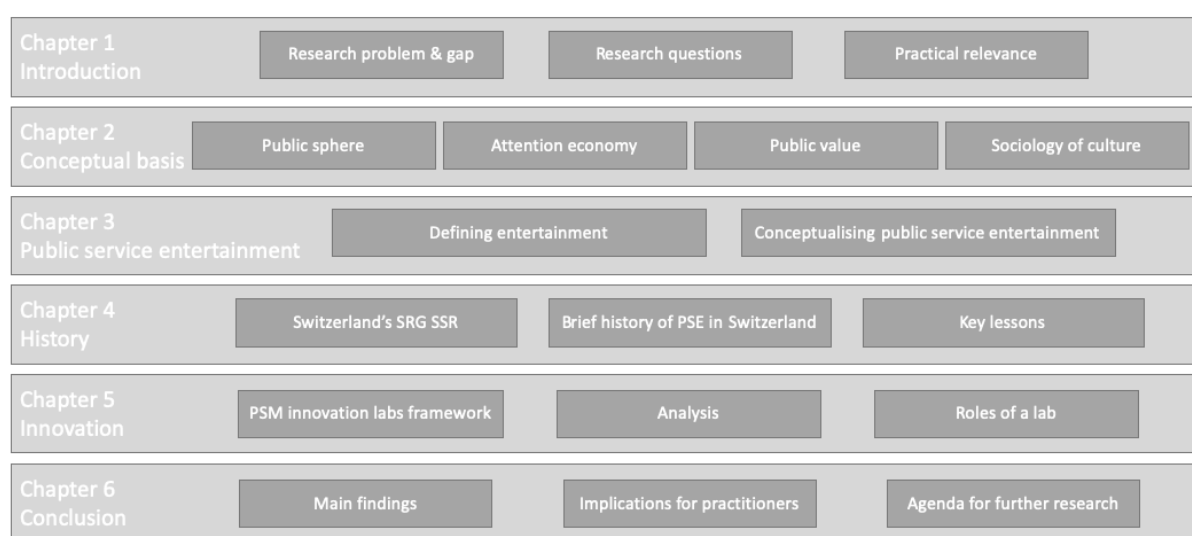
In chapter four, I discuss the history of entertainment at one public service media organisation. The case is centred on Switzerland's SRG SSR, while including references to developments abroad. Switzerland is a relevant case due to its strong democratic legitimacy and a vote on maintaining the licence fee in March 2018. From this case, I draw 11 lessons on Swiss policymaking, entertainment, and technology. Three key challenges for public service entertainment are highlighted.

In chapter five, given the challenges that are identified in chapter four and the continued mandate of citizenship, quality and universalism, I analyse the approach PSM use to stay relevant, with a focus on innovation teams. Culture evolves at the interplay of society, technology, and audience practices. To respond to these developments, several PSM have created internal innovation teams or “labs”. This comparative study outlines seven roles of innovation labs at public service media, considering their source of legitimacy, resources and innovation focus.

In chapter six, I summarise key findings and propose a roadmap for policymakers, practitioners and scholars regarding entertainment within public service in the context of an attention ecology.

The overall structure of the thesis can be found in the following figure.

Figure 3: Structure of the thesis



Different levels of analysis are applied to the chapters, as understood in the levels of the industrialisation of culture framework. Chapter three considers the interplay of mandates and conditions. Chapter four, mandates, conditions, practices and texts. Chapter five, conditions and practices. This project thus goes beyond the typical triad of media studies, namely texts, industry and audience.

1.5. A note on methodology

This research fits into the realms of television studies and public service media policy research. While each chapter includes relevant methodological considerations, I will now address general consideration on PSM research that are relevant to this project. Overall, and fitting to a television studies approach, the project uses a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches, building on several streams of research. This thesis aims to leverage empirically sourced evidence to develop a theoretical

contribution but also recommendations for policymakers and practitioners. In attempting to answer the overarching research question, the thesis addresses three sub-questions; findings build on each other throughout the thesis. Television studies are concerned with “context and multidimensionality”, they typically consider more than one of “industries, programs, and audiences”, amongst other contexts (Gray & Lotz, 2019, p. 140) including government regulation. In this project, I consider programmes, or texts, as illustrations rather than as the main focus. This fits in an approach to media policy that considers and respects the programme autonomy of a PSM.

This research project is partly comparative. Comparative research on public service media is defined by three key features (Raats & Pauwels, 2011): first, no standardised method for the analysis of PSM has been established; second, researchers conducting comparative work on PSM face the challenge of ensuring their findings’ validity; third, comparative research on PSM is regaining popularity, although single unit case studies remain the most current form of research.

PSM researchers using comparative cases face three challenges: conceptualisation; contextualisation; and categorisation of public broadcasting regimes (Raats & Pauwels, 2011). Conceptualisation around the notion of public service broadcasting and media is a challenge, as the concept has evolved throughout time; furthermore, it is often interpreted as one universal standard, typically based on the BBC; additionally, it has a strong normative dimension and reflects an ideological positioning. Contextualisation refers to the importance of political, historical, economic, demographic, cultural contexts that affect a national or regional public service broadcasting system; hence, comparative research requires substantial contextualisation. Categorisation refers to the challenge in proposing coherent classifications of public broadcasting regimes. One classic categorisation is that of PSB by Hallin and Mancini (2004); further classifications were developed to describe how PSM reacted to specific challenges (Raats & Pauwels, 2011); or focus on a specific subset of public service broadcasters.¹²³ While useful for concept development, categorisation is precarious; general claims must not be made based on a group of cases categorised based on selected, limited criteria (Raats & Pauwels, 2011). This caveat will be considered in the chapter five when discussing innovation units.

Comparative research on PSM can be divided into two categories. The first form is a comparison of broadcasting constellations focusing on key elements, typically by conducting a benchmarking analysis of a large number of cases. The second form is

¹²³ For example, for a discussion of small country PSB see Lowe and Nissen (2011).

that of comparative case studies, which enables scholars to consider complexity and context by focusing on two or a few cases. Raats and Pauwels (2011) propose a third type which they coin “collected case study”; while not proposing a coherent, standardised comparative method, it allows a “multi-methodical, interdisciplinary, open and holistic perspective to address policy issues, while employing a broader comparative perspective” (p. 26). An example of a network that favours comparative approaches based on national cases is the Global Internet Television Consortium led by Ramon Lobato and Amanda Lotz.¹²⁴ This research aims to contribute to both the first (chapter five) and second (chapter four) types of comparative research, while also contributing indirectly to the third.

Given the exploratory nature of this research, chapter three offers a theoretical discussion of the concept of entertainment, building on a review of relevant literature streams in chapter two¹²⁵ to conceptualise public service entertainment. Chapter four and five are comparative in nature. Chapter four, while focusing on the national case of Switzerland, has characteristics of comparative cases within the country, as it discusses the cases of four national-language broadcasters. Chapter five compares units and approaches within twelve PSM.

Two caveats on studying media industries in general, and PSM in particular, ought to be mentioned. First, the television industry is a largely self-reflexive industry: it produces numerous movies and shows whose main characters are journalists, producers, etc. It thus routinely exposes its production processes to audiences; in turn, the actors of the industry implement their ideas about their industry in the way they work (Caldwell, 2008). Indeed, media are excellent at storytelling, including in representing their own corporate field. As argued by Eva Novrup Redvall (2013), “all media industries work actively with branding themselves and creating specific kinds of corporate storytelling in the public sphere. This is also the case for institutions with a public service mandate” (p. 192). Second, it is key to remember that, as argued by Jonathan Gray (2008), “[w]e all live in a heavily televised, television-ized culture, and there is no escape. So none of us can examine it from a lofty and removed point” (p. 11). This can be said of television in its broadest sense, which may include a lot of the Internet’s visual culture.

¹²⁴ For more information, see <https://global-internet-tv.com/>.

¹²⁵ This is informed by a normative approach. A normative theory enables a standard against which to evaluate an organisation, practice or situation: in this case, the use of public sphere theory for PSM (Benhabib, 2002; Bernhard, 1994).

Each chapter contains a discussion of methodology, when it is relevant. Overall, this project has a comparative approach, fitting in a PSM research tradition. I turn to discussing the relevance of this research for different audiences.

1.6. Relevance

This research should be relevant for three types of audiences: researchers, practitioners (policymakers and PSM managers) and citizens.

1.6.1. For researchers

Building on the research gap in public service media policy research and television studies within the field of media studies, I aim to make three key contributions. First, I provide a conceptualisation of entertainment from a public service standpoint. Second, I illustrate a PSM history in light of culture and entertainment. Third, I contribute a comparative study on innovation in public service media at a given point in time. I share the television studies approach calling for an attention to context and multidimensionality, while also considering, as argued by Jonathan Gray and Amanda Lotz (2019), that television studies is “now best subsumed within media studies” (p. 144).

In this project, I aim to demonstrate that public service media entertainment is particularly important in an era of attention scarcity. Is entertainment relevant? It is for two main reasons. First, the distinction between information and entertainment, if it ever really existed, is increasingly blurred in the race to capture attention. Second, entertainment has real-life impact on behaviours and social norms.¹²⁶ Not only are information and entertainment merging, but entertainment content consumption shapes social values. Drama, a form of entertainment, has been shown to impact social views. In *Cultural Indicators*, a long-term research project which started in 1967, Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli and Shanahn (2002) studied the impact of drama content in television on the life of audience members. In particular, the scholars studied the contribution of television to the participants’ conception of social reality. According to them, television has replaced religion as a shared daily ritual: “as with religion, the social function of television lies in the continual repetition of stories (myths, ‘facts,’ lessons, and so on) that serve to define the world and legitimize a particular social order” (Gerbner et al., 2002, p. 44). Thus, information is not the sole instrument

¹²⁶ It can bring an immediate physical response: we still await the Internet’s version of Orson Welles’ radio broadcast of *The War of Worlds* in 1938, and are reminded of the Belgian mockumentary *Bye bye Belgium*, broadcast by French-language Belgian PSM RTBF on December 13, 2006, falsely announcing the declaration of independence of Flanders.

to structure social perceptions, as entertainment content shapes social values and behaviours.

Relating my findings to journalism research, I argue that the study of mediated entertainment is important. A new industry is emerging, one that creates false news and is advertising funded: during the 2016 American presidential election, inhabitants of the small village of Veles in Macedonia successfully invented fake news stories for a profit (Byrne, 2016),¹²⁷ thus responding to the incentives of monetisation facilitated by social media algorithms that favour content driving engagement, independently of accuracy. Some of the most effective providers of information in the United States are, arguably, late night-shows run by comedians, such as the *Daily Show with Jon Stewart* discussed by Jonathan Gray (2008) or John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight*; these shows are symptomatic of the rise of *infotainment*, the merging of information and entertainment.

This research also contributes to PSM policy research by focusing on the Swiss PSM case. By contextualising the 2018 *No Billag* vote over an extended period of time, I hope to contribute to public service media policy research and media history research.

1.6.2. For practitioners

Practitioners include two groups: public policymakers and PSM executives. This research aims to contribute to redefining the PSM mission in regard to entertainment as a political project, thus facilitating the case for the periodically reviewed concession and strategic decisions. More broadly, by analysing the role of mediated entertainment in society, this thesis addresses issues that are relevant to other fields of policymaking, notably in relation to data and sovereignty.

As we approach the centennial of the BBC in 2022 and as technology commands a greater share of our daily lives than it did in 1922, we may question what role we want for PSM. To ensure sustained legitimacy, it is essential to better understand which PSM content contributes to public service and which does not. This research aims to provide a tentative framework to evaluate the public service contribution of entertainment content, taking into account the concept of ecology of attention.

If entertainment is taking over the world, it raises questions around the role entertainment plays in PSM; a lack of conceptualisation threatens to delegitimise the PSM, either by alienating it from an important share of its mandated audience, or by

¹²⁷ During the 2016 American presidential election, over one hundred fake news sites were run from the 44,000 inhabitants town of Veles, Macedonia. Beyond any political motive, these entrepreneurs had a financial, ad-based incentive to create and publish outrageous content that satisfies the imagination or wishes of, in this case, the American far-right.

drifting away from its public service mandate. This raises the further question of whether a PSM can exist if it can only encompass non-entertainment programmes. The key challenge here is universalism, and the need to define entertainment addressing the viewer as a citizen.

As users flock to convenient, moderately priced portals like Netflix, managers of public service media face a dilemma. The competition is not over, as Netflix faces increased competition from other players with broader catalogues and it remains to be seen whether users will eventually have multiple subscriptions. Meijer (2005) finds that television producers and PSM executives “lock themselves in the dilemma of either fulfilling the wishes and desires of their audience – namely a commercial attitude – or of choosing quality at the risk of estranging themselves from a large part of the viewers” (p. 32). This project should modestly contribute to navigating this balancing act.

PSM also face the question of which services to invest in and which to divest out of. The history of Swiss public service broadcasting will make this point using radio's symphonic orchestras. Financial pressure means making choices, which are best made based on clear principles and missions, in an evolving context and political discourse. With this in mind, should a PSM create its own portal? Should it distribute content on other portals? If so, when, how and why? This project does not conclusively answer these questions that depend on the national context, yet it considers them in a broader frame.

In an attempt to counter the rise of pure technology players, in particular in the advertising market, new partnerships are attempted: in Switzerland, the public service broadcaster SRG SSR had established a joint venture with one of the largest publishers, Ringier, as well as with the former state telecommunication monopolist, Swisscom, aiming to build a common online advertising platform in 2015;¹²⁸ however, it sold its stake in June 2018 amongst heavy criticism from the media industry. Was this the start of European alliances of convenience between commercial media and PSM? Related to this question, are American tech firms a PSM's competitors, partners, or perhaps both? As the European Commission scrutinises these firms based on competition arguments, one is reminded of the fear of Americanisation, and the cultural exception debate that structured regulation and cultural policy in the late 1980s and 1990s.¹²⁹ In its operationalisation, the cultural exception has however largely focused on diversity in production, rather than diversity in exposure.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ The joint venture, launched in 2016, is named Admeira. Supported by three large players in different industries (public service media, publisher, telco), its creation was reviewed by the Swiss competition authority, which authorised the launch. Admeira provides digital advertising solutions to clients in Switzerland.

¹²⁹ For a critical discussion of the "exception culturelle", see Gournay (2002).

¹³⁰ It is unclear whether platforms such as Netflix would be able to deliver on diversity of exposure.

Shaping social values through broadcast television used to be the privilege of the few executives who decided on the broadcasting programme. While television consumption is diminishing as a share of the general media consumption, and while social media are on the rise, new gatekeepers have appeared: portals.¹³¹ Platforms have more financial might than broadcasters: at the end of 2019, the broad technology sector represented more than 25% of the US stock market value (Wigglesworth, 2020). The mismatch between supply and demand in content requires users to use recommendation tools for curation, or what some call “algorithmic culture”. This curation takes place on a scale that human curation may not provide. Yet the best curators make use of a combination of human and technical curation, as does Spotify.¹³²

These new gatekeepers, platform algorithms, are optimised to orient choices that are perhaps not in our best interest, but in those of the platform itself, as the companies that provide them have a vested interest in our continued use of the platform;¹³³ they consider their audiences as consumers, rather than as citizens.¹³⁴ This accumulation of data and its use have a real impact on the world. Data collected includes active contributions by users, such as reviews, and passive contributions, or traces, such as a search or surf history. The hoarding of this data and its use to influence behaviour are described by Zuboff (2019) as surveillance capitalism.

More broadly, scholars see information abundance as a potential threat to our societies: “[d]espite information abundance, broadly inclusive social media, and the distributed means of communication that characterize the digital age, society may lack the informational tools necessary to involve everyone in democratic decision-making and to foster widespread economic and social flourishing” (Goodman & Chen, 2010, p. 114);¹³⁵ to respond to this failure, “[e]xperts are calling on digital public service media – building on, but transcending the legacy public broadcasting system – to respond to these deficits” (Goodman & Chen, 2010, p. 114).

¹³¹ While broadcasters have one programme for all or selected programmes for specific demographics, portals can personalise, customise content recommendations for each of us based on our profile and previous choices.

¹³² The music streaming platform makes use of collective intelligence to customise playlists for each listener (Popper, 2015).

¹³³ As a reaction to the practice of platforms keeping our attention, some movements appear of which Tristan Harris’ *Time well spent* is an illustration: the non-profit calls on technology firms to respect the attention of users, and not design to capture maximum time and attention. It targets, for example, the auto-play function of YouTube, which by default plays the next video in its recommendation list once the viewing of the current video is over.

¹³⁴ Naturally, broadcasters, both private and public, have an interest in keeping an audience’s attention, to boost their advertising revenue or to justify their existence. A public service broadcaster without an audience cannot justify its existence. Yet there is also a case to make that a PSM’s mandate is not to maximise its capturing of an audience’s attention, but rather to make the most efficient use of that attention in conveying information; and to respond, when relevant, to the need for entertainment, as discussed in chapter three.

¹³⁵ Distributed means of communication refers to the fact that the diffusion of communications is not centralised, but rather distributed throughout the network.

Beyond the mission and concession of PSM, this research may illustrate broader trends related to our digital age. I mention three that I touch upon, yet do not deal with conclusively: the local versus global in a digitalised economy, illustrated by national advertising markets; the ethics of digital infrastructure; and the growing role technology players want to have in regard to sovereign tasks such as urban planning.

Beyond that, the context is one of discussion of a “splinternet”, as the US, China, Russia and Europe pursue diverging views of the future of the Internet and of digital technology. This is visible, for instance, in ethical principles for the use of artificial intelligence, in which European ethicists and policy-makers tend to focus on transparency, privacy, individual rights, while Chinese ethicists and policy-makers favour openness, inclusion and the common good (Thornhill, 2019);¹³⁶ Lee (2018) describes the Chinese approach to AI as “techno-utilitarian”.

The discussions and strategic choices within PSM in how to respond to the rise of the portal are a symptom of broader public sector developments in regard to the crowd and the sovereign use of data. Netflix and Spotify are just one example in entertainment of a trend to algorithms deciding our life experiences, as in decisions relating to people for healthcare, justice, or policing. Curation in entertainment may perhaps be just the first step for algorithms driving our choices in all areas of our life. Furthermore, Gilles Babinet (2015, p. 210) argues that platforms are a threat for a healthy functioning of our European societies on three levels: economic, through competition distortion; regulatory, through effective lobbying; and political, through the definition of norms in the digital world.

This project addresses entertainment, PSM and the public sphere. Yet the challenge that senior management of PSM must confront is one that other public actors are also facing in their fields of policymaking. In urban planning, Google Maps represents a challenge for cities as it algorithmically redirects traffic around town; so does Airbnb, which contributes to gentrifying or depopulating whole neighbourhoods. This is an issue relating to power and sovereignty for cities. Consider Netflix, whose financial bet is on international and national user growth funded essentially through debt. If growth does not follow, its sustainability is not guaranteed. Public service media, as we will discuss, ought to keep their fundamental mission in mind, and apply them to the digital age, while being inspired by the best players. But they should not simply copy those players without a thought for their mandate. In other words: the current challenge for PSM is strong. But in the long run, PSM should prevail, as long as they can make their

¹³⁶ For a survey of AI ethics guidelines, see Jobin, Ienca and Vayena (2019).

case and maintain their legitimacy, notably by demonstrating their continued public value.

1.6.3. For citizens

As William James is believed to have said, our life eventually amounts to what we have paid attention to, be it by choice or by default. In that sense, the stakes are how one's life is lived. As individuals, we choose, to a certain extent, what we pay attention to. As citizens, we shape the shared and collective attention, to ensure that we live lives that are ours. Thus, the discussion around our attention and entertainment is not frivolous; it is an important part of our time, and decisions in this field will have impacts far beyond entertainment. This project may thus be of use to the reader as a citizen in reflecting both on one's own individual practice, as well as social choices as citizens. Technology is not neutral: it reflects the values of its conceivers; also, it is eating the world, as argued by Marc Andreessen. Major consumer technology players are based in America, particularly in the Bay area or Silicon Valley. Much of the political philosophy of this region is libertarian leaning, as Sadin (2016) has shown; he describes the global impact of this political and economic model as "silicolonisation": "[w]e are moving from administrative, communicational or cultural functionalities to a power of algorithmic guidance of our daily lives and automated organisation of our societies. The vocation of digital technology is crossing a threshold, which sees an uncommon extension of its prerogatives, granting an extraordinary and asymmetrical power to those who shape it" (Sadin, 2016, p. 29).¹³⁷ The libertarian bend emerges with technology pushed by Silicon Valley firms, building on the counter-cultural movements of the 1970s California, as Cardon (2019) has shown. Words are lasting, even if their meaning evolves: the word to describe a group online is a community; a lot of the vocabulary is positive, such as Facebook "friends",¹³⁸ a feature that Dave Eggers describes in his 2013 dystopian novel *The Circle*. Likewise, the rise of Chinese technology firms implies the diffusion of another set of values.

Technologies such as blockchain and cryptocurrencies were predicted to necessarily lead to the abolishment of central banks and governments, while social media were to topple dictators; this position was described by Evgeny Morozov (2013) as

¹³⁷ Translated from the original French: "Nous passons de fonctionnalités administratives, communicationnelles ou culturelles à une puissance de guidage algorithmique de nos quotidiens et d'organisation automatisée de nos sociétés. La vocation du numérique franchit un seuil, qui voit une extension sans commune mesure de ses prérogatives, octroyant un pouvoir hors-norme et asymétrique à ceux qui le façonnent".

¹³⁸ This reminds one of Adorno and Horkheimer (p. 166): "Innumerable people use words and expressions which they have either ceased to understand or employ only because they trigger off conditioned reflexes; in this sense, words are trade-marks which are finally all the more firmly linked to the things they denote, the less their linguistic sense is grasped".

“technological solutionism”. Yet in both cases those predictions have not been realised.

Big tech players have become “attention merchants”, whose main business model is to sell audiences to advertisers. This has led to a backlash and movements such as *Time Well Spent*. Public service media must navigate the same waters of the attention economy with the dual, contradictory goals of ensuring their content attracts the audience’s attention, while being a vehicle for different values. Maximising its share of attention may not be the relevant metric of success for PSM. Improving the efficiency of information delivery is perhaps a better metric, though difficult to measure today.

Furthermore, the American tech industry is increasingly aware of its responsibilities and impact on democratic societies¹³⁹ but also sees the business opportunity in entering largely regulated industries such as education and healthcare. In the words of venture capitalist Evan Burfield: “[n]ot only have our lives as citizens lagged behind our lives as consumers, but it feels like the digital revolution may actually be *undermining* our lives as citizens. At a minimum, it’s increasingly hard to argue that Facebook, Amazon, Google, or Apple have made our lives *better* as citizens, in terms of our health, our privacy, our security, or our democracy” (Burfield & Harrison, 2018). A public debate around the role of technology in our entertainment and media may thus provide a sound basis for a discussion on its role in healthcare and education.

The organisation of societies and economies are eminently political choices, for which citizens are eventually responsible. The notion of public service and of the public sector is under attack, not least from Silicon Valley technology firms, as they turn to municipal services in mobility and public transportation (Uber), urban planning (Alphabet’s Sidewalk Labs), amongst others. Public service media are just an example of a public service provided by an organisation which, while imperfect, reflects a political project rather than a profit intention. The idea of public value in public service media is essential – and should be made clearly accessible to all citizens, reflecting PSM’s typical universal mandate. The discussion around public service media is thus part of a broader political debate.

Therefore, I argue that this thesis addresses topics of current political and policy-making relevance. In fact, the role of public service media is a current political topic in many European countries in both information and entertainment. In each of these cases, the extent of PSM activities is discussed, and economic arguments presented to restrict the PSM’s mandate and budget. These restrictions are typically pushed for

¹³⁹ Be it through its leaders being summoned in front of Congress or its workers taking to the street to protest against management decisions, such as Google employees blocking a project with the Pentagon.

by a) citizens who feel they are not being served well, or their political representatives or b) competitors (media) that have a direct economic interest in reduced competition for viewers and advertisers or their political representatives.

Conclusion

Users of peer-to-peer ridesharing applications evaluate each other. When the passenger gets out of the car, he or she grades the driver on a scale. Likewise, the driver evaluates the passenger. These ratings feed into the overall standing of both people within this application and perhaps beyond. This is a contemporary fact. What if this logic was drawn out to all human interactions? The creators of the show *Black Mirror* built on this premise to write their episode *Nosedive*. Spoiler alert: like most *Black Mirror* episodes, it does not end well.

This show is a typical television programme when one considers the following definition: “[t]elevision programs remain broadly shared pieces of culture that challenge, entertain, anger, and inform us, and the ideas within them continue to maintain a pervasive hold on how we imagine our worlds” (Gray & Lotz, 2019, p. 144). *Black Mirror*, started in 2011, released its fifth season in 2019. Over that period, it has drawn on existing technologies and trends including social credits, dating apps and chip implants; some of its dire predictions were arguably realised – and its basic plots become an inspiration for entrepreneurs missing the warning signs. Charlie Brooker, the show’s creator, said: “I like technology, but *Black Mirror* is more what the consequences are, and it doesn’t tend to be about technology itself, it tends to be how we use or misuse it. We’ve not really thought through the consequences of it. You know, it may all be good, but we’re not quite prepared for them. [...] What I enjoy is doing dark ‘what if?’ stories, you know. [...] It usually comes from ideas I find amusing -- and it’s sort of more fun to play them out in a bleak way. I kind of felt like this technological uncertainty wasn’t being studied in other drama serials. It felt like an untapped massive resource for creepy, dark stories.” (in an interview with Kelly, 2013). It also shaped the perception, imagination and creation by the engineers crafting our future tools and shaping the collective imaginary around technology. This seemingly light entertainment not only makes the spectator think, but it also provides the viewer with a glimpse of what the future may be. The show also explores new forms of storytelling with its *Bandersnatch* episode, a late 2018 narrative gameplay on Netflix; it was criticised for collecting data on viewer choices within the story to non-transparent uses (Thwaite, 2019). *Black Mirror* has been the object of scholarly research, through the lens of critical media studies addressing surveillance culture, dystopian future and human identity (Cirucci & Vacker, 2018).

The show also illustrates dynamics at play in the entertainment industry. Originally broadcast on the UK's Channel 4, a public service organisation, the show moved to Netflix for commissioning and exclusive distribution in late 2015. Before this, US distribution on the Netflix portal had brought the show additional international attention and acclaim. It also allowed Netflix to gather data on its users' consumption of this programme. The move by show creator Charlie Brooker was the first time the portal outbid a channel on a show it had originally commissioned (Ritman & Roxborough, 2016); the firm offered attractive conditions including massive budgets and artistic freedom, demarking it from competing networks. It also illustrates dynamics of fan fiction and the interplay of information and entertainment, as people shared memes in 2020 starring the statement "I don't like this episode of *Black Mirror*", referring to the contemporary state of affairs.

The episode *Fifteen Million Merits*, introduces the viewer to a world in which the characters live in rooms surrounded by screens, entertainment and advertising. They have to ride bikes to generate financial capital ("merits") which they can spend on their needs and on the consumption of specific entertainment programmes, or on the ability to skip advertising or escape a specific programme. The episode takes, naturally, a dark turn, as it criticises neoliberalism, celebrity culture and the commodification of resistance. Is it so far off?

As a symptom of the central place stories take in our contemporary world, we can consider the image of the hero in our society. While the 20th century arguably saw the journalist as the lead figure, as in comic book characters Tintin and Fantasio, this has now shifted to the entertainers.¹⁴⁰ While former glory was to travel the world and tell the story to inform – now, it is just to travel the world, and tell the story in images to entertain. This can fit the description Jurgenson (2019) gives of social photography as a form of communication rather than documentation. There is a shift in the people who shape the world we live in. One should not judge this evolution here, but rather identify it. It reflects the rise of the prosumer, of the amateur and of the regime of visibility. What does it mean for our society and our public service media when children aspire to entertain others?

In this chapter, I described the research topic. I hope to have shown that this issue has real-world relevance and that it is interesting. To ensure clarity, I provided

¹⁴⁰ In July 2019, to celebrate the Apollo 11 successful moon mission's 50th anniversary, LEGO surveyed 3'000 children aged 8 to 12 in the United States, United Kingdom and China about their attitude towards space. Out of five options (astronaut, musician, professional athlete, teacher, vlogger/YouTuber), Vlogger ranked first in both the UK and the US with 30% and 29% choosing this answer; incidentally, it was the last choice for the Chinese children (18%) (LEGO Group, 2019).

definitions for key concepts such as public service media, entertainment and the ecology of attention. I then addressed technological developments and their impact on the consumption and production of content, and thereby on PSM. The following chapter reviews relevant streams of the literature that I build on.

Chapter 2: Entertainment and public service media between economics and the public sphere: literature review and key concepts

Culture relates to objects and is a phenomenon of the world; entertainment relates to people and is a phenomenon of life. Hanna Arendt

I hate television. I hate it as much as peanuts. But I can't stop eating peanuts. Orson Welles

Introduction

The late 19th century was one of expanding train infrastructure, making the national territory accessible to businessmen, wealthy citizens and workers alike. Four years after the 1905 dissolution of the union with Sweden, Norwegians celebrated the inauguration of a train line between the nation's two largest cities, Oslo and Bergen. Fifteen years after voting its funding, the completed line allowed trains to cross an original 113 tunnels and covered 496 kilometres, peaking at 1'237 meters above sea level. One hundred years later, the journey took 7 hours to complete. To celebrate the centennial, Norwegian PSM NRK decided to explore a new format, which would become known as *Sakte TV* (Slow TV). This describes a programme that presents a full-length filming of an ordinary event. Using four cameras, the PSM broadcast the full train ride on its channel NRK 2 on November 27, 2009. The programme, *Bergensbanen – minutt for minutt* (Bergen train – minute after minute), was interspersed with archival material and interviews with passengers. It reached 20% of the Norwegian population during its first run. This success brought attention to a slow, long-format approach to television and opened the path for other programmes such as the live, 134-hour boat trip from Bergen to Kirkenes, *Hurtigruten – minutt for minutt* in 2011; Norwegians gathered along the coast to watch the ship pass them and, perhaps, be filmed by the crew. *The New Yorker's* Nathan Heller described it as follows: "Slow TV is high-definition in its visual information, yet it gets its meaning from viewers' imaginative consciousness. As entertainment, it is backward: it appears to do its job by casting viewers into their own minds." (Heller, 2014, p. 30). What reasoning drives a PSM to commit funding to producing such a show? What enjoyment did many Norwegians find in watching a full-length train ride on television?

Slow TV is an example of a type of programme and approach to public service media. Beyond a television studies approach based on the triad of programmes, audiences

and industries, several other academic disciplines can provide concepts to approach this discussion. Public sphere theory could consider the value such a programme contributes to Norway in bringing the nation together and in supporting a discussion on the future. An economic approach could address the relatively low cost of such a programme compared to other forms of programmes. When addressing the production of culture, a sociological approach could help conceptualising the motivation of NRK staffers in proposing this programme. An ecology of attention approach, in turn, could help frame the value of collective and individual attention drawn to a programme that forces individuals to take a break to watch time go by, in a context in which each individual's attention is very solicited. Conceptualising the audience of such a programme enables us to question whether NRK is fulfilling its mandate of addressing citizens in their diversity through these programmes and to address the role audiences could play in contributing to this programme. Public management opens up the question of the public value the programme brings to the public. Television studies, when conceptualising portals, imagine how the industrial dynamics are transformed by a shift from linear to non-linear consumption. In other words, why is slow TV entertaining to an audience and what is the public service layer in these programmes? Before conceptualising entertainment in chapter three, it is relevant to review the logic for the PSM intervention in the market and the disciplines that study evolving constraints.

This chapter reviews perspectives that underly the discussion throughout the following chapters, namely:¹⁴¹ economics; public sphere theory; ecology of attention; public value.¹⁴² It is important to survey these streams and justifications for an intervention in media markets, both as a political justification and academic legitimisation. This implies not only to focus on entertainment in public service media, but also to understand the coherent logic for PSM, including in information and education. It involves both economics and public sphere theory. The attention ecology and sociology of culture challenge these two logics, allowing us to consider evolving conditions. I then consider the case of portals, perhaps the most tangible product of a fundamental shift in mediated entertainment as a by-product of digitalisation.

First, I discuss the public sphere argument for PSM, and link it to the paternalistic understanding of audiences that it implies. Second, I address the economic justification for public service broadcasting. In regard to film and television series, I review the discussion around Americanisation and cultural imperialism, as

¹⁴¹ When relevant, later chapters contain a review and discussion of specific literature.

¹⁴² This broadens the elements introduced on PSM policy, television studies and public service entertainment in chapter one.

backgrounds to the debate around entertainment, and in particular film and television fiction. Third, I address the sociology of the production of cultural goods, discussing Bourdieu and his notion of cultural field, and then critically assess cultural and social capital in regard to contemporary television. I then provide an overview of the literature on the ecology and economy of attention. Digital technologies and the Internet, with the unlimited shelf space they provide, mean that content scarcity does not define media markets anymore; on the contrary, there is an information and content overload, which in turn means that curators are now the key to achieve policy goals. The issue may no longer be to ensure that diversity is broadcast, but rather that diversity is received, a shift that has major consequences for PSM. The role of audiences evolved in a digital era, a development which I discuss. Then, I address public service media as a public organisation, and link it to the public management literature, in particular to the public value stream. The public value concept of Moore (1995) has been widely applied to PSM as it operationalises the public service concept.

The field of academic research on public service media specifically is very active and increasingly structured within media studies, with scholarly exchange platforms.¹⁴³ When reviewing PSM literature, it is important to remember that Europe and America have two different political theories underlying PSM, and hence different organisational models.¹⁴⁴ The rationale for PSM is justified by two political theories, reflecting two political cultures and approaches to media systems: the US marketplace of ideas, and the European, Habermasian public sphere (Burri, 2015). The difference can be traced back to two normative theories as regards the space to confront ideas: the libertarian theory distrusts the government and aims to ensure a diversity of sources and content; the social responsibility theory, on the other hand, views it as the government's responsibility to ensure the public has access to a range of contents, thus justifying PSM as an organisation (Webster, 2014). The former is used in the US, the latter, in Europe; "[t]he European model tends also to align media with cultural policy, whereas US media policy has been aligned with telecommunications policy and focused on

¹⁴³ In particular, the Global PSM Experts Network set up as a website, newsletter and Facebook group, a joint effort of EBU and RIPE@.

¹⁴⁴ Goodwin (2014) links this difference to the fact that the US economy did not undergo a post-war wave of nationalisations or have large related areas of the economy under public control such as telecommunications; Europe, at the same time, had large swathes of the economy under public control. A further difference is linked to the previous broadcasting in radio, in particular in its military role. The difference between European and American media policy is noticeable as early as the emergence of radio prior to World War II. Thus, I argue that the key difference between the European and the American vision of public service media is linked to the underlying political theory. For more on the history of the radio, see Hagen (2005). Van Cuilenberg and McQuail (2003) describe three successive paradigms in communications and media policy in the US and Western Europe: first, the paradigm of emerging communications industry policy (until World War II); second, the paradigm of public service media policy (until the 1980s-1990s); third, the current phase in search of a paradigm. For a discussion in the case of Switzerland, see chapter four.

ownership and access issues” (Burri, 2015, p. 19). Thus, the US model of public service media can be described as a way of thinking about media,¹⁴⁵ as well as their distribution and funding model, rather than about categories of content or platforms.¹⁴⁶ I turn to a discussion of the public sphere arguments for PSM.

2.1. The public sphere arguments for public service media

As a complement to the original infrastructure-based argument for public service broadcasting, policymakers invoked a political project of social cohesion in a democratic regime. This tradition can be related to the Habermasian notion of public sphere, which describes “that realm of social life where the exchange of information and views on questions of common concern can take place so that public opinion can be formed” (Dahlgren, 1995, pp. 7-8). In his study of Britain, France and Germany in the 18th and 19th century *Structural Transformation*, Jürgen Habermas (1989) analysed the rise of the Bourgeois class and the emergence of a new public sphere in coffee houses, as the new middle class met to discuss poetry, before moving on to address governance and politics. The press progressively enhanced this public sphere.¹⁴⁷ In turn, the quality of a public sphere depends both on the “quality of discourse and quantity of participation” (Calhoun, 1992, p. 2); Negt and Kluge (2016) are representative of Habermas critics in pointing out that the 18th century public sphere he described excluded large social groups, including women and workers, and central social issues, notably linked to sexuality and maternity. Digital technologies, and particularly the Internet, has driven both hopes and fears concerning the quality of discourse and quantity of participation, particularly concerning inclusion and diversity.¹⁴⁸

While common references and myths were key to the development of national identities in the 19th century,¹⁴⁹ television has a strong cultural importance in defining

¹⁴⁵ This may also contribute to an explanation as to why successful video technology portals are mostly American, beyond the usual arguments around the Silicon Valley cluster.

¹⁴⁶ The tension between these two categories of rationales for PSM may be observed on a European level; indeed, on a European level, support to public service media may clash with competition policy objectives. However, PSM has been considered a service of general economic interest on a European level, which in turn remains to be defined by each member state (Moe, 2009).

¹⁴⁷ As an addition to Habermasian public sphere, Benedict Anderson (1983) conceptualised the “imagined community”, specifically how print media favoured the emergence of a national consciousness. This notion allowed people to develop a sense of belonging to one group, often the nation, in a group that was too large for all its members to know each other. In the current, digital era, coined “datafied society” by Schäfer and van Es (2017), this takes place, at least in part, via digital platforms. Digital technologies allow imagined communities to not be limited to a geographical area, as they can develop beyond a territory, as was shown in the case of the “connected migrant” (Leurs & Ponzanesi, 2018).

¹⁴⁸ See for instance Papacharissi (2002). She stresses that the Internet both favours and limits the public sphere, for instance the access to information and media literacy as well as the global discourse and political fragmentation.

¹⁴⁹ See for instance Thiesse (2001).

the common references and plays a role in gatekeeping.¹⁵⁰ For Monroe Edwin Price (1995), broadcast media had a power similar to the power that state churches previously held in shaping economic systems, morality and ideology through their narrative force, and in ensuring identification with the state. Yet, some scholars took a critical view to broadcasting technology and its negative impact on the sense of community, challenging its potential for a discursive public sphere. Robert Putnam (2001) presents the view that television erodes the sense of community, which he illustrates in his book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* by referring notably to the declining number of bowling leagues in the United States. He uses bowling leagues as a measure of civic engagement.¹⁵¹ In his view, two main causes are to be found for the decline of civic engagement: generational replacement, and television. Television, in his view, was stealing time from civic engagement; Putnam did not bring much evidence for this claim, and this criticism is a recurring theme for broadcasting mass media (radio, television) and later the Internet.

What is the purpose of a public sphere in society? Beyond common knowledge, we learn social behaviour notably through our media: “[a]nother reason for the survival of traditional media could be that they help us act properly as social beings – which we probably still are, even after the Internet has allowed us to encapsulate our information behaviour completely. Unrequested, display media inform us about what *the* others or what, at least, *others* find important, what one should be concerned about in one’s community or country, or in the world” (Schoenbach, 2007, p. 347).¹⁵² I now turn to discussing the public sphere argument for public service media. First, I address two views of the Internet considering the Habermasian public sphere. Then, I discuss the role of entertainment in the public sphere before turning to libertarian paternalism.

2.1.1. Two views of the Internet: the perfect public sphere and the bubble

The European take on PSM as a forum for the public sphere, rooted in Jürgen Habermas’ (1989) participative and discursive model, has led to much discussion around the opportunities that the Internet offers for opening up the public sphere to a wider range of participants and viewpoints, and hence supporting active political participation.¹⁵³ An opposite view is that the Internet fragments the political debate and

¹⁵⁰ For an example of the use of television for the production of national identity in African nations post-independence in the 1960s, see Straubhaar (2007).

¹⁵¹ He understands social capital as producing civic engagement rather than as the individual’s use of social connections for power on an individual level.

¹⁵² By traditional media, Schoenbach refers here to broadcast television and radio.

¹⁵³ See for instance Dahlgren (2005).

powerful interest groups would get to expose their arguments more visibly (Sunstein, 2001); an extended version of this argument refers to the metaphor of a “bubble”, whereby each of us ends up in an echo chamber of one’s own views. In normative public sphere theory, the ideal communicative forms are dissemination and dialogue: the features of the Internet technically allow for both dissemination and dialogue. Yet, in practice, the dissemination of content is difficult due to its oversupply, which in turn challenges the dialogue. Without effective dissemination, there is a risk of public sphere fragmentation, as Moe (2009) argued.¹⁵⁴

The optimistic view of the Internet’s impact on the public sphere builds on the assumption that the structure of the Internet makes it easier for anyone (authors, bloggers, etc.) to reach an audience without the filter of old media’s gatekeepers (journalists, editors), thus allowing a shift to an idealised model of public sphere; “[t]he ideal, then, sees people moving between outlets devoted to specialized topics and more popular forums where they assemble to hear from and engage with larger publics” (Webster, 2014, p. 149). Indeed, in this view, all that is required to participate in the public sphere is a computer and an Internet connexion (Gerhards & Schafer, 2010);¹⁵⁵ this view does not account for the risks of a digital divide and the risk of excluding the people who cannot navigate using digital tools or who lack digital literacy. The barriers thus shift rather than disappear. The Internet makes it technically possible to gather large audiences for shared rituals or experiences: “[d]igital media are rife with events, large and small, in which the coming together of audiences confers meaning and purpose on those occasions” (Webster, 2014, p. 9). Watching the *Super Bowl* and its advertising campaigns makes for a shared set of experiences for the American public; similar experiences exist with football championships around the world. This amounts to rational rituals (Chwe, 2003), like the evening news or the German drama serial *Tatort*, both representative of television’s prime time programming.

The pessimistic view considers that users end up in a bubble and that the Internet effectively fragments the public sphere.¹⁵⁶ The loss of common areas may even go beyond media and covers our representation of space. Maps, as viewed through applications such as Google Maps on our smartphone, present us with a customised

¹⁵⁴ To contribute to dissemination, PSM acts on its curation and connection layers.

¹⁵⁵ In fact, the Internet has allowed vloggers (video bloggers) and Youtubers to raise to fame with little equipment investment, largely bypassing traditional gatekeepers in a first step. This in turns questions the authority of national film schools as gatekeepers, replacing the validation of experts, film school professors, with the public, voting with likes.

¹⁵⁶ A visualisation of such filter bubbles was set up by *The Wall Street Journal* in 2016, in the *Blue Feed, Red Feed* project, in which it put side-by-side the Facebook public posts of a selected range of very liberal and very conservative users (Keegan, 2016).

representation of space based on our profiles (Greenfield, 2017).¹⁵⁷ This pessimistic view suggests a market failure in regard to an inclusive public sphere and the need for public intervention.

Scholars have developed a range of proposals to ensure the Internet can foster the public sphere; a particular field of research has been the use of portals by PSM to distribute their content and engage with their public; another one has been the development of own portals. This builds on research arguing that American technology firms' tool largely reflected a Californian worldview, suggesting that leaving the Internet and entertainment to them may undermine democracies (Cagé, 2015; Sadin, 2016). Public service navigators, as called for by Burri (2015) are one solution proposed in academic literature; to dive out of the filter bubble based on existing preferences, the public service navigator, a platform outside of the bubble, could aim to provide a non-fragmented territory. Another approach, proposed by Schoenbach (2007), is to foster the discovery of "reliable surprises", or serendipity.¹⁵⁸ However, in turn, personalisation algorithms pushing content to you that people like you, or your friends, have liked or viewed, may fulfil this function as well, leading to a shared cultural experience with your peer group, large or small (Webster, 2014). Aiming at bringing users content that they will enjoy, this curation tactic is particularly visible in entertainment portals. Why is entertainment relevant to the public sphere?

2.1.2. Entertainment and the public sphere

Much of the literature on public sphere focuses on journalism rather than on entertainment. Most scholars focusing on entertainment build on works by Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, which researched the role of popular culture in relation to dominant belief systems. Entertainment may be particularly important for the marketplace of ideas: "[e]ntertainment doesn't seem to trigger people's scepticism the way that news or political advertising does. For that reason, it's been suggested that entertainment may be a more potent vehicle for affecting attitude change" (Webster, 2014, p. 155).¹⁵⁹ Entertainment is an arena for encountering political ideas for two specific reasons: first, "for most people news is a small part of their diet. [...] Media users spend far more time with entertainment, and although that may not offer carefully researched facts, it is loaded with messages about social reality" (Webster, 2014, p.

¹⁵⁷ Thus, if you enjoy Asian cuisine, your city explorations will show you Asian restaurants on the map, while you may miss out on public libraries, or bicycle shops.

¹⁵⁸ Serendipity per se may be more pertinent to information than to entertainment (Schoenbach, 2007)

¹⁵⁹ Illustrating the importance of television series for the public sphere, Dominique Moïsi (2016) published a follow-up essay to his *Geopolitics of emotions* entitled *Geopolitics of series, the triumph of fear* (translation of the title from French to English by the author).

155); second, “the ‘politics’ of entertainment are more difficult for casual users to detect”, for example values displayed regarding social issues such as gender roles (Webster, 2014, p. 155). In her book *Entertaining the Citizen: When Politics and Popular Culture Converge*, Liesbet van Zoonen (2005) argues that “[p]opular culture [...] needs to be acknowledged as a relevant resource for political citizenship: a resource that produces comprehension and respect for popular political voices and that allows for more people to perform as citizens; a resource that makes citizenship more pleasurable, more engaging, and more inclusive” (p. 151). Criticising the Habermasian view that politics is essentially serious while entertainment is not, she argues separating the two is “not a feasible option for the maintenance of citizenship: not only will it not survive the competition for spare time, but more importantly it will also be separated, different, and distant from everyday life” (p. 3). Jonathan Gray (2008) stresses that while some entertainment programmes are explicitly about politics, such as political satire show *The Daily Show*, “all shows are political in one way or another [...] all programs, whether from the news, ads, or entertainment, are constantly offering ways to make sense of the world” (p. 134). Entertainment reflects ideologies and worldviews. One example described by Havens and Lotz (2016), is that of terrorism: one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter; our view of both is structured notably by our entertainment. The theory that watching television influences political opinions of people who are not particularly interested in politics more than other forms of media is called the “trap” effect of television. However, empirical evidence for this trap on actual voting outcome is scarce and varied (Schoenbach & Lauf, 2004). Yet, rather than promoting a specific view or political agenda, entertainment can support performative citizenship; referring to Newcomb and Hirsch’s (1983) concept of “cultural forum”, Jonathan Gray (2008) argues that “a more helpful view might be to ask television to provide *resources* for arriving at our own answers, and *testing grounds* in which we can see various answers interplay” (p. 141). This conception views entertainment programmes as contributing to providing the citizen with dialogic spaces to determine his or her opinion. The role of entertainment in the public sphere is discussed further in chapter three.

2.1.3. Libertarian paternalism and PSM

Public service media is regularly opposed for being paternalistic, by imposing a certain content on viewers and denying consumer choice, or as defending the status quo in power relations within society (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). However, given the abundance of content from which viewers can choose, this argument appears of limited current relevance: a PSM currently can hardly impose one programme on its viewers as they

can freely choose to watch another programme, be it linear on another channel or non-linear by picking another content. Media regulation through controlling an offering may be ineffective in a marketplace of attention. Even if the argument for PSM is to favour quality contents in a paternalistic view, can it ensure citizens will actually watch them? If not, does that undermine the organisation's legitimacy? How does this relate to PSM policy goals? One can address two views of the role of PSM in regard to the vision of culture it promotes; both reflect a negative view of the public. First, Pierre Bourdieu introduces the notion of "populiculture", whereby the PSM's project is to elevate the audience to access cultural artefacts considered legitimate, as well as to participate in a national community through ritualised moments such as the *Tour de France* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Second, John Hartley (1992) introduces the notion of "paedocracy", describing a programming strategy based on an infantilising view of audiences attracted to light entertainment.

The vision of a PSM leadership and policymakers providing the public with programmes it should watch and that it can impose through its control of limited broadcast is a story of the past. Furthermore, diversity is a key policy goal of PSM; it can be divided into three categories: exposure diversity; source diversity; content diversity. Burri (2015) and Napoli (2011) discuss exposure diversity as a policy goal in PSM. This notably conflicts with consumer choice; many opponents to PSM argue that patterns in content preferences by audiences are homogeneous around a limited number of sources, genres or topics. Hindman (2007) shows that the dynamics of new media may lead to a lower diversity of exposure, unlike the common assumption; the common assumption being that lower exposure diversity is due to audience preferences. Hence, with limited diversity exposure, what intervention is warranted that will enhance exposure diversity without limiting consumer choice?

Drawing on behavioural economics, Sunstein and Thaler (2003) proposes the notion of "libertarian paternalism",¹⁶⁰ based on the argument that "in many domains, people lack clear, stable, or well-ordered preferences" (p. 1161); in their view, "libertarian paternalism is a relatively weak and nonintrusive type of paternalism, because choices are not blocked or fenced off" (p. 1161), whereby using default rules, framing effects and starting points, public planners attempt to encourage people in making welfare promoting choices. They stress that opponents to any form of paternalism believe that there are viable alternatives, when, in fact, "in many situations, some organization or agent *must* make a choice that will affect the behavior of some other people" (p. 1164);

¹⁶⁰ Libertarian paternalism is close to the notion of asymmetric paternalism brought forth in medical sciences to change behaviour using behavioural economics in order to fight tobacco consumption, for instance (Loewenstein et al., 2007).

this is true in content provision, be it in broadcast or online. A curation portal is, in the words of Thaler and Sunstein (2008), a “choice architect” inasmuch as it is responsible for the organisation of the context in which viewers make decisions. Thus, when using a curation tool, some algorithm has studied a user’s previous consumption patterns and any other data available to make suggestions based on intransparent rules. One device a PSM can use to be transparent in this regard is labelling, to inform the public about their choice. More broadly, this libertarian paternalism has been operationalised in the form of “nudges” in policymaking.¹⁶¹

As entertainment impacts worldviews, and exposure diversity may contribute to the public sphere, the implementation of tools such as serendipity algorithms in online PSM portals make use of a libertarian paternalism approach. There is a case to make that PSM reflect a libertarian paternalism approach to media offering aiming to foster the public sphere; the political objectives underlying the choice architecture are, in turn, the product of regular democratic negotiation through the definition of the remit. Other portals are not subject to this indirect democratic oversight and accountability.

An alternative view to justifying PSM draws on economics, which I now discuss.

2.2. The economic arguments for public service media

There is an ongoing debate on the reach and mandate of PSM among scholars and practitioners, both referring to economic arguments. What are the economics of media goods and what do they imply for PSM and entertainment programmes? I first discuss the economic characteristics of media products, before addressing the market failure argument and trade considerations. There are two broad economic justifications for PSM: first, the social policy objective of promoting merit goods; second, the public good nature of broadcasting markets and the incentives it implies for commercial broadcasting (Brown, 1996). I discuss these in turn, as well as the debate around entertainment and international trade.

2.2.1. Media products: public goods, experience goods and merit goods

Media products are particular economic goods: they can be considered as public goods, experience goods and merit goods. Information is the archetype of a public good, which is characterised by non-rivalry in consumption¹⁶² and non-excludability

¹⁶¹ In the United Kingdom, a nudge unit, the behavioural insights team, was formed within the government. This team is responsible for introducing behavioural tools to help make policies better. As such, they contribute to delivering public value, which I turn to later in this chapter. In 2014, this unit was externalised and made independent of the government (see Halpern, 2015).

¹⁶² Once produced, the content can be consumed without impacting the consumption of others, i.e. non-rival consumption.

(Birchler & Bütler, 2007). This implies a specific cost structure that can be illustrated using a movie: while marginal costs may be near zero, fixed costs in production remain substantial; the first copy of a movie projected in a cinema carries the bulk of the costs, the second copy only represents a small marginal cost. Public goods tend to be under-provided by the market; there is thus a rationale either to limit their non-excludability through regulation or to subsidise their production if they generate positive externalities. Copyright is a form of regulatory intervention to promote information and media goods as public goods (Smith & Telang, 2016).

Entertainment content are experience goods (Shapiro & Varian, 1998), the value of which the audience member can only determine based on his or her consumption of the good,¹⁶³ in this case the entertainment experience (Sigismondi, 2012). Arguing for media content as an experience good implies questioning the assumption that viewers know in advance what they want to watch, or in economic terms, that they know in advance their own preferences regarding these goods. To deal with this, experience goods such as movies build on trailers, previews, reviews, recommendations. For experience goods, price is not the best indicator of value; trust plays an important role in reducing uncertainty about the quality of the good (Flichy, 2010).

Certain forms of entertainment and of media products in general may also be merit goods; an example would be entertainment content that fosters civic engagement. A merit good is a good that tends to be under-consumed in the free market compared to a consumption level that is beneficial for society overall; accordingly, the government may subsidise its production or consumption.¹⁶⁴ One can consider four main types of positive externalities related to media goods. First, fostering well-educated and informed citizens. A second type of positive externality relates to social capital, or social cohesion. A third type is distributional: poor populations tend to be under-served in information or entertainment relevant to them, as they are not an interesting target for advertisers or for subscription offerings. A fourth reason for media subsidies relates to innovation in programming and technology; innovation can also take place on the consumer end, by extending consumer preferences rather than responding to supposedly pre-existing preferences (Baker, 2001);¹⁶⁵ in this sense, PSM can play a role in providing space for consumer experimentation and preference extension.

¹⁶³ An experience good is an economic good for which key characteristics such as quality are difficult to observe prior to consumption.

¹⁶⁴ Public education and healthcare also are merit goods; that is, the social benefit exceeds the private benefit, leading to positive externalities. The cases of education and healthcare are relevant, because they present the argument for going beyond free-market economics in more than just media. Conversely, the discussion around PSM often also is about public service more broadly. Furthermore, there are a range of possible responses to these market failures, such as regulation in healthcare (Goodwin, 2014).

¹⁶⁵ This point is particularly relevant to the third research question in regard to entertainment and digital innovation labs.

Thus, media goods are public goods, experience goods and merit goods. These characteristics may mandate a market intervention.

2.2.2. Market failure

Market failure appears in cases of asymmetric information, public goods, externalities or market power. State intervention makes sense when it can lead to better outcomes and meet policy objectives, such as diversity, through reasonable means. Public service broadcasting was originally justified by its high fixed costs and low marginal costs structure, which in turn meant high scale effects. This included the limited spectrum argument, although it was combined with idealist objectives such as cultural enlightenment and cohesion (Picard, 2012). High fixed costs exist through studio infrastructure, equipment and a network of journalists, for instance.

Media products display certain economic characteristics that suggest market failure; yet, market failure may not be the right term strictly speaking, as even efficient markets might not reach the outcomes corresponding to media policy objectives such as fostering cultural and political citizenship. Put otherwise, the market offering might correspond to what individuals desire, but not society as a whole. Thus, public intervention may be warranted to pursue the public interest and objectives such as political accountability, education or social solidarity (Brown, 1996); in other terms, media policy may warrant intervention in the case of positive externalities, to pursue distributional objectives, or to support innovation in production and consumption of information (Goodman & Chen, 2010).¹⁶⁶ Regarding media policy objectives and entertainment in particular, a key objective is that of diversity.¹⁶⁷ In this context, the market failure argument is that a commercial media market would under-supply cultural diversity in its programmes.

Indeed, the notion of cultural diversity is central to cultural and media policy objectives. Cultural diversity can be viewed from two vantage points: first, the cultural diversity produced; second, the cultural diversity consumed. Cultural policies tend to evaluate their success based on the variety in production, not in consumption. And yet when facing a constant increase of available content, it is in fact imperative to shift from broadcast to reception studies in regard to cultural diversity. This focus on variety in production may largely be due to the difficulty of measuring consumed diversity. In a report for UNESCO to create indicators for cultural diversity, culture economist Françoise Benhamou (2010) refers to Andy Stirling's (2007) work on diversity in science, technology and society, which was inspired by literature on biodiversity. This

¹⁶⁶ This may particularly be the case in small media markets.

¹⁶⁷ The link and tension between entertainment and cultural policy is discussed in chapters three and four.

framework proposes three criteria for diversity: variety, balance, and disparity. Variety refers to the number of categories or units in the system. Balance is the distribution of the elements in the different categories. Disparity describes the degree to which elements can be distinguished. Applied to films shown in cinema theatres: balance describes the number of movies that come out in cinemas in a given year; variety is the categories the films can be allocated to, typically genre, or nationality of the main producer; and disparity, the degree of difference between categories, say between art-house and blockbusters (Durand, 2016). The disparity criterion is arguably the most difficult to objectively measure.

Cultural diversity has been defined and operationalised by policymakers. It has been defined by UNESCO in the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*.¹⁶⁸ The UNESCO definition of cultural diversity is relevant to this research as a signal of policy objectives,¹⁶⁹ as it has been signed by numerous countries that operate a public service media organisation, and thus is a shared international commitment to promote cultural diversity, both domestically and globally. It was further specified in the 2005 *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*.¹⁷⁰ When celebrating a decade of the *Convention*, UNESCO argued that digital technology, and particularly access to a smartphone, had substantially increased cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2015). The debate around cultural diversity was related to the international trade in cultural goods.

2.2.3. Entertainment, trade and culture: media imperialism and asymmetrical interdependence

The public discourse on entertainment in PSM must be understood in the context of the discourse on the Americanisation of culture and the related economic arguments,

¹⁶⁸ This *Declaration* was adopted on November 2nd, 2001: in particular, the *Declaration* states that cultural diversity “is a source of exchange, innovation and creativity”, it is “as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature”, “it widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development”, and it is “a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence” (UNESCO, 2001). Of relevance for positions around trade in cultural goods, the *Declaration*’s article 8 states that “particular attention must be paid to the diversity of the supply of creative work, to due recognition of the rights of authors and artists and to the specificity of cultural goods and services which, as vectors of identity, values and meaning, must not be treated as mere commodities or consumer goods” (UNESCO, 2001). Furthermore, article 9 specifies that “cultural policies must create conditions conducive to the production and dissemination of diversified cultural goods and services through cultural industries that have the means to assert themselves at the local and global level” (UNESCO, 2001).

¹⁶⁹ It allows us to reframe the mission of public service within the global cultural diversity debate; it also positions PSM in relation to the broader, globally shared notion of sustainable development goals.

¹⁷⁰ In particular, the *Convention* explicitly defines cultural diversity as follows: “‘Cultural diversity’ refers to the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression. These expressions are passed on within and among groups and societies. Cultural diversity is made manifest not only through the varied ways in which the cultural heritage of humanity is expressed, augmented and transmitted through the variety of cultural expressions, but also through diverse modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoy”.

as can be seen in the debate around the film industry and trade.¹⁷¹ Jérôme Bourdon (2011) argues that the history of European television is one of three waves of Americanisation: first, the invisible Americanisation, whereby television professionals turned to America for inspiration, which the author called “auto-imperialism”. This is the case in two particular genres: television journalism and entertainment shows. The second wave, starting in the 1980s, was one of “triumphant Americanisation”, linked to deregulation and competition. It was characterised by the imports of contents and formats. The third wave, starting in early 2000s, was one of “intimate Americanisation”, in which creators fully integrated the American way of life and culture in the development of new formats, notably reality television. These formats were then exported to America. According to Bourdon (2011): “this is a typical process of cultural globalisation: the re-appropriation of mechanisms that correspond, of course, to the spirit of a globalised capitalism, but which are also reflected in languages, content and national news” (p. 224).¹⁷² Americanisation, to a certain extent, is thus related to the rediscovery of the audience and of its preferences in broadcast markets that were centred on a public monopoly.

Bourdon’s description of this third wave reflects a moderate view in the debate on media imperialism in television; the media imperialism thesis argues that large nations, and the US in particular, impose their world view and values through media. Research on media concentration also fits in this tradition, that includes research by Herman and Chomsky (1988), as well as Dorfman and Mattelart (1975). In the scholarly and political debate about media imperialism and while focusing on emerging economies, Joseph Straubhaar (1991) argued for reframing the discussion around the notion of “asymmetrical interdependence”, whereby “we see a qualitative change in world relations. Although the United States still dominates world media sales and flows, national and regional cultural industries are consolidating a relatively more interdependent position in the world television market” (Straubhaar, 1991, p. 56); he thus argued that national television systems, while unequal in global trade, inspire each other and trade both ways. In this view, transnational channels illustrated a weakness in the media imperialism thesis. In the face of competition, transnational, US-based thematic channels such as MTV and CNN were required to localise their content

¹⁷¹ Broadcasting has been an important field of the fight around culture and trade. Fears of Americanisation have long been a political currency, and were particularly at play during the Uruguay round of liberalisation within GATT in the 1980s-1990s, peaking in 1993 (Gournay, 2002). The arguments for limiting trade in cultural goods typically take one of two forms: first, the protection of national cultural production; second, the protection of the production of national culture (Mas-Colell, 1999); the distinction is important, as local production requirements may not be linked to the notion of national culture, but rather to a protectionist measure.

¹⁷² Translated from the original French: “Il y a là plutôt un processus typique de la mondialisation culturelle : la réappropriation de dispositifs qui correspondent bien sûr à l'esprit d'un capitalisme mondialisé, mais sont aussi repris dans des langues, des contenu, une actualité nationale”.

(Chalaby, 2002). Such a strategy was sometimes referred to as “glocalisation”, a reference to Japanese business practices in the 1980s involving one model being replicated globally yet respecting local specificities (Robertson, 2012). Glocalisation is also the basis of the television format industry; an industry worth billions of euros annually, and which is dominated by a selected group of mainly European firms. Research on culture and trade in television has largely focused on programmes. Reflecting this logic, academic research on PSM and entertainment tends to focus mainly on domestically produced content; PSM content acquisitions strategies are a little researched topic (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016). Yet beyond the programmes, portals may be analysed as a new form of media imperialism.¹⁷³ Cunningham and Craig (2016) address the US and Chinese tech domination as a new case of media imperialism, while stressing that portals such as YouTube have offered a channel for marginal and subcultural voices.¹⁷⁴ The Alphabet-owned portal provides these groups with a channel to reach a global diaspora audience without the limitations of the national censorship. The issue of media imperialism in portals illustrates the importance of both content and the platform, which I address later in this chapter. Economics are thus a recurring argument for intervention in media, and entertainment markets; this includes as it relates to trade, encouraged by the cost structure of the industry.¹⁷⁵ They may even have become the dominant argument in the pitch PSM make for themselves. Why?

2.2.4. Economics, an incomplete argument for or against PSM

Since the mid-1980s, arguments to justify PSM focused on the economic rationale, beginning most notably in the UK with the Peacock committee report published in 1986. This major shift was a “victory of free-market ‘neo-liberalism’ over the post-war consensus of a mixed economy” (Goodwin, 2014, p. 78), a shift that would subsequently spread to other Western European nations. Goodwin (2014) argues that “the decisive shift in the ‘common sense’ arguments about PSB to embrace the economic rationale and market orientation that took place in the 1980s owed far less to the inexorable logic of developments specifically in broadcasting technology, and far more to the general shift in a political ‘common sense’ that legitimated a free-market orientation across the board.” (p. 79). This shift in reasoning was reflected in the way in which the BBC made its case in the Charter renewal process, shifting from the role

¹⁷³ Gillespie (2010) reflects on the politics of platforms.

¹⁷⁴ For a recent comparison of active user numbers and capitalisation of the largest American and Chinese tech firms, see Lucas and Wells (2017).

¹⁷⁵ For an analysis of the history of the American cinema industry and trade, see Augros and Kitsopanidou (2009).

of favouring political and cultural citizenship to an emphasis on its economic contribution (D'Arma, 2018). This shift took place in academia as well, to a certain extent: in a seminal study on the economic arguments for PSB, Graham and Davies (1997) made the case for PSB based on market failure.

However, as Goodwin (2014) showed, the argument for market failure in broadcasting could be extended to all forms of media, including, beyond the online extension of PSB, to magazines, music and newspapers; this thus means that the economic arguments for the existence of PSB as it exists today may be incomplete and politically difficult to justify going forward.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, economic motives are key to the trend towards digitalisation in broadcasting (Moe, 2009); television broadcasters digitalise in order to reduce their costs in the long run. Additionally, public service can be provided effectively online by independent actors, the best example being Wikipedia, a participatory encyclopaedia that represents the power of crowdsourcing and collaborative governance (Boullier, 2016). Beyond the economic argument for intervention based on the economic properties of the goods and trade considerations, the economic argument for PSM has largely shifted to its role in supporting creative industries such as the film industry.¹⁷⁷

Thus, the historic economic argument of spectrum scarcity for public service media is not as relevant in a digital era. First, media are particular economic goods, specifically merit goods and experience goods, mandating some form of intervention as in the broader knowledge sector to foster citizenship. In the case of entertainment, many economic arguments can be traced back to a fear of Americanisation, or media imperialism, while research finds interdependent creative markets rather than an imperialist vision of a centre emitting, a periphery purely receiving content and a unidirectional influence on values.

I now turn to the production of cultural goods in an age of attention scarcity and explain why Bourdieu's field theory loses its relevance in the attention economy.

2.3. Sociology of cultural production in an age of attention scarcity: between commerce and creativity

Entertainment content is a cultural good, but also the product of an industry. As such, it illustrates the tension between commerce and creativity. Since PSM create programmes and are increasingly viewed as an actor and partner for the national film, television and music industries, it is relevant to consider the sociology of the production

¹⁷⁶ The argument of "electronic publishing" negates spectrum scarcity. This, in turn, undermines a historic economic argument for PSB. Hence, in print as online, there is no reason for public service media, so goes the argument.

¹⁷⁷ Either temporarily as in the nascent industry argument or more durably.

of culture as it relates to a PSM mandate. A standard model to explore the tension between commerce and creativity is French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1993) sociology of the field of cultural production.¹⁷⁸ This framework is relevant to understand the role of PSM at the interplay of commerce and culture.

2.3.1. Bourdieu's field of cultural production and television

In conceptualising the field of cultural production, Bourdieu is particularly noted for his description of the development of the tension between creativity and commerce (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). In studying 19th century painting and literature, he shows how the idea that artists ought to be autonomous from political and economic power led to the development of a cultural field divided between large-scale production for the masses and small-scale production for producers, or artists;¹⁷⁹ it was the latter that produced cultural capital. Bourdieu addresses social inequality around several forms of capital: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. Cultural capital specifically can take three forms: internalised, as education; objectified, as cultural goods; institutionalised, in the form of titles (Franck, 2000).

As Hesmondhalgh (2006) points out, Bourdieu provides limited information as to the structure of the field of mass production. Yet, there is a struggle for positions between established players and newcomers within a field. This reasoning can be applied to television: the strategy used first by HBO, then by Netflix in producing high-quality television series to attract new subscribers and enhance their profile can be read in this light, namely with the purpose of standing out in the small-scale market for producers and gatekeepers who have cultural capital.¹⁸⁰ Likewise, the debates around admission of Netflix productions in film festivals can be analysed in this perspective.

Bourdieu's analysis of cultural production is relevant to better understand the motivation of players within a PSM. These different forms of capital are useful in analysing the mandate of a PSM, which does not aim at maximising the economic value for its shareholders, employees or customers. The interest in Bourdieu's work

¹⁷⁸ Bourdieu's understanding of cultural production is very broad and includes sciences, law and religion as well as expressive-aesthetic culture; yet his research focuses largely on the two subfields of literature and art (Hesmondhalgh, 2006).

¹⁷⁹ Hesmondhalgh (2006) shows the relevance of the opposition between mass market and the production for producers in pop music: alternative versus mainstream pop. The mainstream is the mass market, which is rejected by those that relate to the other, alternative sub-market. Yet Bourdieu hardly considers the large-scale commercial production (Hesmondhalgh, 2006); in criticising this, Hesmondhalgh points to Williams' (1981) classification of the history of social relations between creators and institutions of cultural production: artisanal, post-artisanal; market professional; corporate professional. Hesmondhalgh (2006) argues that Bourdieu fully describes the third stage, while missing out on the latter, characterised by an employment relation between, for instance, the author and the publisher; i.e., Bourdieu does not identify the rise of cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2006).

¹⁸⁰ Autonomy from the field of power is central to define Bourdieu's small-scale production. This distinction may exist in cinema, where art-house cinema can be produced on a small budget and aimed mainly at film critics and film festival goers, but produces considerable symbolic capital, whereas the opposite is true of mass-market movies.

for the study of PSM is that he introduces his cultural production theory within a comprehensive social theory. This theory may allow us to analyse the practices and texts and to challenge them based on the PSM's mandate. For example, Bourdieu's approach to the field of cultural production may be interesting in understanding the motivations for greenlighting projects for drama: commissioning editors want to produce quality television in order to gain prestige and recognition from a wealthy audience, endowed in economic, cultural and social capital.¹⁸¹ As commissioning editors, they are in fact a part of the artistic project (see Ryan, 1992) and hence also motivated by production for producers within the sub-field. However, the intuitive distinction between PSM in the small-scale and commercial broadcasters in the mass market within the field is not correct; the highest praise is provided to productions of commercial networks and technological players (HBO, Netflix, etc.).¹⁸²

This theory can be used to analyse the programming strategy of cultural producers in television. Hesmondhalgh (2006) argues for a Bourdieusian analysis in reviewing Gitlin's seminal study *Inside Prime Time* (Gitlin, 2000), and in particular the show *Hill Street Blues*: the network provided the creators some autonomy in order to produce a show that gained prestige among wealthy and educated demographic groups, in line with the interests of advertisers.¹⁸³ Along with Bourdieu, it may be argued that addressing a specific market segment through so-called "quality television" allowed networks to address the dominated fraction of the dominant class through a distribution media which, by its nature, addresses the mass audience. In fact, prestige and popularity may not be opposed; the production for producers, such as academy awards ceremonies, lead on to access to a mass market. In linking production to demand on mass markets, Bourdieu argued for a production responding to a pre-existing demand. However, economic research has shown that the demand for cultural goods is actually not formed, and that executives cannot predict the success or failure of a movie (see de Vany, 2003).¹⁸⁴

2.3.2. Criticism of Bourdieu's framework in the context of attention scarcity

However, Bourdieu's field of cultural production theory has been challenged in connection with the shift to attention as the scarce resource on cultural markets; this

¹⁸¹ For more on transnational professional practices, see Kuipers (2011).

¹⁸² Currently, data-driven networks have tremendous amounts of data on what people actually consume, not what they announce they consume (Milkman et al., 2009).

¹⁸³ In a different area, the approach Netflix used to attract the show *House of Cards*, removing the pilot and signing up for two seasons upfront, reminds one of the approach of offering creative freedom – yet, again, to people who were already established (Fincher, etc).

¹⁸⁴ De Vany (2003) showed that uncertainty shapes the film industry, and that neither advertising expenditure nor star power can predict the success or failure of a movie.

tension between the production and the reception perspectives is highlighted. Considering the rise of attention scarcity relative to available content, Georg Franck (2009) uses Bourdieu's conceptualisation of cultural production in analysing the dispute between the autonomy of art and the market. He argues that art and the market interact, as the former provides attention to the latter in an economy of attention.¹⁸⁵

Considering the competition for attention and the incentives for broadcasters, Franck (2000) provides a further criticism of this theory when attempting to unify Bourdieu's concept of elite and the actual type of prominence created by mass media, specifically television. This mass medium is, in his analogy, a stock market of attention, where one's presence in the media reflects one's capital. Reality television is the archetype of this reasoning: Franck (2000) stresses that broadcasters follow business interests, in particular whatever may bring the broadcaster more attention; in his argument, this leads to making people prominent whose prominence will drive more attention to the broadcaster. Following this view, he argues that being successful in attracting attention required lowering one's own standards to produce excitement, an argument that is recurrent in criticism of commercial television and entertainment.

While Bourdieu lectured about television (1996), he "hardly dealt with popular culture at all and failed to show how the rise of the cultural industries affected the structure of the field of cultural production in the twentieth century" (Hesmondhalgh, 2013, p. 49). Specifically, Bourdieu missed the complex division of labour in the contemporary film production process, which Bill Ryan (1992) described. Furthermore, his sociology does not reflect the domination of the cultural production in media by multinational entertainment conglomerates. The sociologist argued that audience measurements (ratings) had a weakening effect on the autonomy of cultural producers (Bourdieu, 1996); this reflects a common fear around television as a medium. However, as Hesmondhalgh counters, serialisation, a key feature of television and hence dependent on ratings, was key in financing great works of 19th century literature including Balzac and Dickens (Hesmondhalgh, 2006).

Thus, Bourdieu's framework is relevant to think about the dynamics in the television markets, yet it has limitations when considering the industrialisation of culture and the scarcity of attention related to production. I turn to studying the implications of the marketplace of attention.

¹⁸⁵ For instance, the dichotomy between high art and popular art described in discourses on art may not be perfectly correct in its description of the former as closer to autonomy.

2.4. The marketplace of attention and an ecology of attention

In his 1995 essay *The Future of Luxury*, German poet and cultural critic Hans Magnus Enzensberger argues that in a world of material comfort the concept of luxury would remain, but it would refer to the fundamentals, rather than to excess. He argues that attention is “a scarce commodity, with all the media competing bitterly for a piece. Watching the melee of money and politics, sports and art, technology, and advertising, leaves little attention leftover. Only the person who turns his back on these overbearing claims on his attention and turns off the roar of the channels can decide for himself what is worth his attention and what is not. In the barrage of arbitrary information our perceptive and cognitive capabilities decline, they grow when we limit our attention to those things and only those things that we ourselves want to see, hear, feel and know. In this we can see an occasion for luxury.” (Enzensberger, 1998). According to him, other luxuries include time, space, and quiet.¹⁸⁶ This view was a premise of the emerging study of attention.

Scholars have theorised an economy of attention (Citton, 2017; Franck, 1998; Lanham, 2006; Wu, 2016). However, an economic approach to attention may be too restrictive, as attention is also a collective phenomenon. I address the notion of a marketplace of attention, an ecology of attention and review findings on the Internet as a structurational world, building on audience dynamics and measurements. This is relevant to this research because a better understanding of the attentional environment in which citizens evolve enables us to better frame the need for public service entertainment and its relevance.

2.4.1. Situating research on attention

Yves Citton (2017) argues that “[w]hile the calculations of the classical economy of material goods are based on the scarcity of factors of *production*, the attention economy is based on the scarcity of the capacity for the *reception* of cultural goods” (p. 2). This notion exemplifies the essential shift from a supply-driven economy of cultural goods to a demand-driven economy, reflecting a fundamental shift in the power relations between creators and consumers.¹⁸⁷ Thus, the economics of attention fundamentally transform the source of capital, when referring to Bourdieu’s framework. Facing a multitude of sources and content, users find information and entertainment

¹⁸⁶ Thus, following Enzensberger, the state may have a distributional role to play on the essential also, including attention. Consider a parallel to the drugs market: drugs are deemed to have a negative impact on both the consumer and society and are thus tightly regulated or prohibited. Attention seekers are, as some argue, addictive and have negative externalities. Yet this analysis is individual, rather than on the collective level.

¹⁸⁷ It transforms the role of the intermediary: even if a book is rejected by a publisher, the author can make it accessible to an audience through self-publishing. It also demonstrates that a product is only financially free if the payment is made in attention, in which case the consumer pays not in dollars, but in attention.

content through search engines and recommendation algorithms; those search engines tend to favour established players, due to their organising principles (Cardon, 2013, 2015).¹⁸⁸

The discourse around the business model of “attention merchants” (Wu, 2016) is also adopted by critics of technology firms: Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes critically describes the business model of the firm he helped create as follows:¹⁸⁹ “Facebook’s business model is built on capturing as much of our attention as possible to encourage people to create and share more information about who they are and who they want to be. We pay for Facebook with our data and our attention, and by either measure it doesn’t come cheap.” (Hughes, 2019). This line of argument around attention fits in the first of three streams of literature on attention that Citton (2017) identifies, that of attention as a scarce resource within market interactions analysed by orthodox economists. The second stream centres around the “alienating effects of the attentional manipulations that technologies of attraction entail” (Citton, 2017, p. 7), largely involving cultural theorists, sociologists and philosophers. The third stream researches the impact of technology on the “development of our mental capacities and subjectivities” (Citton, 2017, p. 8). The final two levels are frequent streams of attack against new media; they also serve as potent justifications for a public mandate in media.

2.4.2. Towards an ecology of attention

In chapter one, I introduced Citton's (2017) argument to shift from an economy of attention to an ecology of attention perspective along three levels: individual attention, joint attention and collective attention. This approach is relevant to study PSM and its competitors, as it places the competing organisations within the broader context of attention. In turn, the interplay of collective, joint and individual attention highlights the relevance of PSM for the public interest.

While the digital era enhanced the importance of attention, it also accelerated the impact attention has on the (digital) world. James Webster (2014) argues that “[t]he marketplace of attention is a structurational world if ever there was one” (p. 11); as users access a pre-structured digital world; this world in turn adapts to user behaviour. This reflects Anthony Giddens’ (1986) idea of duality, whereby agency and structure are mutually constituted. This is broadly recognised in the technology world and

¹⁸⁸ Google’s PageRank algorithm organises webpages based on the number of authoritative webpages that link to it.

¹⁸⁹ Chris Hughes calls for the government to intervene to breakup the company.

reflected in the practice of A/B testing.¹⁹⁰ However, “[i]n the marketplace of attention, it is measured audiences not individual agents that are more likely to change the system” (Webster, 2014, p. 13); this implies the necessity to move between levels of analysis, from the audiences as collections of individuals, to the audiences as publics, networks, which amounts to more than the sum of its parts. These multiple levels of analysis are in line with Citton’s vision of an ecology of attention discussed previously. The implications for PSM portals are important, and ought to be reflected in their mandate. It also stresses the importance of measuring attention and audiences, a key function of media since the rise of advertising.

There is an important change in transparency regarding the relative value of cultural symbols: the role of institutional gatekeepers in selecting cultural products that capture our attention is reduced even further than in the television era and ratings.¹⁹¹ However, while in the television era each viewer was relatively equal and the attention of the viewer was analysed as an aggregate, the digital era transforms and individualises the value of the attention of every individual.¹⁹² Building on Bourdieu’s analysis, this is the basis for a sustainable difference between art and commerce: money provides financial capital, irrelevant of its source; whereas the value of attention depends greatly of its source: a positive review by *The New Yorker’s* critics is much more potent than any random critic, due to its cultural capital.¹⁹³ According to Franck (2000), the elite in an immaterial economy are those people who generate substantially more consideration than they may return; a reality TV contestant gains more consideration in participating in this entertainment show than he or she may provide in return by viewing any single content. When discussing and theorising visibility as it relates to attention, Nathalie Heinich (2012) describes this as a fundamental dissymmetry.

In describing collective attention, Yves Citton (2017) proposes a principle of transindividual attentionality: “through ‘me’, it is always ‘our’ collective thinking and feeling [...] who is paying attention” (p. 31). Citton illustrates this by describing the different debates surrounding Islam in France and race in America, as demonstrating how attention around us shapes our individual attention. This can also be illustrated in the shifting mood in regard to technology firms, and how *Black Mirror* resonates with collective attention to dystopian images of a technologically enabled future. To

¹⁹⁰ In this practice, half the users on the site face a green buy button, and half the users see a red buy button; the company tracks carefully the clicks on each button and maintains the button which saw the highest conversion rate.

¹⁹¹ Gatekeepers exist online also; while in “old” media gatekeepers are mostly humans (journalists, editors), digital gatekeepers are typically technological, in particular algorithms (Machill et al., 2008).

¹⁹² Although prior to the individualisation of consumption, each viewer was not equal within the household in selecting the programmes.

¹⁹³ There has never been a universally recognised independent measure of artistic quality; in fact, the value of any quality judgement depended on the willingness of an audience to offer it attention (Franck, 2009).

integrate a community, a society or, more primitively, a group for survival, one must pay attention to what others pay attention to.

The notion of collective enthrallment shows the strategic and geopolitical importance of attention and news in shaping collective decision-making. Furthermore, and in contrast to some morally oriented positions, Citton (2017) argues that “[a]nchoring the analysis in an awareness of our collective attention allows us to avoid the moralizing discourse which, from Pascal to the Frankfurt School, deplores the apparently hopeless effects of the temptations of ‘entertainment’ and its industries” (p. 33). This point is important, as I discuss in chapter three.

2.4.3. Attention and audience measurement

To monetise attention in the marketplace, it must be measured. The current technological environment has transformed audience measurement. Ratings historically were the measuring system for commercial broadcast media (radio, television), allowing the broadcaster to command a certain advertising price. Ratings are a “market information regime”; they allow market actors to observe the players and make sense of their observations (Anand & Peterson, 2000). Webster (2014) argued for adding a second regime, the “user information regime”, which comprises both search engines and recommendation systems. Both information regimes share one particular characteristic: they are constructs, and, in turn, they construct reality, “they never offer a completely independent or neutral view of the marketplace” (p. 17). User information regimes typically favour popularity, measured as links, likes or views. Thus, curation targeting “near you”, “people like you” or “live now” reinforces the effective popularity of the recommended content in a digital version of joint attention. User research is a large field of research, as audience metrics are changing and structuring the media, including considerations of engagement and diversity.¹⁹⁴

Indeed, audience measures provide the current social capital: effectively, the fact that *Gangnam style* got over one billion views means that one should watch it as well:¹⁹⁵ individual and collective attention shape each other. In turn, a successful short video with a large number of views tends to be picked up by major media, exemplifying the notion of an attention backbone, whereby websites with high traffic amplify the message of less visible websites (Benkler et al., 2013). Put otherwise, that which attracts attention on social media ends up on television, which demonstrates that established institutions such as broadcasters play a key role in diffusing and validating

¹⁹⁴ For more details on audience measurement, see Cardon (2015).

¹⁹⁵ This content will be suggested to a user on social media (“your friends watched this”), on the video platform (YouTube: “trending”), and on the website of newspapers.

information. It also highlights how these different channels interact and cannot be viewed in isolation.

The attention regimes are of systemic importance. PSM fit within a media ecosystem: “[t]he media should be conceived more in terms of ecosystems (of diffusion) than as ‘channels’ (of transmission)” (Citton, 2017, p. 29). Therefore, in analysing public service media, and entertainment in particular, it is important to consider both emission and reception, as emission is competing on an individual and collective level. It must be echoed by others, in what Citton terms an “ecosystem”. This implies challenging the individualistic approach to attention underlying most approaches to an attention economy.

Citton (2017) shows the importance of conceiving attention on the three levels of collective, joint and individual attention. Beyond these three levels, he argues for distinguishing it from a dominant, neoliberal economic logic, which describes attention as the main capital but is insufficient to grasp the complexity of attention. Taking an ecology of attention approach supports an argument for public service media, as it considers the levels of the collective and joint dimensions of attention. Furthermore, entertainment draws attention, making it a shaping force. I turn to conceptualisations of PSM audiences.

2.5. Conceptualising PSM audiences

While there is an abundance of digital content, there are limitations to access it in both legal and practical terms, including to fight piracy; yet the technologically-savvy find ways around these limitations, which in turn suggest new business models and legal frameworks. Digitalisation provides opportunities and challenges in terms of copyright and digital rights management systems. Economic, regulatory and technical barriers were not sufficient to stem piracy, as regulators and interest groups did not understand the fundamental shift in power that Dominique Cardon (2019) describes as the rise of the individual’s power, new forms of collective action and the redistribution of power and value. The phenomenon of digital piracy, or illegal downloading or streaming of movies and series, reflects several ideas about audiences. First, they are both individuals and a group; the latter shapes markets and programmes. Second, they are consumers of content, but they also contribute by expressing the interest in specific programmes and leaving traces. Furthermore, the legal and user interface barriers to piracy allowed the rise of portals as an innovative business model.

2.5.1. Moving beyond the citizen and the consumer

How do public service media contribute to the public sphere? The service provided by PSM is largely defined by their understanding of their audience. Meijer (2005) finds an implicit turn from public service broadcasting to “narrowcasting”,¹⁹⁶ and a trend to leaving entertainment to the commercial sector “based on four assumptions: entertainment can be left to the commercial networks, because it is their core business; commercial networks follow a steady and limited course in their programming; commercial television is free; and sustaining viewers in their role as citizens is a question of offering high quality information” (Meijer, 2005, p. 29); assumptions Meijer questions, as I do particularly regarding the universalism principle. Meijer argues for adding a third concept of audience to the two following: citizens, who are to be informed through quality programmes; and consumers, which PSM largely do not address; the third concept is that of the “enjoyer”, arguing that quality service is not limited to certain genres, or to the quality judgement by industry peers. This concept may in turn reconcile the PSM with attracting audiences in an era of attention scarcity. The notion of enjoyment is linked in the literature to being carried away by the content; enjoyment is central to the notion of entertainment.¹⁹⁷ The viewer of public service entertainment content can actually fit in two categories, the citizen and the enjoyer. Public service entertainment may engage him or her as a citizen after gaining his or her attention as an enjoyer, as he or she may watch a drama that also makes him or her aware of social issues. This notion corresponds to Danish PSM DR’s dogma of “double storytelling”, whereby a television drama must both contain a good story and address social or ethical themes (Redvall, 2013, 2016).¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, in the case of public service media in a networked age, one cannot isolate a type of audience and only service, say, the citizen. Rather, the viewer expects to find his or her needs catered to through one portal, as citizen, consumer and enjoyer.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Narrowcasting refers to the transmission of a television or radio content to a specialised audience. It is opposed to broadcasting, the transmission of content to anyone as a member of the general public.

¹⁹⁷ For more on this, see the discussion in chapter three.

¹⁹⁸ In a different category, factual entertainment shows such as cooking shows strengthen the democratisation of PSM, by making ideals of gender, style, family values, available to all audiences (Brunsdon et al., 2001).

¹⁹⁹ According to Meijer (2005), PSM measure their quality in regard to the content they broadcast, rather than in terms of its impact. In the public sector in general, there has been a move towards more impact measurement rather than output. In public management studies, this stream is coined New Public Management (NPM). Meijer (2005) identifies five repertoires used by professionals involved in producing content when considering quality: marketing, artist, artisan, teacher, moderator; “by differentiating between these repertoires of quality [...], it becomes possible to conceptualize a broader range of programme quality dimensions [...]” (p. 39). In particular, the moderator vocabulary signifies that the content of the show is secondary, as it aims at starting communication among viewers, in an impact function; in fact, such programmes aim at providing orientation, inspiration, representation and identification.

Table 3: Three models of audience-orientedness

Which audience group generates / addresses the programme?	Citizens	Consumers	‘Enjoyers’
What is the aim of the programme?	Address viewers as socially committed	Pleasing the advertisers	Giving your audience real pleasure
How does the programme-maker relate to the audience?	Making your audience aware	Addressing, creating, and delivering markets (e.g. shoppers 19-49, youth)	Loving your audience
How do you recognize programme quality?	• Greater social / democratic involvement with the audience • Community feeling • Education and informing the audience • Rendering visible democratic culture	• Consumer pleasure • The targeted viewer group is being transformed into potential buyers of goods or services	• Visual pleasure • Enthrall your audience • Call on viewers’ sense of playfulness • Utopian escapism: imagining a better world and a better humanity

From Meijer, 2005, p. 36

Furthermore, the concept of “enjoyer” contributes to reducing the distinction between high brow and low brow culture (Meijer, 2005). Meijer argues for extending the quality discourse horizontally to include the “enjoyer”,²⁰⁰ and vertically to including five repertoires. However, this approach may justify the quality of any single content, and risks leading to relativism and an “everything goes” approach.

Syvetsen (2004) proposes another view of the publics of television: citizens; audiences; customers; and players. It is presented in the following table.

²⁰⁰ As opposed to the dichotomy of citizen versus consumer.

Table 4: Typology of broadcasting - viewer relations

Viewers as	Broadcasting – viewer relation
Citizens	serving the public as members of a democratic society
Audiences	serving the public as television viewers keen to watch entertaining and interesting programmes
Customers	serving the public as buyers keen to consume products and services
Players	serving the public as playful and resourceful individuals keen to participate in various (media) activities

From Syvertsen, 2004, p. 365

Effectively, Syvertsen distinguishes the enjoyer as audience and player. While I keep in mind the notion of player, relevant to new services provided by PSM through their portals, I keep the unique notion of enjoyer. I propose a further conceptualisation of the public service entertainment audience in chapter three.

2.5.2. Piracy and convenience: a shift in power

Facilitated by digital technologies, viewers changed in their practices of looking.²⁰¹ While regulations aimed to protect copyright, piracy has played a role in developing offerings that enhance access to content. Indeed, piracy through peer-to-peer sharing put the existing offering under pressure, impacting sales; “piracy creates a new alternative for consumers that competes on not just price but also on timeliness, quality and usability – the same factors the entertainment industries have relied on to execute their business models” (Smith & Telang, 2016, p. 86). The industrial response should be, as Steve Jobs put it in an interview: “We’re never going to top the illegal downloading services, but our message is: Let’s compete and win” (Goodell, 2003). Online television is defined by regulations and industry standards, yet not only; “Governments and corporations do affect the online audience and will play a role in shaping the future of the television system. Equally so, it must also be recognized that the Internet enables the audience to circumvent regulations, subvert markets, and route around technological barriers. This renders the audience a potent force for shaping the emerging online television system” (Strangelove, 2015, pp. 232-233). In other words, there are two approaches creative industries can use to fight piracy: either control and regulation, or differentiation through enhanced convenience and reliability (Smith & Telang, 2016). The latter are central to the development of new PSM services in regard to entertainment and of portals such as Netflix. Simultaneously to the

²⁰¹ Practices made possible by portals, such as speed watching, whereby a viewer watches a whole season of a series in fast forward to capture the structure of the story. The fear of missing out in the face of an abundance of offering or of being exposed to spoilers leads to an evolution in practices of looking.

industrial response to evolving practices of looking, the dichotomy of creator and consumer has weakened; this is the rise of the crowd.

2.5.3. The crowd and the produser

Audiences can passively consume programmes. With digital technologies, they can now also co-create: online participation includes explicit contributions such as editing an entry on Wikipedia or uploading a video to YouTube. Colin and Verdier (2015) describe the contribution of the crowd on both an explicit and implicit level, active and passive. The active contribution includes all user-generated content, while the passive contribution describes the traces and logs, for instance search queries on Google Search. Both of these are strong drivers of value for the organisations that collect them. The attention economy builds on two-sided markets: content creators are attracted to platforms that provide them an audience. Platforms such as YouTube and Facebook are the go-to platform for uploading user-generated video content.²⁰² This free content, in turn, attracts users. The users' attention is then sold on to advertisers by the platforms.²⁰³ This has been described by some as the co-option of the audience, namely the appropriation of the labour of an audience as one's own, be it a private or a public media organisation (Jorge et al., 2018). Cooption can however take a positive form, when it is wished for by the audience, as suggested in the field of fan studies (Gray et al., 2017; Hills, 2002).²⁰⁴

The notion of "produsage" was introduced by media scholar Axel Bruns (2008) to describe the rise of user-generated content, including open source software and the blogosphere. Produsage is characterised by four ideas. First, it builds on an open participation and community-driven evaluation. Second, there is a flux in the hierarchy within the community, tending to a meritocracy. Third, produsage is palimpsestic, as its product is continuously being developed, discussed and edited. Fourth, common property is the norm, for instance by using a Creative Commons licence. This stream of research can be put in relation to the work of Richard Jenkins (2008) on convergence. Lawrence Lessig (2008) discusses "remix culture";²⁰⁵ he also contributed to the development of the creative commons legal framework

Framing the produser as an "amateur", sociologist Patrice Flichy (2010) describes the rise of the amateur culture, as MySpace and blogging allowed fans to interact with

²⁰² Some local markets have local platforms which manage to survive through network effects or strong localisation.

²⁰³ Some argue this implies the user is providing free labour, a view that Hesmondhalgh (2010) disputes.

²⁰⁴ Fans can be a potent force, reinstating cancelled shows such as *Star Trek* in the 1960s or *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* in 2018. They play key roles in the diffusion of programmes online through two activities: by commenting and critiquing the programme on social media; and by contributing to subtitling ("fansubbing").

²⁰⁵ The appropriation of the content by the user reminds one of the consumption mode of tales, a form of oral storytelling.

authors and contribute to the development of their character's universe.²⁰⁶ He finds four political functions of the amateur in the public, political sphere: information collecting, denouncing, providing meaning, and convincing.²⁰⁷ What drives the amateur to contribute? In discussing the theory of gifting that drives the amateur, Flichy (2010) refers to Alain Caillé (1994) and his work on anti-utilitarian sociology. He distinguishes between the *intérêt à* (the interest to act in a certain manner to gain something) and *intérêt pour* (the interest for something), the former focusing on the self-interest of the individual and the utility he or she will gain from such an activity, while the latter focuses on the action as an end in itself. It is worth noting that one is rarely only in one or the other category in a given activity. They can be described as pleasure and constraint.

This dynamic disrupts the traditional authority schema; in an age in which a journalist must produce an extensive amount of reporting in a short period of time, does the amateur who has access to nearly the same source material, has more time to develop a specialised expertise and think about the issue not have an equivalent or stronger expertise? Co-creation, sourcing and curation are major challenges for platforms in the marketplace of attention (Heller, 2016). This is the product of two separate phenomena: sinking costs of technology leading to non-professional offering; and a multiplication of offering of information and entertainment content more broadly. The cost of equipment allowing anyone to produce content competitive with professional content online is sinking (Smith & Telang, 2016); Smartphones can be used to film Hollywood movies.²⁰⁸ Some platforms go even further: YouTube provides access to professional production facilities in their offices in a range of cities around the world to YouTubers with a minimum threshold of followers.²⁰⁹

2.5.4. Views, likes and shares: measuring and surveying the individualised audience

Social media expand the realm of contribution, with individualised metrics of a user's performance in terms of views and likes. This has been discussed through the lens of

²⁰⁶ However, in regard to user-generated content, and as Wu (2016) points out: "[b]loggers and other creators of content were not Renaissance aristocrats; they faced the material constraints of most individuals" (p. 275). There is a need to compensate one way or another the production of content, be it by users, as off a certain threshold.

²⁰⁷ In such cases, the amateur, through networked organisations such as Greenpeace or Amnesty, can contribute to agenda-setting or presenting diverging views of a topic. In fact, beyond the "truth", stories make it possible to be confronted with realities, local, anecdotal stories. In this stream, video games and, soon, virtual reality (VR) will play a particular role. In particular on complex technological or scientific topics, there is not really, necessarily, one fact, but rather a narrative based on complex facts; O'Reilly (2017) argues that emotions may be more effective at contributing to the public sphere than facts.

²⁰⁸ Steven Soderbergh shot his 2018 movie *Unsane* using an iPhone 7 plus.

²⁰⁹ There may be a case to make that in this the artist is a prototype of the future worker, as Menger (2003) argued before YouTube, including in the discussion around the arts as a laboratory for flexible working arrangements.

visibility, privacy, power and surveillance “[t]o make so much of our sociality permanent, categorized, and explicitly and quantifiably ranked into hierarchies produces not sociality for its own sake but one that is concerned with success and failure according to the metrics enforced by platforms” (Jurgenson, 2019, p. 111). In media in general, audience figures are key. Audiences, thus, are measured. Like commercial players, PSM are held accountable in their audience figures, which have long been a challenge in regard to online audience. On the Internet, the advertising industry has developed a whole new set of metrics. Yet collecting data goes beyond digital platforms. Even set-top boxes for televisions, duly installed in the lounge room, allow media firms to collect viewing data, as discussed by Hesmondhalgh and Lobato (2019). Technology firms offer advertisers specific target audiences categorised by age, location, preferences, and many more criteria, based on the accumulation of data from their search history, social media profiles, and so on, as described by Wu (2016) and framed by Zuboff (2019) as “surveillance capitalism”. This is the result of implicit participation: beyond active participation, any user of the Internet participates implicitly. This is the underlying logic for the service of actors such as Google: its PageRank algorithm is based on the assumption that any link to a website is a vote on the value of the site it is pointing to (Cardon, 2015); therefore, the company makes use of pre-existing work by website providers, namely the links from their website to other websites, to improve its service by including their participation (O’Reilly, 2011). The platforms of Google, Facebook, and Twitter improve their service the more people use them, which in turns builds barriers to entry for new players (O’Reilly, 2011).

The choice of a system to regulate, adopt, develop strategies around a technology is determining to the social uses and societal impact of a technology (Cardon, 2019). Choices made around early television and radio in the US and Europe were divergent and were the product of differing political and economic cultures. The choices made around the Internet were driven by the American context, and the rise of the GAFAM reflects a Californian worldview.²¹⁰

Platforms accumulate data on their users, including location, viewing habits, and hardware used. Some applications permanently track their users (Conger, 2016; Isaac, 2017). In this regard, there may be a sovereignty issue for a government in

²¹⁰ The ongoing “splintering” of the Internet shows that this may be coming to an end. Perhaps the only country to have resisted the American tech wave is China, where state regulation has allowed the incubation and development of important tech groups (BAT, or Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent) (Cunningham & Craig, 2016). Baidu is a Chinese technology firm. Its services include a search engine, a cloud storage service, a mapping solution, a social networking service, amongst others; Alibaba is a Chinese technology firm that provides services including e-commerce platforms (business-to-business, business-to-consumer, and consumer-to-consumer), a payment platform, a cloud computing service platform, an instant messaging platform, amongst others; Tencent is a Chinese technology firm. Its services include a social network, mobile and multiplayer games, a mobile chat service, amongst others.

knowing less about its citizens than do foreign technology companies.²¹¹ Referring to Foucault's analysis of converting visibility into social control (prisons, schools), portals can arguably be understood as a means of social control: "[i]n these institutions, the gaze takes the form of the few (teachers, guards, doctors, and other authorities) who keep watch over the many (school-children, patients, prisoners), all made visible, documentable, inspectable, and ranked according to a normative standard that reflects the ideal of those in power" (Jurgenson, 2019, p. 90). The visibility of the viewer, of the audience as a contributor, as a gamified consumer, is in turn a form of social control.

2.5.5. The national audience, portals and the impact on PSM

PSM are competing for the attention of their citizens with the GAFAM²¹² as well as with domestic commercial media. While globalisation puts pressure on the national public sphere, it still remains the relevant frame of reference and of mandates comparing national public service broadcasters (Moe, 2009).

In this regard, public service media are far behind. Yet they may also provide a safe space in their intentions and use of personal data, while private portals stick to laws that lag behind technological possibilities, are not enforced or include minor fines upon infringement.²¹³ Should public service media not make use of this approach to participation, namely, improving its services to users by learning from their behaviour? This may take two forms: better personalisation on an individual level, and an improved service overall. PSM may have an advantage over other portals in their communication to users as they are bound to uphold data protection rules. In fact, the perceived trade-off between privacy and convenience might see a new prioritisation by citizens as awareness of the impact of big data is rising among policymakers and the general population. As viewers are increasingly aware of privacy issues, public service media and private platforms must gain the trust of their viewers; in terms of content accuracy and fair reporting, for instance; but also, trust in the platform, in an age where commitments to privacy and transparency are of the essence (Burri, 2015).

²¹¹ What platforms such as Facebook do is essentially threefold: they collect data about their users, their interests, location, etc; they use this data to sell advertising space, sell their users' attention; and they choose, curate algorithmically what their users see (Vaidhyathan, 2019); they also use the data to improve their models in numerous ways. While it is a global platform, it operates differently in the different local markets; a perfect example of glocalisation. Hence, "[e]ach country will have to assess how its social, cultural and political health is affected by Facebook. Each will have to approach Facebook as part of an information ecosystem, connected intimately with other systems of expression and media forms like television and news services." (Vaidhyathan, 2019).

²¹² Google, Amazon, Facebook Apple, Microsoft.

²¹³ The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which required all organisations to be compliant by May 25, 2018, is a notable change to this. A sanction representing up to 4% of global annual turnover can be imposed - an amount that aimed to enhance compliance, including by large tech portals.

Transparency may also be applied to algorithms, whereby a PSM can provide an example by making the code for its algorithms freely available, understandable and debatable.

The audience can be viewed in different roles. It can be both passive and active. Active by contributing, producing and using content, or passive by simply leaving traces. These traces are collected and consolidated by portals and technology firms. PSM struggle to develop services on par with private technology offerings.

To discuss some challenges in this context, I turn to the literature on public management.

2.6. Public management and public value

The public sector includes all organisations funded or owned by the government (Rainey, 2014). The majority of PSM organisations are considered to belong to the public sector, as opposed to the private sector, as they typically are indirectly funded by the government and the public through compulsory licence fee or another arrangement aiming at ensuring independence from government. Thus, public management literature is relevant to PSM as it impacts the practice of management; the public value concept introduced by Mark Moore (1995) has been largely applied to PSM both by practitioners and scholars.²¹⁴ The effective independence of the PSM manager depends on the national context; yet decisions on programmes, programme autonomy, and the operationalisation of the public service mission relies largely on the broadcaster's leadership.²¹⁵ Since PSM are public organisations, public management literature is relevant to this research. I discuss the public value paradigm and its application to PSM.

2.6.1. Three paradigms of public management: on the road to public value

Public management has undergone three broad periods; each of the three paradigms builds on perceived problems with the previous one (Stoker, 2006). The three paradigms are: Weberian bureaucracy; New Public Management; public value. First, until the 1970s, the public sector was run along the principles of a Weberian bureaucracy, based on a rational-legal authority. This model implied strong hierarchies, strictly respected rules and a clear division of labour (Weber, 2007).

²¹⁴ The public value concept is used in chapter five to analyse PSM innovation labs.

²¹⁵ Furthermore, public service broadcasting management typically have to manage two distinct type of actors: commercial broadcasters, and the political elite (for a study of institutional relations in the case of France, see Kuhn, 2010).

Second, as a response to political and economic changes in the 1970s and 1980s, a new paradigm was proposed for public management: New Public Management (NPM). NPM introduced principles of management from the private sector to the public sector, with a strong focus on service delivery in terms of both efficiency and customer satisfaction (Hood, 1991; Schedler & Proeller, 2011). The introduction of NPM in public management reflected a shift in the understanding of the user from a citizen to a client or consumer. Yet NPM, in turn, faced criticism for its perceived binary opposition of market versus state provision of services (O'Flynn, 2007; Alford & Hughes, 2008); the "social values inherent in public services may not be adequately addressed by the economic efficiency calculus of markets" (Hefetz & Warner, 2004, p. 174). Given its emphasis on service quality and view of the citizen mainly as a client, I agree that NPM is of limited use when applied to PSM. Rather, addressing audiences as citizens is central to PSM. However, the underlying user-centricity of NPM is interesting; it was introduced at a time when PSM faced liberalisation and competition for audiences' attention and had to adapt its programmes. This reflects the discussion of audience orientedness in the previous section.²¹⁶

Third, the public value paradigm, which is largely based on the work of Mark Moore (1995, 2013), aims to ensure public management remains focused on value creation rather than output optimisation (Diefenbach, 2011). Moore's approach brings value to an analysis of PSM, as it develops a strategic public management framework aiming to maximise public value. It is analogous to strategic business management, which aims to maximise economic value. In this analogy, the equivalent to a business' client for a public sector organisation is not an individual citizen, but the political authorities that articulate the choice of citizens (Symes, 1999). Thus, the task of the public manager is political management; he or she must maintain the support from government.²¹⁷ Public value management itself is not free of critics (see for instance Rhodes & Wanna, 2007).

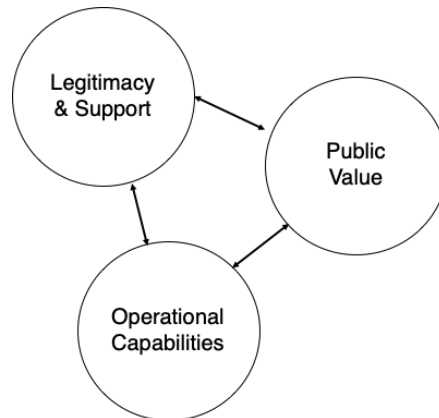
After initially gaining limited attention, Moore's public value concept was picked up by Tony Blair's government and it subsequently spread to other Anglo-Saxon nations (Meynhardt, 2008). While it was mainly used to evaluate public policies, Moore views the public value concept as more than a sheer economic view of value: "[w]e should evaluate the efforts of public sector managers not in the economic marketplace but in the political marketplace of citizens and the collective decisions of representative

²¹⁶ See also the discussion of NPM at the Swiss PSM in chapter four.

²¹⁷ This framework is useful in the case of public media inasmuch as PSM do not have cashiers or direct client contact in the way a public hospital or a passport authority does: rather, the citizen turns on his or her television and can access the programmes. There is thus a more indirect client relation between a PSM and a viewer than between a hospital and a patient.

democratic institutions” (Moore, 1995, p. 31); he proposes techniques including: policy analysis; programme evaluation; cost-effectiveness analysis; cost-benefit analysis; and customer satisfaction surveys to determine the value of public service.²¹⁸ Moore (1995) introduced his “strategic triangle”, a public value model for strategic management in the public sector.

Figure 4: The strategic triangle



From Moore (1995)

The “authorizing environment” is the arena of society and politics, in which public managers must build coalitions to sustain support for their organisation and thus its legitimacy; “public value outcomes” include both the products of the institution (its output) and its results (outcome), both of which should ideally be measurable; “operational capabilities” describes the resources required to ensure production.²¹⁹ To ensure continued support for the organisation, demonstrating its efficiency is increasingly relevant. Andrews and Entwistle (2013) conceptualise four categories of public service efficiency. First, product efficiency, which refers to the maximisation of outputs per input. Second, allocative efficiency, or a match between demand and supply for a product or service. Third, distributive efficiency, or the distribution of the service across groups of citizens. Fourth, dynamic efficiency, or the balance of consumption throughout time. There may be trade-offs between these dimensions of public service efficiency.

Thus, a public manager must manage up to his or her authorising environment; manage out to the general public and a range of stakeholders; and manage inwards to the organisation. Digitalisation has disrupted the way public services are provided and widened the number of formal and informal participants in public value creation,

²¹⁸ Using a notion of co-production, public value PSM would measure more than sheer audience ratings to include the assessment of public value by viewers and users; thus, public value also informs audience research.

²¹⁹ Providing public value requires both tangible assets such as funding and human resources, as well as intangible assets including moral or legal authority, which all require the continued support of the population through elections and taxes.

jointly and separately.²²⁰ As suggested by Bryson, Sancino, Benington and Sørensen (2017), public value may be identified and created by a range of actors on multiple levels, each operating within their own strategic triangle. In the case of PSM, public value is provided by a complex, multi-actor and multi-level system, since private media may also contribute to the public sphere (Bryson et al., 2017). The simplicity of the strategic triangle of public value management model makes it easily applicable. Yet the notion of public value has been much discussed in research and practice.

2.6.2. Defining public value

Research provides several definitions of public value.²²¹ It may be defined as both “what the public most ‘values’ and also what adds value to the public sphere” (Benington & Moore, 2011, p. 14). Alford and Flynn (2009) proposes four approaches to considering public value: public value as paradigm; public value as rhetoric; public value as narrative; and public value as performance. The following table introduces major reference definitions of public value in the relevant literature.

Table 5: Public value definitions

Author(s)	Definition
Moore	What public officials and the citizenry decide, especially via collective choice mechanisms
Bozeman (2007)	Achieving a range of public values, where these are defined by normative consensus about: • The rights, benefits, and prerogatives to which citizens should (and should not) be entitled; • The obligations of citizens to society, the state, and one another; and • The principles on which governments and policies should be based
Bozeman and Johnson (2015)	Public value successes and failures as assessed in part against a set of public value criteria
Meynhardt (2009)	Public value is <i>for</i> the public when it concerns relationships with the public, and <i>from</i> the public when it is drawn from experience of the public
Benington (2011)	What is valued by the public and what enhances the public sphere

Adapted from Bryson et al. (2017, p. 644), referencing Bryson, Crosby, & Bloomberg (2014)

²²⁰ This is true in PSM as well, as the frontiers of the organisation is increasingly blurred and viewers become producers (see discussion on the producer).

²²¹ Public value is in fact both an end and a means. Public sector organisations must provide public value; in that sense, it is an end. Additionally, public value is a means for these organisations to be effective.

Of particular relevance for PSM, Benington (2011) defines public value as expanding the public sphere, which he conceives as a democratic space with the “web of values, places, organizations, rules, knowledge, and other cultural resources held in common by people through their everyday commitments and behaviours, and held in trust by government and public institutions” (p. 32). In turn, public value may be either hegemonic or contested; i.e. there may be agreement on what is public value, or disagreement (Bryson et al., 2017).²²² Mazzucato and Ryan-Collins (2019) broaden the scope of this concept and view public value as an instrument for the public sector to shape and co-create markets rather than correct them, in pursuit of public interest.

2.6.3. Public value and PSM

Due to the type of services they provide and to the challenges in measuring their output using NPM,²²³ PSM are the archetype organisations to apply the public value paradigm to.²²⁴ Public value is defined by managers, yet politicians remain the final determiners of public value (Moore, 1995). PSM were among early adopters amongst public organisations rethinking their mission based on the public value paradigm (BBC, 2004; ZDF, 2006) and communicating extensively on it.²²⁵ The use of the concept of public value by PSM came as a response to rising concerns by commercial media about unfair competition in the online offering (Starks, 2013);²²⁶ for instance, three commercial media lobbies petitioned the European Commission in 2004 regarding PSM competition online (Nord, 2012). Three examples are of interest in regard to PSM and public value: its use by the BBC as of 2006, including the development of a Public Value Test; Germany’s introduction of a three steps test (*drei Stufen Test*) for the introduction of new digital services since 2009; the European Commission’s Communication on State Aid and PSB.

²²² The periodic negotiation around PSM mandates should allow a discussion on this shared understanding of the public value the organisation ought to deliver; this level is more relevant than a discussion of single programmes.

²²³ The BBC explains the difference: “[c]ommercial organisations have a range of financial techniques to help them. They have bottom-line profit, return on capital employed, discounted cash flow, and a range of other quantifiable measures. They use these to decide what new services to launch, where to cut spending and where to invest. Public organisations have very few such techniques. Public value is a much harder concept to measure. [...] it is difficult to quantify the value to our society of having a public place for national debate, or of everyone having access to some of the best of UK culture and creativity, or of coming together as a nation around important national events” (BBC, 2004, p. 84).

²²⁴ See for example Collins (2007).

²²⁵ The public value concept was applied to PSM after the BBC created its public value framework in the process of the 2005 Charter renewal.

²²⁶ This rationale can be read clearly in the BBC’s position paper regarding the organisation’s future in a digital world, when proposing the introduction of a public value test: “[t]he new system will give licence payers greater assurance that the BBC’s services will deliver against their wider public purposes. Because it will delineate the scope and objectives of BBC services more explicitly than in the past, and because any change to scope or objectives will only be approved once the full market context is examined and understood, the system will also make the BBC’s current and future services more predictable from the perspective of other players in the media market” (BBC, 2004, p. 83).

For the BBC (2004), a public service was delivered on three levels: the individual level (in the form of information, education and entertainment in the case of the BBC); on the societal level (as a contribution to the national social, democratic and cultural health, according to the BBC); and on the commercial market, through a contribution in training and creative investment. There were five purposes of public value at the BBC: democratic value; cultural and creative value; educational value; social and community value; global value (BBC, 2004). In turn, the three levels and five purposes of public value were operationalised in a performance management system that measured public value quantitatively and qualitatively along the four dimensions of reach, quality, impact and value for money. Thus, the introduction of notion of public value tests at PSM was first due to the BBC in 2007, with the aim of evaluating the impact of a new service prior to its introduction, and public value tests have since spread across Europe (Nielsen et al., 2016).

Germany introduced a strict evaluation process for services provided by its PSM online; online replay was limited to seven days after broadcast, while sports was limited to 24 hours; archives of historical significance could be provided online, pending regulatory approval. Any other content was to face a three-level test: “(i) was it part of the PSB remit? (ii) would it contribute to pluralism and diversity? (iii) were the budgets reasonable?” (Starks, 2013, p. 197).

In turn, the European Commission published a Communication on State Aid rules and PSB in 2009. It stressed the issue of fair competition with commercial players and recommended introducing some form of public value test, while leaving the responsibility to define and implement the test to national governments (Starks, 2013).²²⁷ Thus, while focussing on fair competition, the EU allowed for PSM funding for public value, pushing for the instrument of *ex ante* evaluations of new media services (Raats & Pauwels, 2011).

While PSM practitioners have used the public value concept, scholars have applied it extensively in PSM (Lowe & Martin, 2014),²²⁸ arguing that “the legitimization of a holistic public service media system and the public broadcasters’ role [...] requires

²²⁷ It stated: “[i]n order to ensure that the public funding of significant new audio-visual services does not distort trade and competition to an extent contrary to the common interest, Member States shall assess, based on the outcome of the open consultation, the overall impact of a new service on the market by comparing the situation in the presence and in the absence of the planned new service. In assessing the impact on the market, relevant aspects include, for example, the existence of similar or substitutable offers, editorial competition, market competition and potential impact on private initiatives. This impact needs to be balanced with the value of the services in question for society. In the case of predominantly negative effects on the market, State funding for audio-visual services would appear proportionate only if it is justified by the added value in terms of serving the social, democratic and cultural needs of society, taking also into account the existing overall public service offer” (European Commission, 2009, pp. 12-13).

²²⁸ The concept of public value in PSM was the topic of the biennial conference RIPE@ in 2013. See the ensuing publication edited by Lowe and Martin (2014).

evidence” (Raats & Pauwels, 2011, p. 17), however difficult the balancing act may be.²²⁹ Public value tests have been a blessing for PSM in search of justification, but also a curse of bureaucracy for these organisations to justify their activities, spawning an assessment industry; the low number of rejections on the base of public value tests also raises questions as to their usefulness (Lowe & Martin, 2014). Eventually, public value will never be fully defined, but rather must be understood as a tool “to stimulate debate about competing interests and perspectives, and to generate dialogue about how to improve services, about who gains and who loses, and about relative benefits and costs” (Benington & Moore, 2011, p. 49). Thus, in this sense, PSM leadership is permanently in a process of construction of the public value it delivers to the public with its stakeholders. When analysing the use of the public value concept at four PSM, Gransow (2020) finds that the implementations are varied and that they are effective in defining the values a PSM delivers to the public.²³⁰ She also stressed the insufficient response in the remit to the rise of portals, which I turn to in the next section. Likewise, Moe (2010) finds varied implementations of public value tests in the cases of the United Kingdom, Germany, and Norway, although he stresses that the “introduction of the tests [...] should be understood as a symptom of a more general trend that calls for all public spending to be legitimized as meritorious enough to distort the free market” (p. 219); although the funding necessary for conducting these public value tests implies a potential contradiction.

Public value is a useful conceptual tool to discuss the value delivered by a PSM as well as the strategic choices and trade-offs operated by PSM leadership. This stream of research is particularly relevant to chapter five addressing innovation. I now discuss television studies and research on portals.

2.7. Portals, between television studies and platform studies

Television studies face a foundational challenge as this sub-discipline of media studies is both defining itself and addressing the evolution of the medium it studies. As an example of the evolution of this field of research, I discuss research on portals, as it is

²²⁹ Exemplary of this line of argument: “PSM organisations are mandated to provide services and cater to groups that are not attractive in commercial terms, and this is entirely appropriate given their public charters and funding. In practice, however, this has meant the institution is torn between evidencing market value, a concept strongly embedded in commercial logic where success depends on achieving sufficient popularity, and embodying its mandate as a not-for-profit institution with values that are in principle contrary to that logic. PSM has become an institution caught between the contrary demands of audiences that are construed as ‘sovereign’ media user and meeting charter requirements that have a pronounced collective, social-welfare orientation. The institution struggles with the pressure to be both popular and to provide a comprehensive service that might not always be liked by the majority or even wanted by some. This balancing act creates significant complexity for a fair, comprehensive and robust measurement of ‘public value’” (Lowe & Martin, 2014, pp. 20-21).

²³⁰ She also found that the negative impact of a new service on existing services is insufficiently evaluated.

relevant to the future of PSM. In chapter one, I discussed Netflix, Disney and PSM in portals. I turn to discussing the relevance of the literature on portals in television studies and platform studies for this research, before reviewing conceptualisations of portals. The business strategies of portals impact their content strategy. It may also impact cultural production; I also address the platformisation of cultural production and the implications for PSM portals.

Ramon Lobato (2019) proposes studying Netflix using two academic approaches: television studies and platform studies.²³¹ The two are complementary in considering portals, as they are fundamentally different: “[t]he former is inherently historicizing; it sees its object in relation to a particular media technology (television) and its evolution. In contrast, the latter implicitly frames its object as a set of computational technologies tied together into a common user interface while also understanding each digital media service as a kind of communication system in its own right – with unique design, affordances, and limitations” (pp. 35-36). Thus, the approach of platform studies brings another problematisation and other issues. It is also relevant to approaching PSM, as that may be the predominant logic of Netflix and other portals, while PSM largely rely on a television logic. It is relevant to policymaking: Lobato (2019) shows how Netflix uses these two logics depending on its interest: the platform logic to sidestep national regulations that could impact its algorithmic curation and the television logic in its texts and experience.²³² A platform studies approach is useful to identify the trade-offs and strategic choices PSM leadership face in developing the value proposition for their own portal and in their relation to platforms. Furthermore, the fundamental challenge of multi-sided markets that is characteristic of platforms is central to media markets as well (Flew, 2019).²³³

2.7.1. Defining platforms

In a platform studies approach, Netflix is illustrative of one type of platform. Nooren, van Gorp, van Eijk and Fathaigh (2018) categorise platforms along two dimensions: their business model (direct payment; advertising model; access model; acquisition growth model) and the extent to which they build on direct or indirect network effects.

²³¹ He refers to two close streams: new media theory and Internet studies.

²³² In terms of competitive environment, portals arrive in a US market in which consumers were facing “bundles of bundles” (Lotz, 2017, p. 68), namely shows bundled into channels, in turn bundled into multichannel distributors, bundled with Internet access, landline, mobile phone, as a symptom of convergence.

²³³ Business literature is relevant in regard to platforms, as they provide insights into the economic and managerial tactics that lead to certain decisions, with an approach describing multi-sided markets. For instance, Evans and Schmalensee (2016) describe the two sides of a market: one side, “money side”, financing the “subsidy side”; for instance, advertisers (money side) pay advertising money to subsidise the (free) use of YouTube by viewers (subsidy side).

In this logic, Netflix is a platform with a direct payment business model (subscription) without direct or indirect network effects.

Portals and platforms pose a methodological challenge to researchers: as Helmond, Nieborg and Vlist (2019) point out, the literature evolves at a pace slower than the platforms change, in technology, governance structure and business model. The texts are continuously evolving, as developers can personalise the experience and adapt it nearly in real time based on individual characteristics and user profiling. Platforms continuously evolve through the interplay of technologies, users, organisational structures, infrastructures as well as economic, social and cultural practices (van Dijck, 2013). For instance, Lobato (2019) describes the evolution in the interface of Netflix from a digital DVD rental store to a cinema experience, reflecting a shift in its reference industry; he stresses that Netflix does not put forward the television experience, although television series are important to its brand identity. As its object of study shifts, scholarship addressing portals or platforms must first define it.

Platforms are “commonly defined as large-scale online systems premised on user interaction and user-generated content” (Lobato, 2019, p. 36); scholarly research on platforms addresses how they transform user communication, labor dynamics and identities. Tarleton Gillespie (2017) defines platforms as “sites and services that host, organize, and circulate users’ shared content” (p. 254). When considering the concept of platform capitalism, Langley and Leyshon (2017) discuss the notion of the “infrastructural and intermediary qualities of the platform” (p. 9), referring to its role as an intermediary for flows of data;²³⁴ they consider “the neologism of ‘platform capitalism’ foregrounds the holding together of the infrastructural and intermediary qualities of the platform” (p. 9). Van Dijck, Poell and de Wall (2018) define platforms as “fuelled by data, automated and organized through algorithms and interfaces, formalized through ownership relations driven by business models, and governed through user agreements” (p. 9).

2.7.2. Theorising the portal

In discussing Internet-distributed television, it is necessary to address a terminology point. Scholars use terms such as platform, portal, navigator, app; like Lotz (2016), I use the term “portal” to describe the intermediary that collects, curates and distributes television content. Specifically, Lotz (2017) explains this choice based on the fact that the term “platform” is used in relation to computing systems, while the term “portal” has mostly fallen from use, as it originally referred to a website that provided a variety of

²³⁴ They address five types of platforms: online exchange markets; social media and user-generated content; sharing economy; crowdsourcing; crowdfunding and P2P lending platforms.

content, such as AOL. In this sense, Netflix is more of a portal than a platform, as it is a closed, curated platform that does not use the explicit crowd contribution typical of platforms.

The equivalent to a portal in broadcast television is a channel. The key difference between a channel and a portal is the notion of the schedule: non-linear consumption, by definition, does not have a schedule imposed by the media. As Lotz (2017) points out, channels had a scheduling function; portals, a curation function, which may include personalisation based on data collected. The following table presents the key differences between a channel and a portal.

Table 6: Key characteristics of channels and portals

	Channel	Portal
Consumption	Linear	Non-linear
Key limitations	• Capacity constraint • Time specificity	• Cost of acquiring content
Selecting content through	Scheduling	Curation
Differentiation in experience through	• Program content	• Program content • Features of interface²³⁵ • Capabilities offered to viewers
Messaging	Mass	Personalised
Recommendations	No	Yes
Metrics of success	Ratings	Net subscribers

Based on Lotz, 2017, pp. 8-29

This table shows the fundamental shift in thinking required by PSM in considering non-linear consumption. The curation function of a portal has two key dimensions: the compilation of content, and its organisation in a clear and accessible manner (Lotz, 2017). This leads to one key lesson for PSM; online, its portal may be as important as its content, as the interface is a differentiation factor as are the programmes in the catalogue. Irrelevant recommendations, a slow loading player or dysfunctional search functionalities will drive away audiences that have come to expect more.

When considering Internet-distributed television, there is a risk of overstating changes and transformations, while developments may be the product of long-lasting trends. Amanda Lotz (2017) shows how two key practices of Internet-distributed television,

²³⁵ Features of the interface include for example the way content is organised, search and recommendation engines, and functions such as autoplay.

subscriber funding and vertical integration, appeared before it.²³⁶ Yet, “[t]hroughout the last twenty years, advancement of television has been consistently instigated by subscriber-funded services”, such as HBO and Showtime, which created quality original series aiming to attract niche rather than mass audiences; this in turn may be linked to their business model based on subscription, because “this simpler relationship of economic exchange is better able to embrace the uncertainty of emergent practices” (p. 58-59).²³⁷ Thus, Netflix fits in the continuity of subscriber-funded television, rather than representing a fundamental disruption in its business model. It stands out, nonetheless, by its portal nature; particularly in its reliance on data and algorithmic curation.

In theorising portals as a subscriber model of media industry operations, Lotz (2017) develops some key ideas: the subscriber model uses bundling in a manner different to that of newspapers or magazines bundling articles to create a single printed product. Rather, bundling is a strategy to deal with heterogenous tastes, a risk aversion of audiences for trying out new programmes, as well as substantial marketing costs for a single unit of content. Bundling also allows portals to benefit from data analytics: it is easier to predict aggregated consumer data rather than on a single media good. Lotz (2017) makes the distinction between portals by companies that only provide their own original content, or vertical integration to monetise a large catalogue, and portals that acquire and create content, such as Netflix. She describes as “studio portals” those portals “whose primary reason of being is to leverage an existing library of content” (p. 62).²³⁸ The distinction between the two is interesting, as she suggests the latter is more successful due to its focus on niche audiences (conglomerated niche strategy), rather than on its existing product.²³⁹ For broadcasting, original content realises the largest share of its value the moment it is broadcast. Portals transformed the economics of the industry because the value of content is not largely focused on this one moment. Instead, it can sit on a virtual shelf and be accessed when the audience

²³⁶ “Although many continued to think of cable channels as primarily advertiser supported, this shift in dominant revenue source left the channels more accurately described as subscriber supported and advertising subsidized” (Lotz, 2017, p. 66).

²³⁷ HBO as a subscriber-based model, has been at the vanguard of television developments for the past twenty years, as have technology firms of the Silicon Valley. Lotz (2017) suggests this may be linked to the simpler economic relationship, as advertisers’ measure of success are slow to evolve with emerging technologies and practices. In this sense, and to the extent PSM can consider itself free from advertisers pressure, it may follow a similar logic.

²³⁸ This means that there are increasing barriers of entry to the portals market in the form of existing intellectual property, or a catalogue. She analyses the logics underlying the subscriber model of portals along the format proposed by Bernard Miège (1989) in *The Capitalization of Cultural Production*, including their central function, economic organisation, income and creative professions. In particular, she argues the key strategies of portals include bundling goods into a library, exclusivity, and vertical integration.

²³⁹ This neatly echoes Silicon Valley’s user-centric design principles and design thinking, and is possibly a differentiating factor compared to portals purely based on the firm’s existing catalogue.

wants it. Thus original content has much longer “shelf value”. Netflix’s deals also transformed the remuneration of creators, as they may not benefit from the whole windowing of content, since it remains largely on the portal.²⁴⁰ The rights for Video On Demand (VOD) were hardly practiced before Netflix acquired them from studios (Nocera, 2016).²⁴¹ While it is technically easy to distribute content globally on digital platforms, it is legally cumbersome to negotiate rights contracts per country rather than globally.

There has been a turn in communication studies to consider infrastructure, which plays a major role in portals. When studying infrastructure from an ethnographic perspective, considering it as both relational and ecological, and focussing on information systems as large technical systems, Susan Leigh Star (1999) defines the eight properties of infrastructure as follows: embeddedness, or infrastructure as a bloc; transparency, inasmuch as infrastructure is invisible when used; reach, spatial or temporal; learned as a part of membership, inasmuch as the use of infrastructure may require initial learning; links with conventions of practice; embodiment of standards; built on an installed base, inasmuch as new infrastructure builds on existing infrastructure; it becomes visible upon breakdown; and it is fixed in modular increments, due to the layered complexity of infrastructures. Consider that when announcing in 2016 at CES that Netflix was expanding to nearly all countries in the world, Reed Hastings said: “No more waiting. No more watching on a schedule that’s not your own. No more frustration. Just Netflix” (quoted in Lobato, 2019, p. 2). This shows the advantage Netflix had by putting forward the Netflix experience as opposed to difficulties users faced with other offerings’ interface or infrastructure. That is one measure of success and, when viewed through the lens proposed by Leigh Star (1999), it shows the central importance of infrastructure in a digital experience.

Portals also require new measures of success: indeed, sheer ratings are insufficient. The key metric for SVOD is subscriptions. One content with a limited viewership may be more valuable if it is instrumental in getting new subscribers, while the most viewed content may not be the most valuable. This ought to illustrate the difficulty of measuring the value of any single piece of content. Portals such as Netflix are believed to collect tremendous amounts of data on user behaviour; this data is not shared with the programme’s rights holder.²⁴² This data may allow to model value of single content elements.

²⁴⁰ This, in turns, raises the question of exclusivity and the dynamics of piracy, which I leave aside.

²⁴¹ This allowed Netflix to cut a profitable deal with content rights owners. The size of the market is leading to difficult rights negotiations, one of the reasons that may have led Netflix to produce own content (Nocera, 2016).

²⁴² This, in turn, may partly explain the move by Disney addressed in the introduction of chapter one, leading to the launch of Disney+.

The subscriber model drives a content strategy. This leads to the debate between the blockbuster and the long tail as the driver of success in a digital age.

2.7.3. Content strategy: the blockbuster and the long tail

A firm's business model has implications for the approach it takes to building its catalogue. Lotz (2017) identifies two key curation tactics in portals: the audience strategy, focusing on a clearly defined target audience, and the content acquisition strategy, which is one of acquiring a large catalogue of content to satisfy many separate audiences. Netflix is a key example of the latter: it follows a "conglomerated niche strategy" (Lotz, 2017, p. 26); "such a mass customization strategy is made possible by the elimination of the time specificity and capacity constraint of linearity that prevent channels from effectively targeting multiple audiences to achieve scale" (p. 26); hence, Netflix is not a web version of a channel, but of a conglomerate. Scale is reached by operations excellency, in particular in technology (platform), more than in content. Furthermore, Netflix can pursue its niche strategy based on two key advantages: selection, or the availability of a platform that offers the viewers a large catalogue of content,²⁴³ and satisfaction, based on the use of consumer data²⁴⁴ and recommendation engines (Smith & Telang, 2016). The content acquisition strategy offers a competitive advantage through exclusive access to owned content,²⁴⁵ as the sole limitation of a portal is its content acquisition budget (Lotz, 2017), as opposed to the time slots in broadcast media.

Other scholars studying creative industries see its future in either the blockbuster or the long tail. The blockbuster view is that in an attention economy, big budget productions take it all, a view put forward by Anita Elberse (2014).²⁴⁶ The long tail, or the rise of the niche market, argues for an economy of abundance where all preferences can be satisfied, as presented by Chris Anderson (2006).²⁴⁷ However, Smith and Telang (2016) argue that both viewpoints are partial as the opposition is false. The bestselling novel *50 Shades of Grey* started in the long tail but became a

²⁴³ Beyond acquisition, Netflix has increased its spending on its own productions: according to calculations by journalist Ashley Rodriguez (2019), Netflix released nearly 90'000 minutes of original content in 2018, of which 66% were series, 11% documentary, 10% films, 5% kids, the remainder anime series, stand-up comedy and talk shows (between 1-3% each).

²⁴⁴ If talent is key, its historical identification in entertainment depended principally on the "gut feeling" of media executives. This was possibly partly due to the difficulty in collecting reliable and relevant data, with tools including focus groups and attendance figures (Smith & Telang, 2016). Netflix executives now have large amounts of data on user behaviour and preferences to orient decisions and identify talent to invest in.

²⁴⁵ This content may be owned by the company or the parent company and is a use of a vertical integration strategy.

²⁴⁶ While there may be a long tail in movie and television fiction production and given the high costs of production, an increased concentration of consumption on a limited set of blockbusters may be observed (Elberse, 2014): shows such as *Game of Thrones* can hardly be missed.

²⁴⁷ In retail, Amazon may represent the epitome of the long tail, having been characterised as the "everything store" by Brad Stone (2013).

blockbuster. They argue for considering the central processes of each model rather than the products: the following table presents the business model underlying both approaches.

Table 7: Blockbuster and long tail business models

	Example	Key processes
Blockbuster business model	Majors	• Curation (selection of products offered on the market) • Control (over resources for promotion & distribution)
Long tail business model	Amazon, Netflix	• Selection (of content made available) • Satisfaction (through the use of data, recommendation engines, peer review, ...)

Based on Smith and Telang (2016)

For Smith and Telang (2016), long tail business models are best equipped to compete for customers' data and attention, as they build on a large catalogue (selection) and mobilise the specificities of digital technologies to track and improve satisfaction (recommendation engines and use of data).

Amanda Lotz (2017) proposes a comparison with the book publishing industry. She argues that the asynchronous consumption of on-demand watching through platforms shares characteristics with book consumption, as readers can choose between the latest bestsellers, new works by established authors, or old classics. This in turn suggests that the success of a television series cannot be known immediately, as was the case with linear distribution, but rather that it may take days, months or years. In this view, one could argue that the discussion around "Peak TV" represents the merger of the blockbuster and long tail approaches in scripted television series.

The notion of blockbuster and long tail business models encapsulate the trade-offs and choices technology executives and senior management of PSM must make for the future of their organisation and its mandate. But it also impacts the cultural producers.

2.7.4. Impact: the platformisation of culture production

Power within the entertainment and cultural industries has shifted from majors, large book publishers, and studios to platforms. Like their predecessors, platforms maintain their power through barriers to entry and economies of scale (Smith & Telang, 2016). According to Nieborg and Poell (2018), content producers face the challenge of having to continuously adapt to changes in platform conditions, including content curation algorithms and pricing strategies, as well as infrastructural changes and new platform services; this, in turn, leads to cultural products becoming essentially contingent,

namely modular and repackaged based on user data.²⁴⁸ The authors describe this as the platformisation of culture. In this context, “[p]latformization can be defined as the penetration of *economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions* of digital platforms into the web and app ecosystems, fundamentally affecting the operations of the cultural industries” (Nieborg & Poell, 2018, p. 4276).²⁴⁹ It affects the cultural industries as they become ever more platform dependent; in other words, cultural producers become complementors to platforms.²⁵⁰ They develop a framework that analyses the impact of platformisation along three dimensions, which are all relevant to PSM.

First, the shift towards multisided platform configurations and winner-takes-all dynamics on platforms. The rise of platforms is linked to new barriers of entry and economies of scale. Smith and Telang (2016) identify four: consumer search and switching cost; platform lock-ins; information bundling; and online platform development. These four characteristics oppose the argument of the Internet as a space for all and show the dynamics of the winner-takes-all in platforms.

Second, the operationalisation of power in platform governance frameworks, often reflecting US-American cultural standards; this point is new inasmuch as, previously, the field of cultural production was largely national.²⁵¹ This second point includes the impact of algorithmic curation. It is particularly powerful because it sets the incentives for cultural producers to develop content that fits the criteria of success defined by the platform (van Dijck, 2013). Ted Striphas (2015) introduces the notion of algorithmic culture, or the organisation of culture by algorithms, building on the impact of the notions of information, crowd and algorithm.

The third dimension draws on software studies and centres around the function of data, tools and infrastructure made available to cultural producers;²⁵² some have called this “infrastructural capture” (Nechushtai, 2018).

Thus, the nature of platforms fundamentally transforms the power relations within cultural industries, with new gatekeepers and an impact on the production of culture itself.

²⁴⁸ This “poses new problems for cultural theorists and critics, who are confronted with cultural objects that resist stabilization. Unstable texts raise a wealth of methodological and cultural challenges” (Nieborg & Poell, 2018, p. 4289).

²⁴⁹ A parallel can be drawn here to the impact broadcasting has had on major sporting events.

²⁵⁰ One could argue that, particularly in small markets, firms in the television and film industry are complementors to the domestic PSM.

²⁵¹ “Global platform policies tend to ignore historical, cultural, and political values and sensitivities, central to news production” (Nieborg & Poell, 2018, p. 4285).

²⁵² This includes the use of Facebook login or of data analytics for instance (Nieborg & Poell, 2018).

2.7.5. A platform: Twitch, gamers and flow

Gaming is a sector that went from an individual or collective activity in arcades, to the basement, to on-the-go consoles, to online. Massively multiplayer online games (MMO) allow hundreds or thousands of players simultaneously on one single server. A form of competitive sport, online gaming has increasingly attracted an audience interested in watching players and listening to their running commentary. According to YouTube, in 2018, 200 million people watched gaming content daily, totalling over 50 billion hours of gaming watched.²⁵³

Why do people watch others play videogames? Largely for the same reason one would watch a sport: to watch someone perform a task in a skilled-manner. The need for editing online gaming is limited, as opposed to physical sports. This is a major difference when comparing to many other amateur formats, including cooking or make-up tutorials. Additionally, the story is rather light with clear metrics for performance and clear rules, making it easy to watch on and off, while multitasking or joining on one's own schedule.

Twitch is a platform for live streaming of both amateur and professional players (Pires & Simon, 2015). While it is researched from the perspective of gaming studies, Twitch allows us to approach evolving audience practices in looking and in participating (Spilker et al., 2020). Twitch and its channels have been described as “third places”, between home and work, where one can gather with others (Hamilton et al., 2014). In line with Raymond Williams' (2003) conceptualisation of flow as the central experience of television, the flow of the schedule bringing together programmes and advertisements alike, and William Uricchio's (2004) use of the concept applied to transmedia content in a user-centred perspective, Spilker, Ask and Hansen (2020) analyse the flow in audience engagement with Twitch channels. Specifically, they propose the concept of switching along two dimensions: “between small and large channels and audiences (‘spatial switching’), and between passive and active forms of attention and engagement (‘affective switching’)” (p. 617). This in turn can be related to the distinct use of social media as a flow by younger generations, as opposed to a catalogue approach by older generations. Twitch can be considered as representative of the flow experience online. Moving beyond the disruption discourse, Zygmunt Bauman (2000) argues for a progressive shift from a hardware-based modernity to a software focused modernity. He describes a fluidity in the identity, individuality and togetherness, a shift from solidity and heaviness to agility, lightness and fluidity.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ This is nearly double the television audience of the *Super Bowl*.

²⁵⁴ These trends are illustrated by divorce rates or the increasing number of careers or living locations people tend to have as symptoms of increasing impermanence of any major decision.

This impermanence, in turn, calls for a different form of content; Jurgenson (2019) shows this in his analysis of photography as a development from an art form and an object, to social photography as a form of communication in the flow. In this sense, a picture on Instagram is to be understood as immediate, impermanent and within a flow of similar pictures, while a Henri Cartier-Bresson or Ansel Adams picture is to be framed and analysed in itself.²⁵⁵

Likewise, in this logic entertainment was previously built around objects that memorialised and tangibilised it, such as the cinema ticket and the popcorn, the beer at the football game, the DVD or the CD one once bought. Now, we live in a time of subscriptions, dematerialised access with a password to a Spotify or Netflix account. In the flow of things, the couple's common Netflix account is a sign of shared life, and the separation is made tangible by recusing the access to the account of the one not paying for the access. In the context of these changes in practices, PSM are attempting a response.

2.7.6. PSM and portals

In the context of the rise of both portals and platforms, PSM are faced with two broad questions: how to compete with them and how to collaborate with them. A portal is part of a public service media's contemporary offering. In a digital era, the portal is the face of the public service media. It is part of the infrastructure that serves as a basis for connection, curation and creation. It is an essential point of entry for viewers, particularly younger audiences. Platform studies are relevant to considering the future of PSM as it enables us to identify issues around platforms that may call for a public intervention or an additional offering to foster customer choice beyond regulation, including on issues around privacy and surveillance, and the public interest in curation. This stream of research is also relevant for its interest in algorithmic recommendation. When discussing the notion of a PSM portal, it is essential to remember that it is positioned within a very crowded space, all vying for the user's attention; it is competing with excellent private offerings. Perhaps portals offer PSM an opportunity to better fulfil its mandate; Amanda Lotz describes the strategy of Netflix as one of "conglomerated niche" (2017, p. 26). Could this be understood as the epitome of universalism in the diversity of publics? Indeed, as opposed to commercial offerings, a PSM must serve all audiences. Jannick Kirk Sørensen, (2020) discusses the tension

²⁵⁵ When considering the existing offering of public service media, let us consider the entertainment, or infotainment content that fits a liquid world. While a large share of budgets is allocated to productions of television series, small budgets can be allocated to in-house digital first, social media oriented teams. When considering entertainment, one can take two viewpoints: first, that of content flagged as entertainment evolving from a logic of catalogue to a logic of flow; and second, the entertainment dimension of any content evolving to a state of impermanence.

between universalism and personalisation, and stresses that universalism was “only an earnest effort in the context of PSM’s role in serving a national cultural sphere that has become increasingly narrowed by these organisations’ need to stand out as recognizable brands with clear competitive profiles” (p. 202). Catherine Johnson (2017) analyses ITV Hub, the British commercial public service broadcasters VOD offering; she finds that the distinction between broadcast and on-demand television is breaking down. With Paul Grainge, she also (2018) addresses the evolving positioning of the BBC’s iPlayer to navigate the definition of a public service media in a digital era. PSM hold substantial catalogues of national film history. The development of a portal can thus place them in the position Lotz (2017) describes as a studio portal aiming at valorising its catalogue of programmes. Furthermore, new practices appear in production, such as the mashup culture, which provides chances for PSM to use their catalogue of archives in the public interest; although these developments also challenge classical rights management conceptions (Burri, 2015), in particular regarding content that is reused or co-created. Common practices of distribution are questioned; the chronology of media is contested.²⁵⁶ The remix culture, in turn, builds on new legal regimes such as creative commons (Lessig, 2008), reflecting the opposition of read-only culture and read/write culture typical of the digital age.

The portal is, in itself, a product, including search and recommendation features, and a user interface. Together, they require new skills from a PSM organisation. Additionally, “even if they are not sold in the manner of the revenue strategies of social media companies, meaningful data are a core product created in the operation of these industries” (Lotz, 2017, p. 46). This all requires new jobs around viewer experience of content, beyond its sheer production. Historically, public service media focused on the creation and licensing of content, and its broadcasting. They now must also have staff able to ensure the manner in which viewers experience this content, or, as Amanda Lotz put it, “[s]ubscriber-funded portals also require creative professionals skilled in data science and analysis to evaluate subscriber behaviour data” (2017, p. 44).²⁵⁶

Mira Burri (2015) proposes the idea of a Public Service Navigator (PSN), namely “PSN as a mechanism for influencing the conditions of access to content, in particular as its visibility, discoverability and usability are concerned” (p. 13), and links it to the current practice observed in existing platforms. Indeed, algorithms are only tools to an end and not deterministic; algorithms can be designed to foster diversity rather than reinforcement of existing preferences (Blakley, 2016). This understanding of a PSN

²⁵⁶ The chronology of media refers to the legal order in which films are released through different media ; films are first distributed in cinemas, then in cable television, DVD, and on networks.

can be framed within a libertarian paternalism tradition,²⁵⁷ or within the realm of nudge theory applications in the public sector, based on works by Thaler and Sunstein (2008). They argued that any offering includes an architecture of choice, and that said architecture tends to favour one of several options. Indeed, “architecture is politics”, meaning that the structure and design of any portal or platforms and what it optimises for is, ultimately, political.²⁵⁸ When considering platforms, the governance and curation principles defining content that is authorised or not depends largely on a US-based view, effectively leading to a globalisation of US-American standards on acceptability (Jin, 2015). Such standards are in turn operationalised through the terms and conditions and additional policies that form a base to forbid or remove specific content, although the process through which this happens is often relatively unclear and subject to limited accountability.²⁵⁹ On the contrary, it is important for PSM to be clear in their conditions as a space for artistic and political expression depending on their mandate.²⁶⁰

Platforms do not expressly recognise their political dimension. Tarleton Gillespie (2010) critically discusses how platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter describe themselves as neutral intermediaries, and thus as technology firms rather than as media. This strategy aims to hide the agency of platforms in the way they “shape the communications, interactions, and consumptions that they facilitate – through interface design, moderation policies, terms of service, algorithmic recommendation, and so on” (Lobato, 2019, p. 38).

The Netflix, YouTube and Twitch examples illustrate how entertainment is increasingly delivered through platforms and portals, which themselves are not neutral as a technology, whatever their contents are. Likewise, a PSM’s distribution channel is key to reaching the audiences and as such must aim also for citizenship, quality and universalism, both in its programmes and in its portal.²⁶¹

Consider the incentives that advertising-funded platforms face. In the pursuit of attention, many options have been studied and practiced. If the key metric is attention,

²⁵⁷ Libertarian paternalism describes the notion that it is legitimate, and possible, for a public institution to influence behaviour while respecting freedom of choice.

²⁵⁸ Two examples here. First, does one use the data to optimise for engagement, or for relevance? Engagement will mean the viewer will remain on the platform longer, something one can recognise when one opens a social media platform and suddenly wakes up having spent two hours on it. Second, does one centralise or decentralise the data? Originally conceived to be decentralised, for the purpose of robustness, the Internet has increasingly become platforms for a whole range of the population. Likewise, data about one’s health, mobility, etc. are centralised on the servers of providers, rather than controlled by the user. These are broad, political fields that activists in the MyData movement are working on.

²⁵⁹ The appointment of a digital ambassador by Denmark to represent its interests to these technology groups, reflects their growing political relevance (Gramer, 2017).

²⁶⁰ This could include to prevent infrastructural capture of domestic film, television and music industries.

²⁶¹ This requires simple language, accessibility, etc.

designing the platform to maximise attention may be relevant: tech platforms have been advised on the use of persuasive design to drive behavioural changes, based on the works of Stanford's BJ Fogg (2008; 2009). Specifically, he describes six components of "mass interpersonal persuasion": persuasive experience, automated structure, social distribution, rapid cycle, huge social graph, and measured impact (Fogg, 2008). The aim of using such mechanisms is to ensure addiction, and thus the sustainability of the firm as an attention merchant. The misalignment between the consumer and the provider's interests are obvious here. Alphabet's YouTube works on ensuring its algorithms maintains an even stronger engagement of its users (Hao, 2019). The government ensures that one can consume products from the supermarket and use medicine bought from a pharmacy by defining norms and ensuring controls. In the same logic, there are increasing calls to regulate the content industries and platforms, as the attention of billions is being captured. With this in mind, platform studies may suggest the need for a portal that serves the public interest, protecting citizens and cultural producers in a system that could be accountable and transparent.

If entertainment programmes are user-centred television, then the portal is the user-centred equivalent in terms of medium: offering people what they want, when they want it, how they want it.²⁶²

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed a range of perspectives on public service media, both overall and relating to entertainment in particular. PSM appeared with radio broadcasting, extended to television broadcasting and expanded with the Internet. Specific disciplines emerged to study each medium. I believe that a phenomenon such as PSM requires a multidisciplinary approach. Hans Magnus Enzensberger argues likewise in his essay *The Industrialization of the Mind*:

"The mind-making industry is a product of the last hundred years. It has developed at such a pace, and assumed such varied forms, that it has outgrown our understanding and our control. Our current discussion of the 'media' seems to suffer from severe theoretical limitations. Newsprint, films, television, and public relations tend to be evaluated separately, in terms of their specific technologies, conditions, and possibilities. Every new branch of the industry starts off a new group of theories. Hardly anyone seems to be aware of the phenomenon as a whole: the industrialization of the

²⁶² The possibility to watch Netflix on a TV-device, a computer, tablet or smartphone, or on several devices at a time, illustrates this last point.

human mind. This is a process that cannot be understood by a mere examination of its machinery.” (Enzensberger, 1982, p. 4).

The criticism that different reasonings are used for different media is relevant; given the convergence, one coherent media policy approach and analytical structure is required. In the end, all media are about the mind. This also includes social networks and gaming.²⁶³

Julia Cagé (2015) argues for considering media within the broad knowledge production sector, including public libraries and schools, which are also considered merit goods; I support this argument in particular as it relates to PSM. Yet, it remains the responsibility of the viewer to decide whether the information presented to him or her is convincing or not: the capacity to critically assess information or programmes is provided by (public) education. Thus, media belongs to the knowledge sector with schools, universities and public libraries. This is a complement to what Eric Klinenberg (2018) describes as “social infrastructure”, including public libraries and parks, as physical organisations and places that shape the way people interact, beyond media. The interplay of society, media, attention and power has seen a regained interest, as illustrated by the discussion around cultural critic Neil Postman’s 1985 *Amusing ourselves to death*.²⁶⁴ In it, the American media theorist reviewed two classical dystopian novels published in the mid-20th century by British novelists and cultural critics, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, and George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The two novels share a preoccupation with freedom, choice and information. The latter described a totalitarian system that censored information and restricted movement, while the former, *Brave New World*, envisioned a technology-saturated future in which truth disappeared in instant pleasures: critics would call this entertainment. The role of information in these two dystopias was in fact opposite. Postman (1985) argued that his contemporaries were too focussed on preventing Orwell’s vision being realised, while he feared Huxley may be right. While the two novels were written at a time when broadcasting was a state monopoly, there has since been a multiplication of both private and public offering, as well as the emergence of networks, technologies and practices allowing each individual to be a creator as well as a consumer.

Rising content supply certainly offers the consumer a larger choice but poses mid-term challenges to secure the funding of the media overall. A range of changes has

²⁶³ Currently, gaming is largely not considered in the context of PSM practice, yet massively multiple player online games are the location for discourse and conversation, for exchanging values, etc. In recent years, cultural policy in European nations has progressively started supporting their gaming industry as a cultural policy; in a parallel, e-sports are becoming a major economic actor, driving multi-million award prizes.

²⁶⁴ Neil Postman’s son Andrew published an op-ed in which he sees recent political developments in the UK and US as a symptom that his father was right (A. Postman, 2017).

strengthened criticism of PSM: globalisation and the digital media technology affect broadcasting media and the media policy regime at large. All areas of media are concerned by these sweeping changes, including the production of content, its distribution, its consumption, as well as regulation and organisations. Considering an ecology of attention, the three conditions of technology, economics and regulation are transforming forces. Concerning PSM, regulation and mandates must be clear: what is an entertained citizen? This point is the central question of chapter three.

Chapter 3: Conceptualising public service entertainment

The world is a stage, the stage is a world of entertainment. That's entertainment! Movie Band Wagon, 1953

Movies can and do have tremendous influence in shaping young lives in the realm of entertainment towards the ideals and objectives of normal adulthood. Walt Disney

Introduction

Nearly all children and adults recognise Mickey Mouse. Originally a clumsy mouse on a ship first appearing in 1928's *Steamboat Willie*, Mickey Mouse evolved into the symbol of the Walt Disney Company, and of the Americanisation and commercialisation of culture. The conglomerate is one of the world's largest media companies and the home to some of the most famous franchises including Star Wars (Lucasfilm), Marvel, and Pixar. Disney's business spans movie production and distribution, entertainment parks, toys and licensing rights, and more recently streaming services (Disney+). The history of Walt Disney's creations and firms shaped and reflected many trends in cultural industries: the importance of technology to procure enjoyment in stories and experiences; the values embedded in entertainment content; and the discussion around art and culture versus commerce and consumerism. As an example, the creation of the Disneyland Paris park in 1992 launched a staunch debate around American cultural imperialism in France. Yet most importantly, Disney movies shape the imagination and worldview of millions of children around the world. Mickey Mouse and his colleagues, Luke Skywalker, Spider-Man, and Nemo entertain the world and provide us with stories we use to shape our understanding of it.²⁶⁵

Yet entertainment is rarely clearly and comprehensively defined within the context of public service media specifically, even though it is widely viewed as one of its three key missions, along with information and education. It is essential, for this project as for policymakers and public service media executives, to clearly define entertainment, both in general and as relating to public service in particular; and this, even though "[t]here are few things less entertaining than trying to define mass entertainment"

²⁶⁵ There is an extensive literature on Disney in media studies. Eric Smoodin (1994) edited a book that takes an interdisciplinary approach to the Disney empire and its impact on American popular culture as well as the complex reception of Disney productions. Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart (1975) approached Disney from a media imperialism angle. Ole Mjøs (2010) compared the commercialisation of children's media landscape at the interplay of television programming and merchandising in the case of Disney and Norwegian PSM NRK.

(Bosshart & Macconi, 1998, p. 3). This is the case for two main reasons: first, mass entertainment is a complex phenomenon; second, it is a highly moralised concept. We will see that “entertainment often does more than entertain - or, put differently, entertainment functions are often intertwined with nonentertainment functions” (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 2), which explains the political interest for entertainment.

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, I define entertainment in general, starting with its etymology. Considering a mediological approach, I address how entertainment has grown in a network era to include the notion of playing, thus challenging the view of the audience as necessarily passive viewers or listeners. Entertainment is the object of academic study in three fields that relate to media studies: cultural studies; economics; psychology. By combining concepts and findings from these three fields, I propose a two-fold approach to entertainment: first, entertainment as a category of broadcast programmes, and second the individual reception of content as entertainment.²⁶⁶ The two-fold approach reflects the paradox that, while some content is flagged as primarily entertainment, entertainment also is essentially subjective, and thus depends on the individual’s reception of said content. Before moving on to conceptualise entertainment in a public service remit, I stress that existing definitions of entertainment are incomplete for policymaking purposes.

In the second section, I conceptualise public service entertainment, understood here as entertainment in public service media.²⁶⁷ Before that, I discuss the history of entertainment as a tool for power and politics. I then propose two categorisations, reflecting the two-fold approach to entertainment. Starting with the broadcasting or organisational approach, I define four categories of entertainment content. A PSM addresses its audience as citizens, reflecting one of public service media’s key principles, citizenship. While an audience member can be approached as a citizen, a consumer or an enjoyer, I discuss how the citizen role can be analysed on three levels of responsibility. In a model of the citizen I introduce, I argue that in entertainment, one is a citizen as one is responsible to the nation, to the community, and to oneself, the individual. Lastly, I combine the public service media model in a networked age with the principles of PSM to propose a mediated public service entertainment (PSE) framework. This framework may be used by policymakers to work on the PSE mandate, by senior management to refine a content, connection and curation strategy, by program managers aiming to select a coherent portfolio of content in implementing

²⁶⁶ Content refers here broadly to include programmes and contributions by users.

²⁶⁷ This thus excludes forms of entertainment that are provided as a public service other than a PSM, be it in the French understanding of public service as provided by a public institution, or in the British understanding of public service as a service to society.

the strategy, and by ombudsmen evaluating programme choices *ex post*. It is to be understood as a conceptualisation of the issue rather than a detailed checklist, as it is a framework that complements the regulatory context and mandate of the PSM.

Before conceptualising public service entertainment, I must first define entertainment independently of public service considerations.

3.1. Defining entertainment

While entertainment industries are economically very significant,²⁶⁸ there is limited research on entertainment when related to its economic value (Collis, 2017).²⁶⁹ Scholars are aware of this fact: in his presidential address to the International Communications Association (ICA) in 2004, mass communications scholar Jennings Bryant (2004) stated, when discussing entertainment: “[w]ith a phenomenon so obtrusive internationally, it would appear to be obvious that social scientists have an obligation to devote considerable time and resources to developing entertainment theory” (p. 392). Furthermore, entertainment is politically relevant, as it is situated at the interplay of culture, politics and power. The complex links between politics and entertainment have been a point of contention as early as ancient Greece, and entertainment has been used as an instrument of power ever since.

There are three academic approaches to conceptualising entertainment: as the relation between an audience and a text;²⁷⁰ as an industry; and as a psychological reception mechanism on the side of audience members. This section discusses these three streams of research.

3.1.1. An etymology of entertainment

Today, entertainment is broadly understood as any activity that provides pleasure and captures the attention of an audience, as an individual or as a group. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, entertainment is “the action of providing or being provided with amusement or enjoyment” (Soanes & Stevenson, 2005, p. 579). For the *Collins Dictionary*, “entertainment consists of performances of plays and films, and activities such as reading and watching television, that give people pleasure” (“Entertainment,” 2018). These general definitions share two key ideas: pleasure for the consumer; and an audience, as an individual or a group. Put otherwise, there must be something provided and someone to subjectively consume it.

²⁶⁸ According to the PwC *Global Entertainment & Media Outlook*, the global entertainment and media industry had 2018 revenues of USD 2.1 trillion (van Eeden & Chow, 2019).

²⁶⁹ Jean-Alain Jutteau (2017) makes a similar observation with the subject of playing and its role in contemporary cultural practices, and in particular video games.

²⁷⁰ Text is understood broadly to include written text as well as film, music, etc.

The etymology of the word entertainment comes most likely from Latin *inter*, among, and *tenere*, to hold. It evolved from Middle French *entretenir*, meaning to maintain in a certain frame of mind or to sustain. Entertainment thus can be related to the tradition of welcoming guests for food and a show, as a support for a social interaction centred around enjoyment, albeit perhaps organised for ulterior purposes. In their *Encyclopédie*, published in 1751, Diderot and d'Alembert defined the word *divertissement* (entertainment in French) as subjective and founded on procuring pleasure.²⁷¹

While the tradition of entertainment in royal courts comes to mind in this etymology, the 19th and 20th century saw the emergence of an industry around entertainment as it is understood today, made possible by recording technology. By recording and distributing entertainment like music, films and games, a tangible, transportable and copiable version of a story replaced the wandering poets. This is built on the model of the printing press leading to the distribution of recorded words in the printed form of books. The mechanical reproduction granted the masses access to a unified culture.²⁷² This technical innovation led to a broader revolution in the political and economic sphere, but also religious, psychologic and intellectual spheres (Cardon, 2019). The shift from royal, or elite culture, to mass entertainment, represented the first step in a long-lasting shift from entertainment as an experience to entertainment as an object, an artefact that one owns. The inverse shift took place in the early 21st century, as one goes back to streaming music and films, and thus experiencing them in a subscription model, supported by increasing personalisation. This implies a shift from a service to a good and back to a service.²⁷³ There is one major difference: it is now an intermediary that earns the bulk of the revenue online, rather than the contemporary equivalent of the wandering poet of the past; this development has been denounced by major artists concerning the share of revenues they receive from such

²⁷¹ They also discussed the legal meaning, and the theatre and opera use of *divertissement*. They went on to show how “divertissement, amusement, récréation, réjouissance” (entertainment, amusement, recreation, rejoicing) are synonymous and have “la dissipation ou le plaisir pour fondement” (dissipation or pleasure as a foundation). Translated to English from the original French: “Amusement is a light occupation of little importance & which pleases; entertainment is accompanied by more lively, more extensive pleasures; recreation is a short term for relaxation: it is a simple pastime to distract the mind from its fatigues; rejoicing is marked by external actions, dances, cries of joy, cheers from several people. Comedy has always been the recreation or relaxation of great men, the entertainment of polite people, & the amusement of the people; it is a part of public receptions in some events” (Boucher d’Argis et al., 1751, p. 1069).

²⁷² The reproduction of images led to cultural critic Walter Benjamin to conceptualise how this mechanical reproduction transformed the work of art, and in particular devalued its aura, in his 1935 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Benjamin, 2011).

²⁷³ This can be illustrated by considering famous music bands. While their major revenues previously came from recordings (the sale of a physical product), they now draw more revenue from live tours (service); a minor share is added by revenue from streaming services (subscribed to as a service by users).

streaming services.²⁷⁴ These trends in entertainment reflect the development of the broader economy, from services to goods and back to services. Technical recording and reproduction however enable this service to be on demand, on an industrial scale at a minimal marginal cost.

To summarise, the etymology of entertainment demonstrates its roots in live events and the experiential; with technological capacities and recordings, it developed into an industry, including mass media entertainment. The etymology also shows the importance of pleasure and enjoyment in social settings.

Beyond individual or collective enjoyment, entertainment is both an industry and a cultural reception to any content. How is entertainment conceptualised in academic research? There are three streams of academic research on entertainment: psychology, economics and cultural studies.

3.1.2. Entertainment as a research topic

Mass communication scholars tend not to mainly study entertainment content, dismissing it as low-brow or mindless; as an example relating to television, Jonathan Gray (2008) argues in his book on the topic that “television entertainment has become a prime topic of suspicion” and that it is “remarkably hard to offer a value-neutral definition of entertainment” (p. 4). He finds three common criticisms of television entertainment: first, the fear as to its power; second, as the opposite of information and education viewed as nobler pursuits; third, as to its addictive potential. On the other hand, some go as far as to argue that “[s]cientific mass communication research made a momentous omission error by not considering mass media primarily as entertainment media from the very beginning” (Felix, 2003, pp. 138-139).²⁷⁵

Before exploring major streams of research in entertainment, what are the key ideas of entertainment in general? In an attempt to define entertainment, Stephen Bates and Anthony Ferri (2010) “believe that entertainment must be defined largely in objective terms. Entertainment, in our view, involves communication featuring external stimuli; it provides pleasure to some people, though not of course to everyone; and it reaches a generally passive audience” (p. 15). This focus on the pleasure of an audience in

²⁷⁴ Several major bands and musicians do not allow their music on Spotify, which became the symbol for subscription-based freemium music services. A key contention point is on the share of revenue that is distributed to the artists. Alternative solutions have emerged that may be more interesting for artists in terms of revenue share, yet with lower audiences. Tidal, launched in 2014 and owned by artist Jay-Z, with a pitch around higher royalties for musicians and higher quality audio, is an example. A second example is Bandcamp, launched in 2008, which allows musicians to upload their music and set their pricing, somewhat like an e-commerce offering. While major artists may be dissatisfied with their checks from Spotify, less well-known artists may enjoy the exposure.

²⁷⁵ Translated from German: “Die wissenschaftliche Massenkommunikationsforschung beging einen folgenschweren Unterlassungsfehler, indem sie die Massenmedien nicht von allem Anfang an primär als Unterhaltungsmedien betrachtete” (Felix, 2003, pp. 138-139).

entertainment means that implicitly all streams are based on a psychological effect that the product or service aims for. Bates and Ferri (2010) define entertainment by describing its five key ideas. First, entertainment is about communication. Second, it involves an external stimulus; daydreaming thus is not entertainment. Third, it provides pleasure to a segment of an audience, stressing that what is entertainment to one person may not be to another. Fourth, it implies an audience. And lastly, they argue that the audience is usually passive.

As a first approach to considering entertainment, these key elements are all relevant, although two key points require elaboration: the forms of pleasure and the passivity of the audience. A discussion of the pleasure procured by entertainment will be conducted in the psychological stream below, particularly concerning the complexity of the entertainment experience. About the passivity of the audience, Bates and Ferri (2010) recognise that this point may be contested.²⁷⁶ I argue that this criterion is too limiting, and thus discard it, for five reasons. First, in an attention economy, nearly everyone produces content for an audience. Second and as a direct consequence of the previous point, the line between producer and viewer is blurred, as theorised by Axel Bruns (2008) in the concept of produsage.²⁷⁷ Third, all viewers contribute, actively or passively, by leaving traces and thus nourishing the production through immediate feedback loops.²⁷⁸ Fourth, the trend to a personalisation of experiences thanks to data is inspiring other forms of creation, such as interactive theatre in the offline world;²⁷⁹ emerging technologies such as virtual and augmented reality offer promising storytelling opportunities also. And lastly, it is arguably a return to the historical situation, whereby the audience actively took part in the entertainment, as an audience.²⁸⁰

When studying entertainment, two broad approaches are common: the impact of entertainment on an individual's behaviour and its influence on the broader culture. Cultural studies scholars, considering entertainment, tend to focus on specific programmes, such as *Star Wars* or *The Birth of a Nation*. Yet it would be incorrect to

²⁷⁶ In their words: “[c]oncededly, passivity is the most problematic of our criteria, and perhaps the most likely to become outdated” (Bates & Ferri, 2010, p. 14).

²⁷⁷ See the discussion in chapter two.

²⁷⁸ On platforms, the pure broadcast model does not exist anymore. The sheer fact of watching content is monitored, tracked and crossed with profile data, which is used for real-time decision-making. This can be linked to the broader issue of middle-men being weakened, such as music labels and book publishers. While their expertise was used not only to select the creators that were brought to market but also shape their products and accompany them, this role is somewhat, arguably, taken over by audiences passively selecting creators by viewing their products. See also the discussion of the platformisation of culture in chapter two.

²⁷⁹ Interactive theatre is a theatre performance that breaks the fourth wall, thus directly engaging actively audience members in interacting with the performers. Interactive theatre typically goes further than improvisation matches in which the audience votes for a winning team, to allow a personalised experience in exploring a place.

²⁸⁰ Be it with the chants of supports at a football game, or audience members calling out the actors in late 19th-century popular theatre, as described by Flichy (2004).

describe academic research on entertainment as completely lacking: in her extensive review of academic definitions of entertainment, Christy Collis (2017) identifies three streams of research on entertainment:²⁸¹

1. research focusing on entertainment as culture understood as a relationship between an audience and a text and the collective creation of meaning, in particular through the use of stories (cultural studies);
2. research focusing on business models and industry organisations (economics);
3. research from psychology, centred on the effect entertainment has on viewers, both generating emotions or responding to intrinsic needs (psychology).

Research focusing on entertainment as culture can be considered as applying an intersubjective approach to the topic; entertainment as an industry takes an objective approach by describing the actors and their business models; the psychology of entertainment centres on the subjective effects of entertainment on individuals. For this research, I consider all three research streams as complementary. Indeed, they are different ways of looking at entertainment; they are all necessary for this analysis. To summarise, based on Bates and Ferri's (2010) general approach to entertainment: there are three main streams of research on entertainment which all build on the notion of the audience member's pleasure consuming entertainment; this entertainment is delivered by an external stimulus, as a communication.

Having identified four key ideas of entertainment (communication, external stimulus, pleasure, audience), I situate entertainment within culture and question the exclusion of play from entertainment.

3.1.2.1. Situating entertainment within culture

In the field of media studies, entertainment, as an industry, has long been viewed by some with slight condescension for a range of reasons, including it being brushed off as superficial, as scholars and policymakers rather focus on the more prestigious issue

²⁸¹ Based on an observation of a group of entertainment professionals, Christy Collis (2017) adds a fourth definition of entertainment: an industry, practice-based, definition of entertainment. She finds that entertainment has two key characteristics, from an industrial perspective: it is audience-centred; and it is a commercial form of culture. In other words, "entertainment has a specific type of orientation towards audiences: it tends to identify audience tastes, values, and desires, and then to design products which will cater to them. Entertainment gives audiences what they want and what they like." (p. 16). For this research, I consider this commercial culture of entertainment as fitting within the second category of definitions, arguing as I will that audience-centeredness is one of the mandates of public service media, although balanced by the principles of quality and citizenship. It must be stressed that this observation does not study public service media in particular but is centred on an industry perspective. In this segment and this research, I attempt to understand what non-commercial, public service entertainment is.

of persuasion with mass media and the public; as Jonathan Gray (2008) puts it, “[t]oo often, scholars and pundits have discussed television entertainment simply as *not* television news, constructing along the way an epic battle between information and entertainment, ‘need’ and ‘want’, civic duty and selfish desires, importance and frivolity, wherein entertainment perennially plays the role of bad guy” (p. 12). Indeed, numerous observers make a distinction between information and entertainment regarding their impact on the functioning of democracy; both concepts are however equally difficult to define.²⁸² This view, opposing entertainment and information as opposite poles, would suggest that entertainment does not shape attitudes, social and political views, a position which media scholars Havens and Lotz (2016) disagree with. They illustrate the argument that entertainment content shapes our worldview with the example of the definition of terrorism in the US, reminding us that our view of what a terrorist looks like is “more likely than not” shaped by entertainment content as well as by news coverage (Havens & Lotz, 2016, p. 9).²⁸³ Entertainment also has a formative citizen function; a citizen may get more socially involved after watching a drama that addresses some social issue.²⁸⁴ Put otherwise, entertainment is one part of culture, which is “the *signifying system* through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored” (Williams, 1981, p. 13, emphasis in original). Even as it has been disregarded by some, entertainment is part of culture and shapes our worldview.

Yet, beyond media studies, where do we place entertainment within culture? To situate entertainment, it is useful to describe what it is not but is close to it in its function. Bates and Ferri (2010) argue that entertainment theory is a notion distinct from two other fields of cultural studies: leisure studies, and popular culture. It appears important to clarify this distinction here, concerning the debate around popular culture, entertainment and public service media. Leisure, while overlapping with entertainment, also comprises such activities as sports, musical practice and gardening. The key distinction being that entertainment involves, in their view, a notion of spectatorship, rather than physical participation; I challenge this notion in the

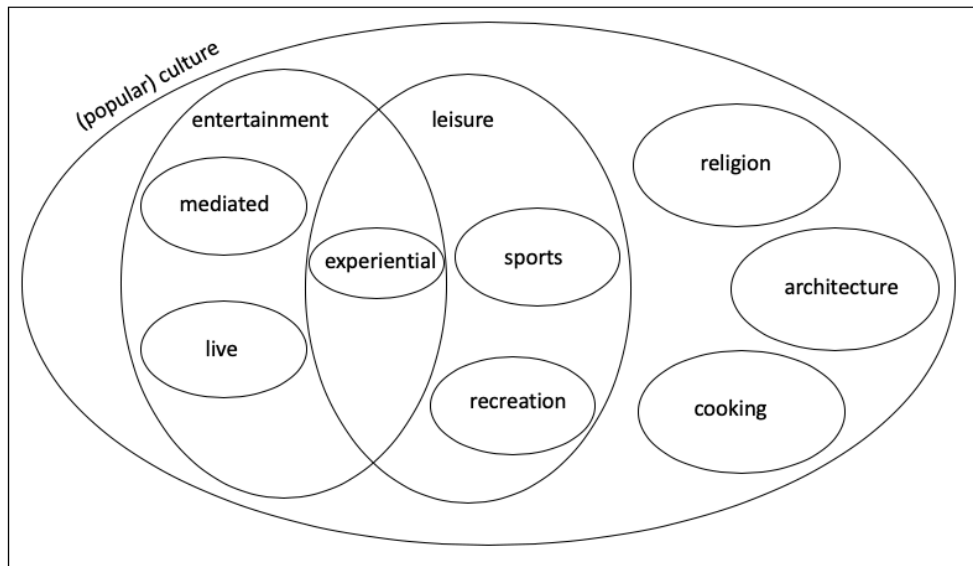
²⁸² In their textbook *Information economics*, Urs Birchler and Monika Büttler (2007) write: “It has been said that the term ‘information’ is a ‘semantic chameleon.’ Indeed, the term seems to adapt itself to its environment automatically like the main character in the Woody Allen movie *Zelig* (1983). The two characteristics of the word ‘information’ – that it is easy to use but hard to define – appear to be the two sides of the same coin” (p. 13). The same could be written about entertainment.

²⁸³ This phenomenon is particularly visible in remakes, whereby producers adapt a plot from abroad to their national context, often taking care not to import the cultural and social values the original show carried.

²⁸⁴ However, Todd Gitlin (2000) shows how networks aim at creating content that is “safe”, content that will not turn away advertisers. Likewise, PSM may tend to broadcast content considered politically safe, namely content that does address political issues without risking any backlash. This view may however be challenged today with the rise of quality TV and the third golden age of television initiated by HBO’s *The Sopranos*; programmes can now be more challenging, for the channel to stand out from the numerous competing offers.

following section. Thus, in their logic, playing football is leisure; watching a national football match is entertainment.²⁸⁵ To put this in a more contemporary setting: playing a video game with friends would be leisure; watching competitive gaming on Twitch is entertainment.²⁸⁶ Popular culture, on the other hand, is a broader category that encompasses such subjects as religion, architecture and cooking.

Figure 5: Situating entertainment within culture



The previous figure displays the link between these fields. Specifically, while entertainment can be divided into three categories (mediated, live, and experiential), the latter also fits into leisure. Leisure includes broadly sports and recreation (gardening, music, etc.). Entertainment exists in three forms: mediated, which describes an entertainment transmitted through a medium such as radio, television or the Internet; live, in which the entertainment is created and consumed simultaneously; and experiential, in which the entertainment is consumed through some action by the audience, more or less actively.²⁸⁷ These three categories of entertainment are not mutually exclusive; for instance, a sporting event or a concert that is broadcast on television is both live and mediated entertainment.

While this research focuses on public service media, and thus on *mediated* entertainment, it is clear that entertainment is larger than only mediated entertainment. Both live and experiential entertainment are regularly supported by the state. Furthermore, some live entertainment is created largely to be mediated. Thus, criteria

²⁸⁵ According to this logic, playing the lottery would fit in entertainment, while gambling in poker would be leisure. As a side note, it is worth noting that in many European nations, the lottery is a strictly regulated sector, and often operated by a company owned by the government. In the case of Switzerland for instance, lottery profits are distributed to finance culture, entertainment and sports.

²⁸⁶ Twitch is a video live streaming service, used primarily for videogame live streaming. It is a subsidiary of Amazon. See also the discussion in chapter two.

²⁸⁷ See figure 6.

for public service media addressed further in this chapter may apply to other areas of public service entertainment, such as theatre subsidies.²⁸⁸

Thus, entertainment theory fits within (popular) culture but is distinct from leisure as it mostly involves a spectator function,²⁸⁹ yet they are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, I argue for including play in the concept of mediated entertainment, which I discuss in the following section.

3.1.2.2. *Entertainment and play in an era of consumer-producer*

Playing a game suggests action by the user, whereas entertainment is typically defined as passive. I argue that while broadcasting technologies long implied a passive audience due to the one-way communication it enabled, digital technologies facilitate interactivity and challenge the distinction between entertainment and play.²⁹⁰ The shift from broadcast entertainment to entertainment as play is facilitated by technology.

The interplay of technology and culture is the object of mediology, which is an approach to cultural transmission over time and space. In particular, it considers both organisations and technologies. Mediology was first introduced by Régis Debray, who conceptualised a periodisation of the dominant media over time, or rather the organising principle of the media system.²⁹¹ It builds on the notion that there are shifts in history as to the central media in a given time in society. The four mediaspheres conceptualised in mediology are: the logosphere, centred around the spoken word; the graphosphere, around the printing press; the videosphere, around audiovisual media and particularly television and; the hypersphere, based on networks. The notion of hypersphere was introduced by communications scholar Louise Merzeau (1998); the conceptualisation of networks and the Internet as defining and creating a new mediasphere is relevant to PSM. She argues for a shift from the symbolic “organon” of the schedule of programmes in television to the Internet’s models and algorithms.²⁹² She analyses how the individual evolves from a “consumer” whom the media seduces

²⁸⁸ Notably, this support is addressed to both public and private actors.

²⁸⁹ And yet, as Gabler (2000) points out, there are recurring metaphors linking entertainment to amusement parks (experiential entertainment) when writing about big-budget movies (for instance the keyword “rollercoaster” to describe an emotional plot).

²⁹⁰ Broadcast media have aimed to include interaction with the audience for instance by introducing telephone or SMS voting systems in reality TV programmes. Yet this remained a limited feature in terms of interactivity.

²⁹¹ The discipline of mediology contradicts the notion of technological determinism; rather, organisations and technologies construct each other over time. In this logic, the introduction of the Internet and networks does not lead to an immediate transition and revolution. Rather, technologies allow the emergence of a new mediasphere over the continuum of time, which leads to a period of progressively shifting to a new equilibrium. This long timeline of shifts from one mediasphere to the next is slowed down by institutions that evolved over time. This reading is relevant to public service media, whose conceptualisation still largely lies in the videosphere. while a large share of its viewers, particularly the young, are anchored in the hypersphere.

²⁹² In mediology, “organon” refers to a device, understood broadly.

through television to an “actor-user-player” who can be mobilised online. In other words, in a digital era, the individual is not a viewer anymore, but rather an actor, a user and a player. The concept of produsage developed later by Axel Bruns (2008), previously discussed in chapter two, fits in this context. The technology, practices and organisations of the hypersphere thus enable the individual to be an actor, rather than a passive viewer or consumer.

Furthermore, games are essential to generating culture, starting as children. The importance of games in culture means that our definition of entertainment must include this active notion. Indeed, the importance of play for culture is a view argued for by the Dutch cultural theorist Johan Huizinga in this 1938 book *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, with the argument that play is a necessary condition for generating culture. Or in Schiller’s words, “*der Mensch ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt*” (People are only fully human when they play). For Huizinga, the play element of culture had been understudied because few philosophers considered fun as something one ought to strive for.²⁹³ In choosing the term *Homo Ludens*, he alluded to the Latin noun *Ludus*, which refers to play, sport, practice and school. This reflects the idea that the experience of pleasure is central to playing and play in turn is central to learning. Yet the notion of playing, or games, covers distinct mechanisms for different purposes in various social settings.

Jean-Alain Jutteau (2017, pp. 30-35) proposes a typology of three forms of games, to which correspond three motivations for the players, which I summarise in the following table. Games imply a second reality within which it takes place, and which is used as a space to learn how to deal with the player’s primary reality, in line with Huizinga’s thinking. Jutteau argues that the key distinction of games to other human activities is “due solely to the singular nature of the interest it arouses among those who practice it” (p. 43).²⁹⁴

²⁹³ For Huizinga, play has five cumulative characteristics: 1) it is freedom; 2) it is not only “real life”; 3) it is distinct of said real life in duration and location; 4) it creates order; 5) it is not connected to a material gain. In his characterisation, play is thus distinct from work.

²⁹⁴ Translated from the original French: “tient uniquement à la nature singulière de l’intérêt qu’il suscite auprès de ceux qui le pratiquent”.

Table 8: Three forms of games

Type of game	Ritual games	Rules games	Reflection games
Description	Simulate relations with the physical world	Learn how to interact with others within society	Simulate causal relations & consequences of actions
Society model	Social practices of oral-based societies	Conformity to dogmas of writing-based societies	Empirical rationalism since modern times
Player motivation	Internal peace	Social integration	Practical effectiveness

Based on Jutteau (2017)

The player motivations described correspond to socially relevant goals that entertainment produced in the public interest can pursue, as I will argue. He furthermore identifies three categories of games based on their social setting with other players: does one play alone (solitary game), with others as rivals (competitive games), or with others as partners (relationship games). This approach allows us to consider the complexity of the game experience and shows how the spectators and players are not necessarily two distinct categories. Consider, as does Jutteau, a game of rugby. Before the game, the spectators come to the stadium wearing make-up, and perhaps specific attire. They chant and clap throughout the game. The professional players, on the field, might start with a ritual game, such as the Oceanian haka. Once the game starts, it is a rules game, and the referee plays an important role in ensuring adherence to the rules. Rugby is also a reflection game, which the trainers on both sides prepare well in advance in developing their strategy, and which the players continuously implement when deciding who to pass the ball to. Games go beyond the stadium itself, as bookmakers take bets on the game's outcome, and experts compete in commenting the game. Even the media houses competing for broadcasting rights can be viewed as a form of game. The distinction between players, broadcasters and viewers is relative to the vantage point at any given moment. Arguably, the spectators of a performer are the performers of someone else.

This is increasingly the case in digital networks. In social media, all perform and consume.²⁹⁵ This, in turn, has consequences for PSM, as it becomes necessary to rethink the notion of PSM audiences; in particular, it is key to understand that the audience member can be a player and that it is through play that he or she acquires most practical knowledge. In this context, the notion of player may be more relevant

²⁹⁵ See the discussion of produsage in chapter two.

than that of producer, as the former suggests the notion of pleasure. While the public service mandate currently typically considers the audience as a passive spectator, a view of the audience as citizens can imply a more active role.²⁹⁶ This fits into a broader trend: that of an empowered citizen, contributing to solving social issues, who can be an actor in his entertainment, through play or co-creating entertainment for others or with others. This is made possible through digital technology and requires rethinking fundamentally the entertainment mission.

Thus, play and entertainment are not mutually exclusive. Rather, technology reinforces the use of play mechanisms, or gamification, for entertainment and other forms of content use. Competitive dynamics, badges and colors are used to motivate learning or reinforce positive or negative behaviors. The development of virtual reality and augmented reality are promising in terms of interactive entertainment. Yet any technology requires time to see its potential used for the development of new forms of storytelling. Storytellers are currently experimenting with virtual reality and augmented reality.

Therefore, entertainment does not necessarily imply a passive audience anymore. Another way of considering entertainment with an active audience is as playing. I argue for considering play as a form of entertainment, if it is capable of attracting an audience; this is indicative of a broader shift from broadcast entertainment to playing as entertainment. I now review three streams of academic definitions of entertainment, starting with the cultural studies approach.

3.1.2.3. *Entertainment in cultural studies: the relation between a text and an audience*

Definitions based on a relationship between an audience and a text, focusing on the collective creation of meaning, include studies on the reception and social impact of movies, songs, and even advertising; considering shows such as *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*, or the link between *Black Panther* and the social and political standing of Afro-Americans are a few among many examples. I only address this literature stream briefly here; I explore the relation between entertainment and power in the second half of the chapter.

²⁹⁶ In particular, beyond the passive consumer of entertainment, there may be an intermediary step in mediated public service education. Entertainment content with educational purposes may aim at mobilising the viewer's imagination beyond the sheer duration of the show. The broadcasts of national historical fictions in the 1960s and 1970s anchored the role of public service broadcasters as constructors of a national history. Arguably, fictionalised depictions of historical events tell one more about the period they were filmed, as is most visible through the haircuts of lead actors.

By recognising how our worldview shapes and is shaped by entertainment, the cultural studies approach may take a critical view of public service entertainment, as the public sector may be argued to have an interest in defending the status quo, a point argued by Tom Mills (2016) in writing about the BBC. Even in countries that do not have a strong public service media one can observe government interventions in creative industries to frame this relationship between the national audience and a text. For instance, the *American Production Code*, valid through the mid-1930s to mid-1950s, required the “bad guys” to have a negative ending on-screen; likewise, there are extensive studies on war-time instructions for the film industry (Bates & Ferri, 2010). In entertainment and increasingly in other fields, the story is key to keep the viewer’s attention.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, some cultural theorists argue that entertainers refer to symbols, familiar words or images so that all in the audience have the same experience; in this view, entertainment is conventional where art is intentional (Gabler, 2000). For example, fiction, and in particular the science fiction genre, by feeding on insights from social sciences, is essentially a discussion around social relations and can be analysed through that lens (Frase, 2016). In a volume edited by Tania Modleski (1986), scholars approach mass media entertainment from a range of critical perspectives including feminism.

While I do not dig deeper into specific types of content here, I want to stress that, recognising the links between entertainment products and social constructions, governments intervene and regulate more or less directly entertainment programmes, independently of public service media. The more recent discussions around regulating platforms and their responsibility as editors for user-generated content go in this direction, or the editorial choice of social media to allow violence rather than nudity; Tarleton Gillespie (2010) discusses the “politics of platforms” and how these firms tactically use the term “platform” to elude their responsibilities and manage their different stakeholders, including users, advertisers and policymakers. Furthermore, entertainment has an interactive relation to our worldview: it shapes it and is shaped

²⁹⁷ Wu (2016) shows how the earliest form of reality TV lacked a clear story dynamic, and how it drove the choice of casting and structure for the future shows. The story is key in journalism also; the key question an editor will ask a journalist is: “What is the story?”. This, in turn, is structured in journalism’s Five Ws: who, what, when, where, why. Similarly, political campaigns are now built as stories, with different sequences. Christian Salmon (2008) calls this “storytelling”. When thinking about entertainment, one cannot miss thinking of Disney’s empire of animated happiness, starting with *Snow White*. Former CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg (1991) wrote in a famous internal memo that: “[b]ut, given this, there are still some overall guidelines of key importance in telling a good story. Most important of these is the need to create one or more central characters who confront something elemental about themselves by the end of the film. This sounds much more cerebral than it is. All this means is that there should be a sympathetic protagonist who goes through some transforming experience with which the audience can relate. This applies to the whole enormous and extraordinary range of film experience. Name any truly successful movie and you will find that this is the case.” (p. 15). This, to a certain extent, reflects the thoughts on the hero’s journey put forth by Joseph Campbell (1949), an inspiration to numerous screenwriters.

by it. In the second half of the chapter, I discuss how this relates to power. However, since this stream of research typically analyses one specific text (in the broad sense) and its reception by an audience, it is less central to this project.²⁹⁸

Entertainment can be viewed through the lens of cultural studies, considering how its content reflects social relations. It can also be viewed through the lens of economics, which I discuss now.

3.1.2.4. *Entertainment in economics: business models and industrial organisation*

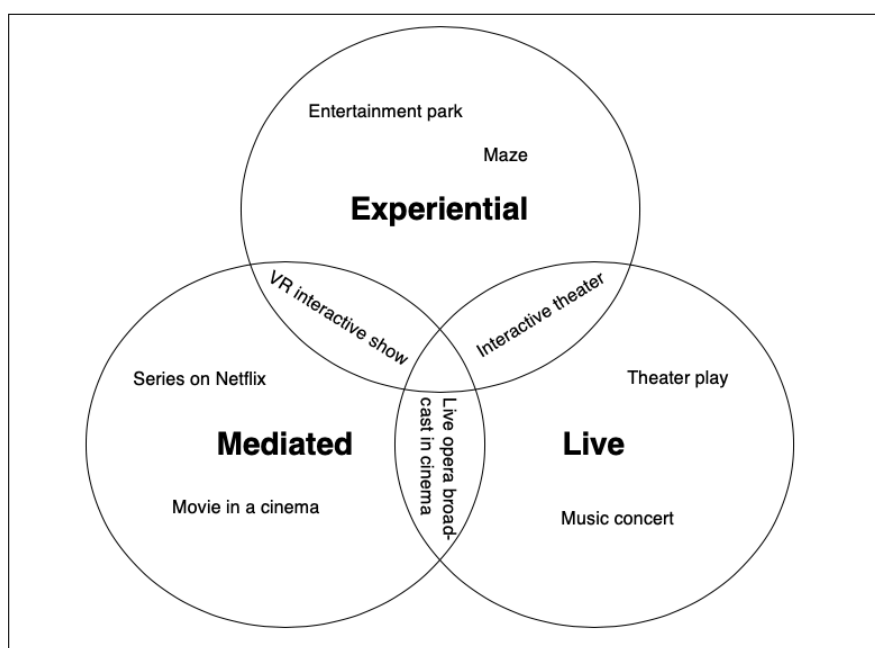
The second stream of research on entertainment focuses on the organisations that produce the entertainment content, and on the industry dynamics. This stream typically builds on economics. It works on the assumption that entertainment is a fixed set of content types, independently of its reception. In other words, using an economic approach, entertainment is anything that can be sold as such, with the stated aim of entertaining; these products are in turn produced by industries coined entertainment industries. Vogel (2014) provides a framework for financial analysis of this industry, defining entertainment as “that which produces a pleasurable and satisfying experience” (p. 4) and provided by firms in industry segments, or “enterprises or organizations of significant size that have similar technological structures of production and that produce or supply goods, services, or sources of income that are largely substitutable” (p. XVIII). Typical of the economics approach to entertainment, he does not address audiences nor content, while hinting at the desired psychological effect, but focusing on the industry.²⁹⁹ Rather, he divides the entertainment industry in media-dependent entertainment (movies, music, broadcasting, cable, publishing, toys & games) and live entertainment (gaming & wagering, sports, performing arts & culture, amusement parks). Andersson and Andersson (2006), likewise, use a definition based on the business models of entertainment industries to define it.

An industry-based approach to entertainment typically divides entertainment business-models into three categories, as represented in the following figure: mediated; live; experiential. These categories are not mutually exclusive: a virtual reality show is both mediated and experiential.

²⁹⁸ The underlying logic is in line with the media policy of programme autonomy, although some programmes are considered as examples.

²⁹⁹ An industrial approach can also be centered on the workers. Yet little research has been conducted on the workers in entertainment industries, as opposed to media professionals in general or journalists specifically (Collis, 2017); von Rimscha and Siegert (2011) study the self-definition and understanding of entertainment professionals.

Figure 6: Three forms of entertainment industries



This stream of research is the most frequently used by policymakers, as it is considered more objective. Section 3.1.3, thus, expands on this notion, with a focus on the categorisation used by official statistics.

In this research on public service media, the focus is naturally on mediated entertainment. However, an industry approach to entertainment serves as a reminder that there are other forms of entertainment, beyond that carried by media; furthermore, technological developments transform the barriers of entertainment industries, notably through VR and the porous barrier between viewer, player, and producer. Thus, public service media must be understood as fitting within the context of the broader intervention of the state in the entertainment industries, through funding, regulating, and enforcement.

Entertainment is also the subject of research in psychology, which is hinted at in the purpose of the industry from an economics approach. I now turn to this third stream of research about the experience of entertainment.

3.1.2.5. *Entertainment in psychology: causes and effects on an individual level*

The third stream of definitions of entertainment come from the field of psychology. There are two broad categories of definitions in psychology: descriptive and prescriptive.³⁰⁰ Overall, the discipline has seen an evolution from a hedonistic view of entertainment to increasingly complex models. This stream of research explores why

³⁰⁰ Regarding prescriptive psychology, I discuss in particular positive psychology.

people choose to spend their time consuming entertainment content, and what impact it has during the consumption and afterwards.

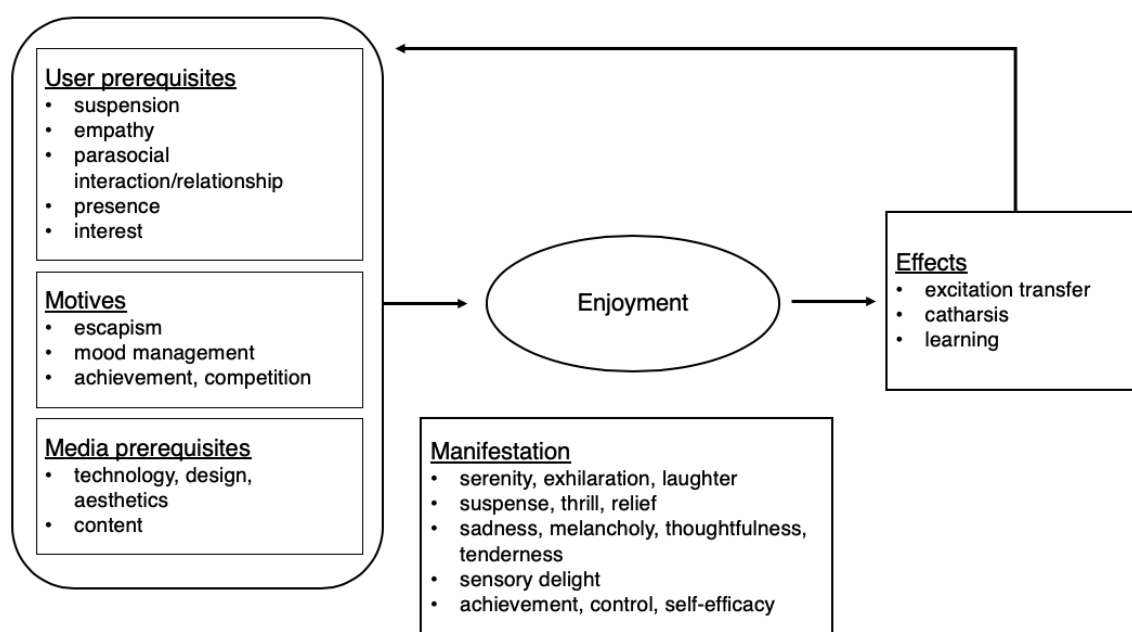
Psychologists provide different rationales for entertainment, be it generating emotions for mood management (e.g. Zillmann & Bryant, 1994) or responding to intrinsic needs (e.g. Ryan & Deci, 2000). The benefit of entertainment content is that it “stimulates, encourages, or otherwise generates a condition of pleasurable diversion” (Vogel, 2014, p. XVII). For Bosshart and Macconi (1998, p. 3-4), entertainment is essentially a reception phenomenon, which has the following effects on the viewer: psychological relaxation; change and diversion; stimulation; fun; atmosphere; joy. They distinguish the impact of this pleasure on three subsystems (p. 5): the physical system, the psychological system (personality, emotions), and the social system (sociality). A pure focus on immediate pleasure is an incomplete description of entertainment, as entertainment can contain unpleasant experiences, such as suspense.³⁰¹ As Vorderer and Reinecke (2015) show, scholarly definitions have been evolving from a purely hedonistic, pleasure-driven view, to more complex models: indeed, it is difficult to argue that watching sad content provides pleasure. Some scholars try to solve this contradiction with the notion of delayed pleasure, as in waiting for a happy ending (e.g. Zillmann, 2006); this still implies a hedonic model.

In terms of individual reception, Zillmann (2006) enunciates an “Affective Disposition Theory”, according to which viewers approve or disapprove of a character’s behaviour based on moral criteria; this theory focuses on the emotional engagement and response of media users to the story. In another model, Vorderer, Klimmt and Ritterfeld (2004) argues that entertainment potentially produces five emotions in the viewer: exhilaration; suspense; melancholy; sensory delight; achievement.³⁰² The enjoyment of the experience, motivated by escapism, mood management or competition, leads to the following effects: excitation transfer, catharsis, and/or learning. Their model for the complexity of the entertainment experience builds on many aspects of psychological theory for entertainment while showing its multidimensionality; specifically, it considers user prerequisites, motives, media prerequisites, manifestation of enjoyment and effects (see the following figure). This multidimensional model is an inspiration to represent the full entertainment experience from a psychological standpoint later in this section. It highlights the central experience of enjoyment and its manifestations, and contextualises it considering user and media prerequisites, motives and effects.

³⁰¹ This may remind the reader of Aristotle’s notion of “catharsis”, the purification or purgation of emotions through tragedy or comedy.

³⁰² Within media studies, cognitive film theory draws on psychological research.

Figure 7: The complexity of the entertainment experience



From Vorderer, Klimmt and Ritterfeld, 2004, p. 393

Psychological research in entertainment appears to have undergone a shift from hedonistic models to complex models recognising the “eudaimonia” in entertainment. When focusing on the reasons that drive people to seek out and consume entertainment, research shows a second factor beyond hedonic motives, or mood management, namely the search for growth or meaning, intrinsic need satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Oliver and Raney (2011) “argue that people consume media entertainment in the pursuit of pleasure and amusement (hedonic motivations) *and* as a part of their general need to search for and ponder life’s meaning, truths, and purposes – motivations that we characterize as ‘eudaimonic’” (p. 985), in line with the philosophical writings of Aristotle who separated two forms of happiness: *hedonic* and *eudaimonic*, the latter consisting of personal development and self-realization. The two-factor model combines hedonic and eudaimonic, or the notion of happiness, or welfare, or even “truth seeking” (Oliver & Raney, 2011, p. 984), a development which Vorderer and Reinecke (2015) call a “shift from mood to meaning” (p. 449). Thus, psychological research on entertainment has seen a shift from a hedonic focus on amusement to a more complex approach that includes eudaimonic motives, centred around welfare and meaning.

In discussing television entertainment, Bosshart (1979) describes its three functions as compensation, gratification, and self-realisation; as Vorderer writes (2001): “[w]hile entertainment as compensation takes place in the more dissatisfying, ‘negative’ areas of one’s life, entertainment as gratification is located in the more central, ‘neutral’ area,

and self-realization can be found wherever the individual seeks fulfilment and complete exploitation of the possibilities of being a human being” (p. 257). However, keeping in mind that entertainment is essentially about reception, it is difficult to generalise one specific content as necessarily contributing to self-realisation. This brings us to a more prescriptive form of research, that found in positive psychology.

Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, founding fathers of positive psychology, argue that their discipline, psychology, focused on reducing pains, and rather should attempt to increase happiness, as should technology, entertainment and design.³⁰³ They write that “[t]he exclusive focus on pathology that has dominated so much of our discipline results in a model of the human being lacking the positive features that make life worth living” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5), which can be linked to the functions of compensation, gratification and self-realisation introduced by Vorderer (2001).

To increase happiness, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) propose addressing three pillars: positive subjective emotions;³⁰⁴ positive individual traits;³⁰⁵ and positive institutions: on the latter, they write: “[a]t the group level, it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic” (p. 5). PSM typically could be understood and conceptualised as positive institutions. Seligman (2004) theorises three forms of a happy life: the pleasant life; the good life (which has engagement, flow in the sense of *eudaimonic*), and the meaningful life (knowing one’s strengths and using them to a greater purpose). Csikszentmihalyi (1975) introduces the concept of flow experience in which there is a “centering of attention on a limited stimulus field” (p. 40) with the “merging of action and awareness” (p. 38) and in effect, a “complete involvement of the actor with his activity” (p. 36), a concept that was used later on by Meyersohn (1978) and McLean, Hurd, and Rogers (2005) applied to entertainment or leisure. In an attention economy, the ultimate luxury may be flow, or at least attention, as Enzensberger argues.³⁰⁶

³⁰³ In fact, the notion of positive psychology has inspired other disciplines. Journalism saw the creation of a group working on “constructive journalism”, an interdisciplinary take on journalism using methods from positive psychology. See McIntyre and Gyldensted (2017), as well as Ulrik Haagerup (2017), former executive director of news at DR.

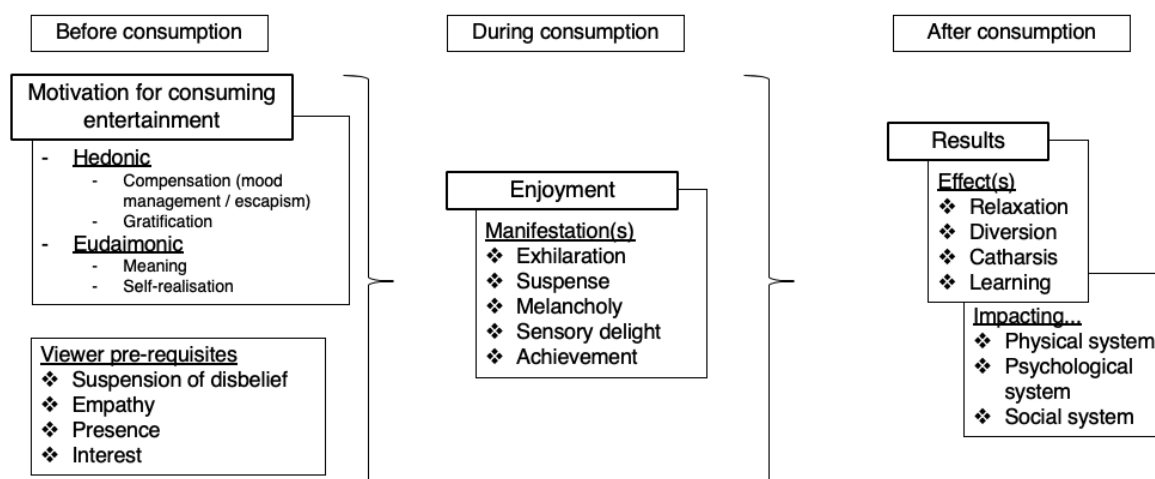
³⁰⁴ Positive subjective emotions relate to “well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past) ; hope and optimism (for the future) ; and flow and happiness (in the present)” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5).

³⁰⁵ Positive individual traits relate to “the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5).

³⁰⁶ As discussed in chapter two.

By joining the descriptive and prescriptive approaches to entertainment in psychology, I propose in the following figure a model of the experience of entertainment.³⁰⁷ Centered around enjoyment in the consumption phase, it describes the motives for consumption as well as the results.

Figure 8: The entertainment experience



Based on Bosshart and Macconi (1998), Vorderer (2001), Vorderer, Klimmt and Ritterfeld (2004)

The entertainment model, viewed from a psychological perspective, includes three periods: before, during and after consumption. Prior to the consumption, two points are relevant: viewer pre-requisites, and the motivation for consuming entertainment. There are two key drivers for wanting to consume entertainment: hedonic, and eudaimonic. In regard to viewer prerequisites, suspension of disbelief, empathy, presence and interest combine attention and posture. The entertainment experience itself generates enjoyment, manifested as exhilaration, suspense, melancholy, sensory delight or achievement; these are not all manifestations that one would consider positive from a hedonic perspective, thus highlighting the complexity of the entertainment experience. Following the entertainment, several effects can be generated: relaxation, diversion, catharsis or learning. This in turn impact positively one or more of the following systems: individual psychological or physiological, or the social system. A prescriptive approach suggests fostering positive emotions, impacting the psychological system, and positive individual traits within society, impacting the social system; I discuss this later in this chapter. Furthermore, this model should be considered in relation to the three levels of an ecology of attention; there is a specific quality of joint attention, namely watching entertainment with others.

³⁰⁷ As I discuss later in the chapter, the prescriptive dimension is a useful conceptual tool to develop the concept of public service entertainment.

One added value of this psychological model is that it is independent of the technological developments, or rather shows explicitly the motivations for consuming entertainment and the effects, both individual and societal, that ensue. It shows that entertainment can be pursued for both hedonic and eudaimonic motives, and that they may not be mutually exclusive.

3.1.2.6. Intermediate conclusion

Rather than a separate category, entertainment can be understood as a quality, as a characteristic of a programme, when one considers the psychological analysis of entertainment. Entertainment provides enjoyment, but it can be sought for different reasons and have a variety of effects impacting three systems: the physical system, the psychological system, and the social system. The industrial approach, on the other hand, requires a programmes-based approach. I thus use a dual approach to entertainment, combining a reception characteristic approach from psychology with a content-based approach from economics.

In this section, I addressed three streams of academic research that, combined, allow us to have a coherent view of entertainment. This combination, however, makes a duality apparent: entertainment is both an industry, a category of programmes that are labelled as entertaining; and it is the reception by an audience, as a group or as an individual, of specific content that this audience finds entertaining. In discussing public service entertainment, this dual aspect of entertainment will be addressed, while also asking what makes certain entertainment programmes fit in a public service mandate. Furthermore, individual programmes may reflect and shape how society views their topic.³⁰⁸

Beyond public service media, policymakers act on culture and entertainment. I now turn to discuss the incomplete view of entertainment used for policymaking.

3.1.3. An incomplete definition for policymaking

From a cultural or political standpoint, entertainment is not sufficiently clearly defined for policymaking purposes; the lack of interest of policymakers for entertainment as such reflects the limited interest of the scientific community and the moralisation of entertainment. A major issue put forth by Collis (2017) is the lack of consensus in policymaking on a definition of entertainment, particularly as opposed to art, for cultural policy objectives. Indeed, “there must be a strong theoretical basis for any definition used for public policy purposes, not least because this has important consequences

³⁰⁸ For a discussion of specific formats, see the case of Switzerland in chapter four.

for how we measure these industries and the type of intervention we adopt” (Galloway & Dunlop, 2007, p. 17). This is particularly important as public service media regulation is eminently policymaking, and the lack of clear definitions leads some to question the legitimacy of what some view as essentially an intervention in the market.

This lack of definition is a problem for PSM: since the introduction of competition in broadcasting, the production and broadcasting of entertainment content have been a regular angle of attack against PSM with the argument that such content can be provided by market players without public sector intervention.³⁰⁹ A case in point is a study of the BBC’s development between 1974 and 1987, in which Seaton (2015) describes how the 1980s saw the rise to prominence of the argument that the BBC “ought only to make the ‘quality’ programmes that the market did not support, those that commercial broadcasting organisations had to be dragooned by regulation into giving the public” (p. 232); this could aptly describe the situation in many countries today. Seaton presents the underlying commercial and political issue in the following manner: “[l]imiting the BBC to the lofty, and reducing its capacity to entertain everyone, would have left the ITV companies cheerily to do what they did best, providing great swathes of fun to the largest possible audiences. It would have been the end of the BBC, as the universality of the licence fee would have become hard to defend. Equally destructively, it would have ripped out the duty to relate to the whole British public in all of their moods” (2015, p. 232). These themes are recurring when considering entertainment and public service media. Particularly at a time when entertainment is difficult to isolate, attacking PSM for providing content labelled as entertainment means restricting its action field massively, making the topic of this research project all the more relevant.³¹⁰

The three streams of research on entertainment mirror the three most common arguments for public service media in general. The cultural studies research on audiences and texts reflects the argument for shaping a common national culture, and the risk that foreign media, commercial media or politically oriented media may represent. The research on economics reflects the argument for supporting a domestic media broadcasting industry, and in particular the national film and television industries. The research on psychology can be recognised in arguments around the

³⁰⁹ See the discussion of this point in chapter four.

³¹⁰ Beyond this specific example of one moment in time, the development of the notion of entertainment in public service media over time is discussed in chapter four. This chapter of the thesis includes the progressive extension of PSM to a range of entertainment categories, focusing on the case of Switzerland’s SSR SRG.

protection of the psyche of citizens or the development of specific virtues, and in particular in specific audiences such as children.³¹¹

Some equate entertainment to popular culture, as opposed to high culture, with an aim at downgrading entertainment as unworthy of scholarly research, or indeed of policymaking. Symptomatically, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN agency responsible for culture, does not provide any work on or definition of entertainment.³¹² This absence of the concept of entertainment in multilateral cultural policy is not reflected in trade policy: the original *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)*, signed in 1947 and which later led to the creation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), addresses the cultural economic sector of cinema, excluding it de facto from this multilateral free trade agreement.³¹³ This may suggest that, for the multilateral arena, entertainment is only an economic sector to be considered from a trade policy perspective rather than a cultural policy one.³¹⁴ However, trade policy arguments on cultural goods and services are typically justified through cultural policy objectives,³¹⁵ without entertainment being explicitly defined in the context of cultural policy. Thus, entertainment is not clearly defined within the multilateral system, other than as an exception to trade agreements relating to film. It is not defined as a part of culture within the UNESCO framework, which does not help to define it or relate it to culture; and thus, is absent from multilateral policymaking. Beyond the multilateral level, many countries have defined dedicated schemes to support creative industries, including the film and television industries; chapter four reviews the case of Switzerland in this regard.

Nonetheless, the lack of clearly established definition of entertainment for policymakers is an issue for civil servants aiming at fostering cultural industries in general, and those supervising public service media in particular. First, I address the opposition of arts and entertainment, arguing that the perceived opposition in their underlying view of audiences is misguided. Second, I discuss how entertainment is

³¹¹ Klein (2011) refers to “entertainment-education” as particularly used in developing countries and children programmes, in both cases due to limited media options. The term describes “media content that has the explicit goal of educating the public about social issues” (p. 906).

³¹² The only apparent programme UNESCO appears to be involved in referring to entertainment aims at educating on AIDS through a radio soap opera.

³¹³ Its article IV is entitled “Special Provisions relating to the Cinematograph Films”. The GATT had 38 articles, highlighting the importance recognised to the audiovisual sector after World War II.

³¹⁴ In fact, concerns around the links between entertainment and culture in policymaking are real. This is most visible in trade policy around cultural mass media products such as films, and in particular in the fear of Canadian and French policymakers of seeing their culture diluted by US-American film imports. This fear is the main justification for the *exception culturelle*, the policy that excludes cultural goods from international trade agreements under WTO law.

³¹⁵ For more on the *exception culturelle* within global trade negotiations, see Gournay (2002).

addressed in statistics as an indirect way of understanding how policymakers conceive entertainment.

3.1.3.1. *Arts versus entertainment: a discussion on a false dichotomy*

From a policymaking perspective, there is a perceived dichotomy between art and entertainment, or between creativity and commerce. In particular, the two are typically viewed as essentially different in their relation to their audience. I discuss this issue on the level of audience orientation and of organisational structure, reflecting both economic and psychological effect. The following table presents the two extremes on this spectrum, or the dichotomy that I argue is an ideal that is overdone for policymaking.

Table 9: Arts and entertainment dichotomy

	Arts	Entertainment
Aim	Meaning	Pleasure
Audience orientation	Audience development	Audience research
Deficit	Audience understanding of content	Audience understanding by producers
Proposition	Change audience to suit product	Change product to suit audience
Focus on	Artist	Audience
Worker as a	Dreamer / visionary	Entrepreneur / visionary

When considering arts, the policy since the 1990s has been one of audience development, as opposed to the entertainment industry's audience research orientation. Policymakers regularly consider art, but not entertainment, as worthy of support.³¹⁶ When opposing arts and entertainment, it is considered that the arts focus on the artist, while entertainment focuses on the audience (Harrington, 2017). This perception is damaging, as arts and entertainment are both oriented towards their audience, yet with different approaches: for Christy Collis (2017), shaping products to fit audience tastes is one form of audience orientation.

The approach to audiences adopted by arts organisations is that of “audience development”; this strategy is used by public-funded arts organisations, which they progressively adopted in the early 1990s to face reduced funding (Collis, 2017). Specifically, Nobuko Kawashima (2006) describes four types of audience

³¹⁶ This reminds us of the tradition of disdain for entertainment as popular culture in the 19th century. The distinction between art and entertainment goes back to the 19th century at least. In America, entertainment novels had tremendous circulation (for example dime novels). Neal Gabler (2000) argues that “cultural aristocrats sneered, the new popular entertainment was primarily about fun. It was about gratification rather than edification, indulgence rather than transcendence, reaction rather than contemplation, escape from moral instruction rather than submission to it”. (p. 16).

development: extended marketing, taste cultivation, audience education, and outreach. Marketing addresses latent audiences. Taste cultivation and audience education aim at developing existing audiences to “broaden their cultural scope (the former) or to enrich their arts experience (the latter)” (p. 57). Lastly, outreach aims at making art available in places and to audiences that do not normally have access to this content.

The double aim of audience development (convincing existing audiences to spend more and attracting new audiences) are closely related to the marketing of a commercial entertainment organisation, with one distinction: the aim is to shape the audience rather than simply attract it; reflecting the specific properties of cultural goods, one would refer to this as giving the audience what they did not know that they wanted. Yet “[a]rts development proposes changing audiences to suit the product; entertainment proposes changing the product to suit audiences” (Collis, 2017, p. 18); in other words, it can be described as a different deficit: arts has a deficit in its audience, for example in cultural capital, while entertainment has a deficit in understanding its audiences, requiring market research.

How does this relate to public service media? PSM have from the start pursued audience development. Yet PSM appear to have a deficit in audience research, which they are attempting to mitigate by creating audience insights and data teams. Audience development suits the aims of a PSM pursuing citizenship while opening questions in terms of universalism: one could argue that the Danish public media DR’s “double storytelling”³¹⁷ applied to fiction as described by Redvall (2013) does both audience research and audience development, by adding a “public service layer” to the entertaining, gripping story (p. 68). Indeed, while the archetypes of art and entertainment have different audience orientations, public service entertainment can build on a combination of audience research and audience development. The art versus entertainment is a continuous spectrum rather than a dichotomy. Entertainment that pursues audience development may be worthy of support by policymakers, including content commonly referred to as popular, mainstream or prime-time.

Beyond the relation to the audience, it is often argued that the organisation of an artist and an entertainer are fundamentally different, the latter being an entrepreneur, the former a dreamer; I argue that this opposition is exaggerated. Whatever their view of audiences, both operate within given constraints, including economic and technological constraints. In this logic, Bourdieu (2001) describes Beethoven as an artist-entrepreneur, creating with full knowledge of the opportunities and constraints of

³¹⁷ The term coined by Eva Novrup Redvall (2013, p. 68) when describing “‘a good story’ but also a story with ethical or social connotations”.

both technology and economics for his creative work.³¹⁸ Bourdieu stresses that Beethoven was creating in a period during which the economics of music were changing, as broke aristocrats could not fund court musicians anymore, unemployed musicians became music teachers and schools appeared. Thus, responding to economic constraints is not a specificity that defines entertainment as such. Subsidies for cultural industries, a form of economic incentives, are central to cultural policies. Pierre-Michel Menger (2003) argues that the development of the artist's role and work in society is a prototype of the future worker: "[f]ar from the romantic, contesting or subversive representations of the artist, we should now look at the creator as an exemplary figure of the new worker, a figure through which can be read such decisive transformations as the fragmentation of the wage landscape, the rise of autonomous professionals, the amplitude and dynamics of contemporary inequalities, the measurement and evaluation of skills or the individualisation of employment relationships" (p. 8);³¹⁹ his essay was published before the creation of today's dominant social networks and the rise of the gig economy. Thus, artists are aware of their technological and economic constraints and respond to incentives such as subsidies.

Therefore, the dichotomy of art versus entertainment is an opposition that is not sufficiently robust for policymaking given technological and financial constraints, and therefore should be discarded.³²⁰ The two archetypes are relevant when considering the discourse around entertainment in PSM. It does, however, show the commonality of the two sectors and the value in supporting them, depending on a set of criteria. Both respond to evolving technological conditions and economic incentives; both can aim for audience development.

Operating an economic activity means it can be measured – as it is, by the state. I now turn to discuss entertainment in public statistics.

³¹⁸ He argues that artistic transformations happen when there are changes in demand, audiences and offer. In that sense, Beethoven gained an advantage in the field as a reconfiguration allowed his works to be played, particularly due to the emergence of concert halls and new instruments.

³¹⁹ Translated from the original French : "Loin des représentations romantiques, contestataires ou subversives de l'artiste, il faudrait désormais regarder le créateur comme une figure exemplaire du nouveau travailleur, figure à travers laquelle se lisent des transformations aussi décisives que la fragmentation du continent salarial, la poussée des professionnels autonomes, l'amplitude et les ressorts des inégalités contemporaines, la mesure et l'évaluation des compétences ou encore l'individualisation des relations d'emploi".

³²⁰ Furthermore, this distinction is not relevant in practice, in the perceived divide between the commercial sector and the public or subsidised sector. The arts and the knowledge industry overall are in fact largely subsidised or indirectly supported. For instance, a large film production gets funding, tax credits, and other incentives. Meanwhile, subsidised organisations seek additional funding and aim for financial self-sufficiency in the context of reduced public funding.

3.1.3.2. *Entertainment in public statistics*

Within the economy and society, one key early role of the state was to provide statistics, or, put otherwise, a widely accepted view of the situation (regarding population, education, or industry for example) at a given date and on a regular basis.³²¹ This politically sensitive work requires clear, precise definitions, not least because official statistics are often used to measure the performances of public actors against their objectives using indicators provided by public statistics, but also for defining further policymaking. While an indirect approach, it is thus useful to consider how entertainment is described in official statistics. This considers all entertainment industries and not only mediated entertainment.

In the Eurostat Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community, Rev 2 (2008),³²² a reference for European countries, entertainment as defined as an industry in the previous section fits in two categories: arts, entertainment and recreation; and information and communication. As an explicit category, entertainment fits in the section introduced in the following table.

Table 10: Eurostat categories regarding entertainment

R: Arts, Entertainment and Recreation ³²³
90: Creative, arts and entertainment activities
91: Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities
92: Gambling and betting activities
93: Sports activities and amusement and recreation activities

Radio and television broadcasting, including motion pictures, are placed in another section, “J: Information and communication”, which is detailed in the following table.

³²¹ In the era of big data and real-time data flows, the role of a state in providing statistics is evolving; open data portals are a first step in this direction.

³²² The full system is retrievable at:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/nomenclatures/index.cfm?TargetUrl=LST_NOM_DTL&StrNom=NACE_REV2&StrLanguageCode=EN&IntPcKey=&StrLayoutCode=HIERARCHIC

³²³ Incidentally, it is the last category of economic activity before the “other” category, an implicit normative judgment on the value of this industry.

Table 11: Eurostat categories regarding information and communication

J: Information and communication
58: Publishing activities
59: Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities
60: Programming and broadcasting activities
61: Telecommunications
62: Computer programming, consultancy and related activities
63: Information service activities

This classification aims at obtaining economic activity data, and thus does not reflect a policymaking view on entertainment; however, it does give a sense of how it is considered.³²⁴ This categorisation shows the relative economic importance of mediated entertainment, as well as entertainment's link to knowledge and culture. Policymakers do not have a clear definition of entertainment in a multilateral context, nor for public service purposes, beyond the industrial categories created for the purpose of generating statistics on economic sectors; and there is a lack of clear categorisation of entertainment categories in public service media. This makes it harder to justify and explain any intervention in this field. It also makes attacks easier and more effective.

Intermediate conclusion

For this research, I have now discussed three academic approaches to understanding the concept of entertainment: cultural studies, economics, and psychology. While cultural studies typically focus on specific programmes, the economics approach

³²⁴ Specifically, the category “creative, arts and entertainment activities” refers to “performing arts”; “support activities to performing arts”; “artistic creation”; “operation of arts facilities”; yet, in the explanations of the category classification, it becomes clear that the administration expects the untrained reader to consider motion pictures, video production and distribution as well as radio and television broadcasting to belong to entertainment. As it is generally understood to be included in entertainment, Eurostat must explain explicitly that motion pictures fit in another category. In the explanations, Eurostat details this division as follows: “This item includes:

This division includes the operation of facilities and provision of services to meet the cultural and entertainment interests of their customers. This includes the production and promotion of, and participation in, live performances, events or exhibits intended for public viewing; the provision of artistic, creative or technical skills for the production of artistic products and live performances.

This item excludes: This division excludes:

- the operation of museums of all kinds, botanical and zoological gardens; the preservation of historical sites; and nature reserves activities, see division 91
- gambling and betting activities, see division 92
- sports and amusement and recreation activities, see division 93. Some units that provide cultural, entertainment or recreational facilities and services are classified in other divisions, such as:
- motion picture and video production and distribution, see 59.11, 59.12, 59.13
- motion picture projection, see 59.14
- radio and television broadcasting, see 60.1, 60.2”.

addresses the industries producing entertainment, while psychology provides models of the entertainment experience, centred on enjoyment. The classical opposition of art and entertainment is of limited relevance, as both respond to changes in technological conditions and economic incentives. Furthermore, they may join in a public service media context in their view of the audience: both audience research and audience development. Yet, policymakers cannot rely on a solid, multilateral definition of entertainment, which is not conceptualised in multilateral cultural policy.

I did not so far ask: what is the opposite of entertainment? Brecht argued it was boredom. Reed Hastings, the CEO of Netflix, one contemporary empire of entertainment, argued that the firm's greatest competitor was... sleep – the kingdom of dreams.³²⁵ All waking hours may now be entertainment, reflecting the importance of an attention ecology analysis.³²⁶

In an attention economy, many forms of communication have taken elements characteristic of entertainment formats; this is clear in the gamification being brought in most user interfaces to keep users engaged. However, to argue that all is entertainment equals saying that nothing is. The logic of entertainment has expanded. The key notion of entertainment is a focus on audiences, but to what end? If a commercial firm aims at capturing attention using entertainment to sell its audience's attention to advertisers, what do PSM aim for in providing entertainment? I now turn to introduce the concept of public service entertainment.

3.2. Bringing it all together: public service entertainment

After defining entertainment and considering both the production and reception perspectives on entertainment, how can this be matched with a public service mandate? I turn to defining public service entertainment, a subset of the broader entertainment category, and more specifically mediated public service entertainment. It is essential to consider public service entertainment within the framework of an ecology of attention approach,³²⁷ yet to define it with timeless values and characteristics, independently of the channel or technology it is delivered through. Furthermore, public service entertainment may be delivered by organisations other than a public service media; in fact, libraries and other knowledge organisations certainly use entertainment to deliver their public service; likewise, private providers may also fulfil a public service mandate. In this sense, public service entertainment

³²⁵ In fact, literature has provided some examples of how political dreams can be. In the *Palace of Dreams*, Albanian author Ismail Kadare (2008) tells the story of an administration tasked with collecting and interpreting the dreams of the citizens to determine the destiny of the Empire – a novel that is an interesting read in the era of big data.

³²⁶ Discussed in section 3.2.

³²⁷ Discussed in chapter two.

may be broader than public service media delivering entertainment; indeed, it fits within the knowledge sector.³²⁸

Before proposing a definition and a framework of public service entertainment, I conceptualise the audience as a citizen and the types of programmes typically included as entertainment. To think about entertainment as providing pleasure as well as learning, consider T.S. Eliot's expression of the meaning of poetry. For him, the main use of poetry is "to satisfy one habit of the reader, to keep his mind diverted and quiet, while the poem does its work upon him: much as the imaginary burglar is always provided with a bit of nice meat for the house-dog" (Eliot, 1986, p. 144). Likewise, in viewing the consumer of entertainment both as an enjoyer and as a citizen, so too entertainment can contribute to more than pure, instantaneous enjoyment. As an example of this view, consider the 15 dogmas of Danish PSM DR to guide their fiction productions. In particular, dogma number 2, "DR's public service status demands that our productions contain – besides 'the good story' – an overall plot with ethical/social themes. In other words, we must always have a dual narrative. The weight of each of these two narratives to one another will always depend on society's historical-cultural discourse" (quoted in Redvall, 2013, p. 69). This is the duality between audience research and audience development in audience orientation; public service media effectively do both simultaneously.

Beyond the impact entertainment has on individuals, it has always been an instrument of power within society. I now turn to discuss three views of entertainment and power.

3.2.1. Entertainment and power: a short primer

Since time immemorial, mankind has sought out stories to communicate, share its understanding of the world, find meaning and build futures. Stories have also always been a political instrument, to determine who belongs and who does not, and eventually to shape collective imaginations and social constructions. Arguably, "the deliberate application of the techniques of theater to politics, religion, education, literature, commerce, warfare, crime, *everything*, has converted them into branches of show business, where the overriding objective is getting and satisfying an audience" (Gabler, 2000, p. 5).

While some denounce current politics as entertainment, I argue the opposite: entertainment itself is, in fact, political. The role of entertainment in the public sphere

³²⁸ School also fits in this scheme. Public schooling trains citizens and economic actors, in both roles and not one or the other. Public schooling is funded by general taxes, independently of whether the taxed person has children or not. This builds on the idea that one benefits from having co-citizens who are informed and reasonable, and a public sphere that allows people to develop a shared vision of the future, as does public service media.

has long been understood by the policymakers of the time, rulers and philosophers, to be an important one, while at the same time being starkly criticized. The current discussion around mass media entertainment must be understood within a tradition of criticism of entertainment, and of the use of entertainment as an instrument of power:³²⁹ “[i]t appears that the influence of Greco-Roman morality, Hebraic-Christian concepts of sin, Catholic and Protestant asceticism, Puritan dogma, secular royalism, and ideological Marxism either singly or in combination serve as foundation stones for the strength and diversity of the attack upon mass media entertainment” (Mendelsohn, 1966, p. 31).

Entertainment programmes shape values and culture.³³⁰ Fully aware of this fact, and even when the public sector is not providing entertainment programmes directly through a public service broadcaster, governments have determined guidelines to frame the values carried by such programmes, or the industry has self-regulated;³³¹ this is true in times of war as in times of peace, as well as in nations that have powerful PSM and in those that rely mostly on commercial broadcasters.³³² In a democracy, decision-making is conducted by the citizen, although the modalities depend on the national context and include a variable degree of power delegation to elected representatives.³³³ With this in mind, how does entertainment relate to power?

I find three main views of entertainment as an instrument of power and politics throughout history: 1) entertainment for social control; 2) entertainment as a social selection mechanism; 3) entertainment to educate the people and to create a nation. I briefly address each of these views, from the implicitly most critical of entertainment to the least.³³⁴

³²⁹ Entertainment, and particularly the film industry, also is an instrument of power in geopolitics. It is representative of a nation's soft power, a concept introduced by Joseph Nye (2004), which means to co-opt, to attract, as opposed to the coercion implied by hard power.

³³⁰ Just as there is no such thing as “the market” (child labour is prohibited) there is no such thing as free content markets. Therefore, any entertainment content is the object of some form of selection and censorship.

³³¹ One such example is the *Motion Picture Production Code* in the United States. These guidelines adopted by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), in use between 1934 and 1968, are also known as the *Hays Code*.

³³² Schools are an apt comparison, in which the public sector determines what content is taught. Indeed, schools pursue the double aim of educating citizens able to contribute to the public discourse, vote and conduct a fulfilling life, as well as training future workers for the economy. School training is provided mainly to children and the young. Mass media on the other hand, and in particular entertainment, is addressed, to nearly all segments of the population.

³³³ Digital technologies make it technically possible to do away with elected representatives in the form of a parliament, with citizens deciding directly on each issue via a digital platform. This stream of thinking is called “liquid democracy”. It is worth underlining here that the challenge with such a vision is cultural and procedural rather than technical, although security challenges would certainly be important.

³³⁴ Some of these views, in turn, are also used as arguments against or in favour of public service media overall; as instruments of power and social control, or of education for the people.

3.2.1.1. *Entertainment for social control*

The most critical view of entertainment as it relates to power within society is the argument of the use of entertainment for social control: entertainment as a form of an opium of the people, a role played previously by religion in Karl Marx's reasoning. Social control to defend the status quo with a culture industry responding to clear incentives, as argued by the Frankfurt School, or social control as a by-product of keeping people busy and numb.

In what would become a key theoretical contribution of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (2016) argue that since it is an industry, culture is commodified by its industrialisation, perhaps introducing the concept of culture industry.³³⁵ It is useful to consider their position in some detail, because "Adorno and Horkheimer provide the fullest and most intelligent version of the extreme, pessimistic view of the industrialisation of culture" (Hesmondhalgh, 2013, p. 25), a view that is still common in critics of popular culture and entertainment.

In their logic, the interest of the culture industry is to maximise revenue and ensure the stability of society as it is, as they write in a book chapter entitled *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*, published in 1944.³³⁶ In a nod to the notion of escapism, Adorno and Horkheimer (2016) argue that entertainment plays a role in maintaining the system and ensuring the compliance of the masses, or their contentment with their situation: "[a]musement under late capitalism is the prolongation of work. It is sought after as an escape from the mechanized work process, and to recruit strength in order to be able to cope with it again. But at the same time mechanization has such power over a man's leisure and happiness, and so profoundly determines the manufacture of amusement goods, that his experiences are inevitably after-images of the work process itself" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2016, p. 137); "[p]leasure promotes the resignation which it ought to help to forget" (p. 142). In this view, entertainment serves the purpose of social control: "[i]n so far as cartoons do any more than accustom the senses to the new tempo, they hammer into every brain the old lesson that continuous friction, the breaking down of all individual resistance, is the condition of life in this society. Donald Duck in the cartoons and the unfortunate in real life get their thrashing so that the audience can learn to take their own punishment" (p.

³³⁵ As David Hesmondhalgh (2013) points out, "[c]ulture Industry' was a concept intended to shock" (p. 24).

³³⁶ This was a time "when the end of the Nazi terror was within sight" (p. IX). It was a time of state monopoly in broadcasting, during which "[t]he need which might resist central control has already been suppressed by the control of the individual consciousness" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2016, p. 121). Broadcasting technology allows to make culture standardised and broadly available; yet "[n]o mention is made of the fact that the basis on which technology acquires power over society is the power of those whose economic hold over society is greatest" (p. 121).

138).³³⁷ This entertainment is offered to specific segments, and “[e]verybody must behave (as if spontaneously) in accordance with his previously determined and indexed level, and choose the category of mass product turned out for his type” (p. 123).³³⁸ While one may have the impression of a large choice of culture products, this choice is only an illusion, according to the authors.

This view of entertainment is relevant as a point of criticism of the culture industry in its role as “irrefutable prophet of the prevailing order” (p. 147), and a reminder of the challenge to offer entertainment that goes beyond this. In this view of entertainment though, the culture industry is not malevolent *per se*. Rather, it responds to incentives of its own: “[t]he consumer becomes the ideology of the pleasure industry, whose institutions he cannot escape” (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2016, p. 158). Furthermore, they stress that, already in 1944, “the culture industry remains the entertainment business” (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2016, p. 136). Indeed, the culture industry is structured in such a manner that “any trace of spontaneity from the public in official broadcasting is controlled and absorbed by talent scouts, studio competitions and official programs of every kind selected by professionals” (p. 122). Likewise, “[i]t is still possible to make one’s way in entertainment, if one is not too obstinate about one’s own concerns, and proves appropriately pliable” (p. 132). It was a time of limited supply; their analysis ought to be understood within its context, namely that of the use of propaganda by the parties at war. However, the authors’ argument goes beyond this, stressing how audiences get used to specific contents and continue to request the same, through the use of clichés that make content more easily digestible for all. Arguably, the same argument could be made today, potentially strengthened by the Internet, of which memes are an illustration.

They provide an argument on new technology and perception that is recurrent: “[t]he whole world is made to pass through the filter of the culture industry” (p. 126), as technological development and in particular sound in the movies mean that “[r]eal life

³³⁷ Referring to Aristotle, Adorno and Horkheimer (2016) address both tragedy and comedy. While tragedy carried by the culture industry, has a new, absurd function, as it is “reduced to the threat to destroy anyone who does not cooperate, whereas its paradoxical significance once lay in a hopeless resistance to mythic destiny” (p. 152), or tragedy as an instrument of social control. In turn, laughter is viewed merely as an outlet for an individual’s fears: “[t]here is laughter because there is nothing to laugh at. Laughter, whether conciliatory or terrible, always occurs when some fear passes. It indicates liberation either from physical danger or from the grip of logic. Conciliatory laughter is heard as the echo of an escape from the grip of power; the wrong kind overcomes fear by capitulating to the forces which are to be feared” (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2016, p. 140).

³³⁸ “Today the culture industry has taken over the civilizing inheritance of the entrepreneurial and frontier democracy-whose appreciation of intellectual deviations was never very finely attuned. All are free to dance and enjoy themselves, just as they have been free, since the historical neutralization of religion to join any of the innumerable sects. But freedom to choose an ideology-since ideology always reflects economic coercion-everywhere proves to the freedom to choose what is always the same” (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2016, pp. 166-167).

is becoming indistinguishable from the movies” (p. 126). In this view of entertainment, movies are a filter for perception, thus using movies to reinforce social control.

Applied to the paternalist institutions that were early public service media, this view can be reflected in an observation by the director-general of the BBC, Charles Curran, in 1971, namely that the BBC “is a creation of the Establishment, and it depends on the assent of the Establishment for its continuance in being” (quoted in Mills, 2016, p.4, albeit not focussing on the issue of entertainment and specific to the British case).

Beyond the Frankfurt School view, one can consider entertainment in a parallel to organised religion. While Marx argued that religion was the opium for the people with a numbing effect, it could be argued that, in the 21st century, entertainment is the opium for the people. When considering the history of the state and entertainment, some draw links between contemporary entertainment and organised religion. Arguably, entertainment industries share many features of organised religion. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the church was used as an instrument for nation-building in several European countries. Some have argued that the attention required by entertainment content shares some commonality with the rituals around structured religions and the church. Tim Wu (2016) argues that the rituals of attention-seeking are in line with those of religion, the millennia old form of ritual. Progressively funded by a dedicated tax and donations, organised religion had “antennas”, called churches and temples throughout the country, broadcasting one message regularly. Furthermore, since the progressive separation of state and church,³³⁹ organised religion and public service media share a financing model whereby they are independent of the government, contribute to opinion-making, and get public funding.³⁴⁰ Can we thus view organised religion as an earlier form of public service entertainment? In a somewhat lighter version of the social control mechanism, Rome’s Juvenal argued that the entertainment forms of the Roman period, the circus, and bread,³⁴¹ ensured that the people were kept distracted and satisfied.

The Frankfurt School is illustrative of the view of entertainment and cultural industries as an instrument for social control. Some have denounced PSM as working to defend the established order, such as Tom Mills (2016) who analysed the history of the BBC in this light, with a focus on its domestic journalistic reporting. This type of argument is reemerging in the context of automation and the debate around the future of work, asking how the masses of potentially unemployed will use their time. As a nod to this

³³⁹ Arguably there is some degree of permeability, depending on the national context, between church and state. Politics and religion use each other to address issues and to campaign.

³⁴⁰ The exact details of this arrangement depend on the national context.

³⁴¹ *Panem et circenses* (bread and circuses), according to the phrase attributed to Juvenal.

chapter's introduction, one is reminded of the image of overweight humans floating around in chairs and consuming entertainment in Pixar's *Wall-e*.

3.2.1.2. *Entertainment as a social selection mechanism*

Entertainment has been argued to be an instrument for social selection. This specific view typically takes one of two colours: Bourdieu's cultural capital and the social selection it implies; and Gabler's argument that by downgrading entertainment as opposed to high culture, it is a construction reflecting an underlying class warfare.

First, Pierre Bourdieu introduces the notion of cultural capital; I discussed his field theory in chapter two. In general, Bourdieu's sociology describes social inequality as a division in classes based not solely on financial wealth, but also on both cultural capital and social relations (Franck, 2000); the three forms of capital are namely economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. Cultural capital exists in three forms (Franck, 2000): in an internalised form, such as education and behaviours; in an objectified form, such as cultural goods; in an institutionalised form, such as titles and positions. Cultural capital is the result of an investment of time, which leads to any future time investment providing a higher return in terms of consideration. Indeed time, which is limited, is the currency of cultural capital, which leads to respect. Thus, through the cultural capital one accumulates, one accesses social status. Entertainment is one aspect of this cultural capital; watching long drama series and being familiar with their plot may be a sign of having the time to spend on watching a season and gaining cultural capital.

The second view of entertainment as an instrument of social selection is implicit in the elitist distinction between culture and entertainment viewed as separate worlds: "[p]rior to the arrival of mass-produced entertainment, American culture, like European culture, had been the special preserve of the wealthy, the educated, the refined – this country's own aristocrats" (Gabler, 2000, p. 15); it was about more than fun, as art "redirected one's vision from the sensual to the intellectual, from the temporal to the eternal, from the corporeal to the spiritual, all of which made art a matter not only of aesthetics but of morality as well because its effect was to encourage one's better self" (p. 15). On the other hand, those cultural elitists argued that entertainment was essentially about fun and did not require any effort to appreciate it: "[a]rt enlisted the senses, but it enlisted them in the service of the mind or soul; it was hard work rewarded by divine experience. By contrast, to the extent entertainment enlisted the mind at all, it was only in the service of the senses and emotions; it was passive response rewarded by fun" (Gabler, 2000, p. 16). A key differentiator in this view is the effect it has on an

audience, both as a text and as a psychological effect. An additional perceived difference between art and entertainment, is that art is addressed to a person, while entertainment is addressed to people, as a generic mass; in the context of the rise of mass media, this is a reflection on power within society. In that sense, cultural elites of the 19th and 20th century perceived mass, popular culture as something to be wary of; the discourse of cultural elites on theatre or sensational novels in the 19th century is echoed today in reviews of big-budget Hollywood productions. Yet, the real cause for the strong reaction to the emergence in the 19th century of large-scale entertainment through mass media, argues Gabler (2000, p. 21), was that “entertainment was less about morality or even aesthetics than about power-the power to replace the old cultural order with a new one, the power to replace the sublime with fun”.³⁴² Put in other terms, if culture is a shadow show on the wall of a cave, the fight is for the power to design what is shown. Although there is now a discussion around personalisation and the long tail, collective and joint attention mean that those who decide what is paid attention to, largely control social selection.

The third view is the use of entertainment not for social control or social selection, but for education and nation-building.

3.2.1.3. Entertainment to educate people and create a nation

In the third type of link between entertainment and power, this argument reflects the paternalistic fundament of public service media. Even though over the past two decades there has been a shift in the justification for public service media, moving over to economic development of the domestic film and television industries (D’Arma, 2018), the notion remains of educating people and creating an imagined community through entertainment.

This view predates the idea of the nation in its modern understanding. It appeared with city-states in ancient Greece. In *The Republic*, Plato had Socrates describe the Philosopher King’s City, Kallipolis, in which poetry is censored and poets expelled. In this ideal city, the state can mandate poetry, and there is no privacy; in the text: “[f]or we mean to employ for our souls’ health the rougher and severer poet or story-teller, who will imitate the style of the virtuous only, and will follow those models which we prescribed at first when we began the education of our soldiers.” (Plato, 2000, p. 69). In Antiquity, the power of crafting stories to share values and cultural traditions across

³⁴² I address this previously in discussing implications for policymaking of the debate around art versus entertainment.

generations was fully understood.³⁴³ In ancient Greece, mythmakers played an important role in the model-city, and one can link the original discourse around PSM to this stream of the role of poetry in society. Public service media's creation is typically anchored in this third stream of reasoning around entertainment and power, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter and has been addressed in chapters one and two.³⁴⁴

There are thus three main views on how entertainment and power interact: entertainment for social control, entertainment for social selection, or entertainment for education and nation-building.

3.2.2. General considerations: why *public service entertainment*?

The entertainment mission of the public service mandate has regularly been addressed by PSM senior managers. Huw Weldon, a former managing director of BBC TV, is quoted as arguing that “[m]aking the good popular and the popular good has been a core purpose of the BBC since its foundation.” As early as 1959, the director of France’s television programs, Jean d’Arcy, building on Lord Reith’s triad “inform, educate and entertain”, put a spin on it: “I deeply believe in the unity of goals that radio and television internationally have set for themselves. Our goals are [...] to entertain, inform, educate. I believe that it would be a mistake to have programmes of pure entertainment, dry information programs, and overly pedagogical instructional programmes. On the contrary, I believe that the good program is the one that falls between these three categories, the programme that is both distraction and information, instruction and distraction [...]. I believe that we should not aim at a pure entertainment programme at all, and that the separation that we tend to make between information and entertainment is ultimately a bad thing” (quoted in Cohen, 2019, p. 223).³⁴⁵ The view that it is important to mix two of the three missions in a programme is exemplified in the highlight of broadcast television: the evening news, which contains elements from the most earnest to lighter local entertaining news, to the extent that it contains archetypes of these views in one show. Yet the thought is more profound: one programme can be all three. It also shows that attacking one specific type of

³⁴³ For Régis Debray (1991), this is the concept of transmission.

³⁴⁴ The public sphere argument discussed in chapter two fits in this stream.

³⁴⁵ Translated from the original French: “Je crois profondément à l’unité des buts qu’internationalement la radio et la télévision se sont fixés. Nos buts sont [...] distraire, informer, instruire. Je crois que ce serait une erreur d’avoir des programmes de distraction pure, des programmes d’information sèche, et des programmes d’instruction trop pédagogiques. Je crois au contraire que le programme bon est celui qui se joue entre ces trois catégories, c’est le programme à la fois de distraction et d’information, d’instruction et de distraction [...]. Je crois qu’il ne faut pas du tout viser à un programme de distraction pure, et que la séparation qu’on a un petit peu trop tendance à faire entre information et spectacle est finalement une mauvaise chose”.

content as being entertaining and therefore inadequate for public service media is an attack that appears insufficient. Entertainment cannot be entirely isolated in public service media.

Furthermore, mediated public service entertainment is one of several forms of public service entertainment. PSM are only one of the providers of entertainment that fulfils a public service. This distinction is made difficult because of the confusion around the notion of public service and of the organisation (PSM) that provides it. Indeed, a circus or a theatre may also deliver a public service in bringing the community together for a shared show and experience, yet they are not considered as such in public discourse; whereas the public service of the PSM is identified with the organisation as a whole. From a public policy standpoint, this means that entertainment is not only in media. This is relevant to keep in mind when considering that entertainment in other forms is typically subsidised, including in theatre and contemporary dance, the opera, sport stadiums or entertainment parks and circuses that sometimes get access to prime locations at a subsidised rate. One could even argue that this medium specificity of mediated public service entertainment is of the past, as new technologies increasingly lead to a convergence of portals and experiential and live entertainment, in particular when one considers the potential of virtual or augmented reality.

Identifying that entertainment for public service goes beyond PSM raises the question of how far public intervention ought to go. Mariana Mazzucato (2018) argues for mission-oriented organisations and a state whose role goes beyond a focus on taxation, redistribution and regulation.³⁴⁶ In line with her thinking regarding research and innovation to fuel economic growth in Europe, I argue that PSM can be framed as mission-oriented organisations; while their overall mission is formulated in their mandate, the approach of clear, targeted missions fulfilled by a portfolio of projects can be applied to PSM. This framing allows us to move beyond a defence of PSM to the formulation of a bold mission to gather around.

The range of activities in entertainment, beyond media, is a reminder of the importance of repositioning the PSM debate within a broader frame, that of knowledge.³⁴⁷ I now turn to the specificities of entertainment in public service media, both as categories of programmes and as a view of the audience. I then present a model of public service entertainment. Viewing an audience as citizens is a complement to the consumer and

³⁴⁶ She argues for five criteria for selecting missions: Bold, inspirational with wide societal relevance; a clear direction: targeted, measurable and time-bound; ambitious but realistic research & innovation actions; cross-disciplinary, cross-sectorial and cross-actor innovation; multiple, bottom-up solutions (pp. 14-15). Some of these criteria may appear naturally applicable to PSM, including the societal relevance, and clear measurement.

³⁴⁷ As discussed in chapter two, this also fits within the broader debate around the sustainability of media.

the enjoyer; I introduce three dimensions to the citizen, who is the target audience of public service media.

3.2.3. The audience as citizens: the three roles model

Entertainment is not solely one type of programme, but rather a reaction in the audience member that makes him or her seek it out. Public service aims at viewing the spectator as a citizen as well as any other given function, be it consumer or enjoyer. This citizen function must always be served in one way or another by the PSM, fitting with its citizenship mandate. I thus propose a model of the citizen, a way of defining what a citizen is in the context of entertainment.

Public service media mandates typically include three core dimensions: citizenship, universalism, and quality, of which citizenship is the basis (Born & Prosser, 2001). In chapter two, three views of the audience were discussed: the viewer as a citizen, a consumer, and an enjoyer. While the enjoyer focuses on pleasure and hence entertainment, there is a common opposition between how one views and addresses the citizen and the consumer. Considering public service entertainment raises the question: are we citizens when we seek out entertainment? In which cases can the viewer of entertainment be considered a citizen? And as a PSM, how does one address the viewer as a citizen? I turn to define the viewer as a citizen, as the mandate of a PSM is to focus on citizen welfare rather than consumer welfare. While in a strict understanding, a citizen is a member of a political, sovereign territorial state, I argue for a broader understanding in the context of this research. Indeed, many viewers of public service media would not be included in this restrictive definition: in fact, many who contribute financially through licence fees are not citizens in a strict definition, as some residents do not have citizenship.

For this research, I propose to consider the citizen on three levels, all comprising positive externalities, and hence worthy of public intervention. The citizen is thus the addressee of public service media. These three levels are the citizen as a co-decider, a contributor and an individual. The co-decider is a citizen in the sense that the person contributes to the decisions of the political community, through votes and elections. The contributor participates in the community, financially through taxes, and/or through time by getting involved in the local social life. The individual is a person who strives for meaning or happiness. While the individual focuses on survival and happiness, the contributor and the co-decider focus on a notion of responsibility to a group and a society.

Table 12: Three-levels model of the citizen

	Co-decider	Contributor	Individual
Reference unit / group	State	Local / family	Individual
Number	Citizens	Local communities / households	Population
Goal (ideal)	Freedom / peace / prosperity / solidarity	Peace / cohesion	Life evaluation, affect & eudaimonia / Independence & learning
Primary responsibility to	Nation / co-citizens	Community / family	Self
Type of learning	Existence and consistency	Existence and consistency / meaningful life	Subsistence / pleasant life
Type of capital	Symbolic capital	Social capital	Cultural capital
Type of attention	Collective attention	Joint attention	Individual attention
Positive result	Positive institutions	Positive individual traits	Positive subjective emotions

The previous table presents some dimensions of these three levels, building notably on the concepts of attention ecology and positive psychology (in particular Bourdieu, 1993; Citton, 2017; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Stiegler, 2005). Different types of programmes may address the viewer at one or several of these levels. In this table, the type of learning introduces the notion implicitly aimed for by a public service mandate.

The aim of this model is not to build a direct impact model showing, for instance, that there is a specific public health outcome; but rather that any programme can, overall, be argued to respond to one of these three views of the citizen. For example, the happy, empowered individual is a broad category that should reflect the capacity for learning and meaning. In turn, a programme that would not contribute to that would not suit a public service remit unless it contributes to political decision making or social cohesion. The responses to the criteria are multiple, to reflect a variety of underlying political postures, for instance in the responsibility to a nation or co-citizens.

Scholars have proposed other classifications of the citizen.³⁴⁸ For example, the idea of durability as a level in citizenship is put forth by Bernard Stiegler (2005). He presents

³⁴⁸ Taking a historic perspective on citizenship, Thomas Humphrey Marshall (2009) argues in a 1950 essay that citizenship in England evolved from a focus on civil rights in the 18th century to political rights in the 19th and social rights in the 20th. This suggests a shift from the right to survival to participate in political decision and finally participate in civilised life within society. Notably, this model, as other theoretical models of citizenship, were not fully realised for all, notably women and minorities.

three levels, or the range of action, between the bare subsistence or survival, existence as the affirmation of singularity of the individual, and consistency, which gives the individual a position in a collective that lasts beyond the individual's lifespan, taking into account future generations. The three levels of subsistence, existence and consistency thus show a gradation in their reference timeline, from the minute-to-minute survival to the every-lasting traces one leaves behind, the latter driving politicians and artists alike. I include this notion of long-term in the co-decider and the contributor. On the three levels of the citizen, and building on work by Stiegler (2005), entertainment may potentially foster the survival of the species or civilisation by including the role of current generations in their responsibility to future generations. This may not necessarily be political, as scientific consensus describes non-political findings. Furthermore, I include Stiegler's (2005) range of action as forms of learning aimed for: existence and consistency for the co-decider; existence and consistency for a meaningful life for the contributor; and subsistence for a pleasant life for the individual. Thus, the notion of durability may be included in both the co-decider and the contributor levels.

The balance between the three levels of a citizen may be culture-specific, concerning individualism versus community for instance.³⁴⁹ Yet the individual is the central point upon which the other two levels build, albeit they are interconnected and shape each other. Furthermore, addressing the individual ensures an integration function for future co-deciders. I turn to discuss the individual in more detail.

The citizen as an individual includes two broad ideas: practical knowledge for independence, and the pursuit of happiness or search for meaning. Practical knowledge includes learning or self-learning,³⁵⁰ and the craftsmanship one demonstrates in one's profession;³⁵¹ it is profoundly anchored in the vision of the Enlightenment for an empowered individual. On an individual level, the pursuit of happiness and search for meaning can be measured along three dimensions, as argued for by the OECD (2013) in its guidelines on measuring subjective well-being.

³⁴⁹ Geert Hofstede (1984) developed a framework to compare national cultures in the practice of cross-cultural management. Through a study of employee values at IBM, he originally proposed the four dimensions of individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance and masculinity-femininity. He later added long-term orientation.

³⁵⁰ Ivan Illich (1971) in his book *Deschooling Society* argues for a reform of institutionalised learning to be replaced by a web of learning. Others argue for a learning society, for instance, Joseph E. Stiglitz and Bruce Greenwald (2014).

³⁵¹ The sociologist Richard Sennett produces a criticism of the notion of elite expertise as opposed to the craftsmanship of employees throughout organisations confronted with quantitative targets from management. His book *The Craftsman* (Sennett, 2008) fits in a broader tradition arguing for a return to individualised labor, away from chain production (see for instance Vitaud, 2019). It also fits the narrative of the rise of the amateur (Flichy, 2010).

The three dimensions are life evaluation,³⁵² affect and eudaimonia. Life evaluation is “a reflective assessment on a person’s life or some specific aspect of it” (p. 10); affect is “a person’s feelings or emotional states, typically measured with reference to a particular point in time” (p. 10); eudaimonia is “a sense of meaning and purpose in life, or good psychological functioning” (p. 10). Responding to an increasing interest by policymakers for subjective well-being as an objective of policymaking, the OECD proposed a framework to measure it. The purpose of addressing an individual as a citizen is thus to empower him or her to lead a happy, independent life.

Addressing the three levels of a citizen is central to public schooling: the child is educated to be a citizen, a member of the workforce and community, and an independent and fulfilled individual, responsible for him- or herself. While schooling is typically legally mandatory, continuous training is not and is usually voluntary or based on fiscal incentives; it is based on voluntary consumption. Beyond schooling, consumption of entertainment content as a citizen is largely voluntary and it competes with numerous other forms of entertainment.

Given the context of undersupply of attention to the available content, I consider the different types of attention of an individual in relation to the responsibilities as a citizen.³⁵³ In a digital age, universalism means, in fact, audience centeredness. The mandate must be understood as such and obliges PSM to focus on reception studies and impact measurement, beyond a sheer broadcasting view.³⁵⁴ When considering the competition for attention, it is essential to view the individual as a citizen within a society and a small group: collective attention is important and influences individual attention.

Indeed, the three levels of the citizen must be considered as interconnected in the context of attention. Yves Citton (2017) argues in his book *The Ecology of Attention* for considering attention on three levels: collective attention (as a society), joint attention (as a small group), and individual attention (as an individual). This means that what we as a group, as a society, pay attention collectively to elements in our environment and society, which Citton (2017) calls the “principle of selective collectivization: attention simultaneously ensures a certain adaptation of our behaviour

³⁵² The question of the good life has also been addressed by scholars in a range of fields, including management scholar Clayton Christensen (2010) in his article *How will you measure your life?*.

³⁵³ Consider the issue of terrorism as an example. On the level of an individual, the immediate individual concern is that of survival in case of an attack. As a contributor, while this may be discussed, the awareness of development of individuals around oneself and potential signs of radicalisation may be the main attention point. On the level of a co-decider, the main focus will be to consider and tackle the root causes for these issues which include issues such as intelligence and security services but also education and integration with the aim of an economic and opportunity equality.

³⁵⁴ The argument Burri (2015) makes about diversity in exposure rather than diversity in production fits in this line of thinking.

to our environment (by selecting in it what interests us) and a certain collective composition of individual desires (by spontaneously aligning our sensibilities and our preferences with those of others)” (p. 34). Collective attention may be worthy of public intervention, in a context of technological evolution different to the early days of PSM. Indeed, technology is leading to a shift from broadcast to networks, a fundamental shift in communication systems, which Vilém Flüsser (2006) describes in 1974 as the radio system broadcasting from one single transmitter in one direction to a multiplicity of receptors to a network system, in which many participants are inter-connected and communication is bidirectional. The post and telephone are network systems, while the radio and press are radio systems. The Internet changes more than just the role of spectator to creator, it transforms the quality of attention: “[w]hen we pass from the analysis of collective attention, organized by the profoundly asymmetrical apparatuses characterizing the mass media, to joint attention whose model is the reciprocal conversation supported by the telephone or the post, we are therefore doing something very different to simply changing scale with respect to the number of participants involved. Most importantly, we are changing the structure of relations. Environments that are favourable to joint attention are characterized by the mode of interaction more than by their size.” (Citton, 2017, p. 86); this reflects a potential shift from a consumer to a citizen or at least lowering the barriers to participation.

The three levels of the citizen can be considered for all content, be it information, education or entertainment. They largely reflect the intentions of defenders of public service media, for instance Jérôme Bourdon (2011), whose analysis can be followed using the three levels of the citizen: “we do not mean here only [by public service] an enumeration of missions, but a cultural and political ambition linked to a group of professionals capable of defending and embodying it. The cultural ambition is that of transmitting to a population, which has no access to it by other means, a certain form of culture, a knowledge that enables it to access a form of emancipation and personal and collective fulfilment. Generally speaking, to transmit knowledge, but knowledge that has a function other than purely academic. This is why, understandably, cultural ambition cannot be dissociated from political ambition: the public service must also provide knowledge that enables people to take part in the democratic debate” (p. 224).³⁵⁵

³⁵⁵ Translated from the original French: “nous n’entendons pas ici seulement [par service public] une énumération de missions, mais une ambition à la fois culturelle et politique liée à un groupe de professionnels capables de la défendre et de l’incarner. L’ambition culturelle, c’est celle de transmettre à une population, qui n’y a pas accès par d’autres voies, une certaine forme de culture, un savoir qui lui permettent d’accéder à une forme d’émancipation et d’épanouissement personnelle et mais aussi collective. De façon générale, transmettre un savoir, mais un savoir qui occupe une fonction autre que purement scolaire. C’est en quoi, on le comprend, l’ambition culturelle n’est pas

To summarise, the audience can be addressed as citizens of one or more of three levels: as an individual pursuing eudaimonia and learning; as a contributor pursuing peace and cohesion and as a co-decider pursuing freedom, peace, prosperity or solidarity, depending on their political preferences.

3.2.4. Broadcasting entertainment: four categories of entertainment programmes

For historical reasons, as I will discuss in chapter four, public service media have broadcast entertainment programmes as specific categories. In the logic of combining reception studies, or the psychological take on entertainment, and specific programmes from a broadcast perspective, I propose a typology of entertainment programmes. Broadly speaking, entertainment is any programme or content that procures pleasure, as discussed in section 3.1; yet, from a production perspective, it is a set of programmes produced with this aim in mind. Entertainment contains both flow and catalogue type of programmes, reflecting two broad business models related to the timeliness of programmes.

In conceptualising Internet-distributed television, Amanda Lotz (2017) refers to the categorisation proposed by Bernard Miège (1989) for media production: “the publishing model, the flow model, and the written press model” (Lotz, 2017, p. 17). These models aim to analyse whole sectors of the media based on their internal logic. The publishing model is centred around the selection, distribution and reproduction of individual cultural goods, which covers the film industry, book publishing, and recording industry. Their shelf life is longer than in the flow model. The flow logic is one of continuous flow that is integrated into daily life: the schedule drives decisions, or in Lotz' words (2017, p. 19) Miège “argues flow industries primarily produce a *schedule* rather than particular creative goods”; it corresponds to broadcast radio and television. The written press model is close in the logic of a flow of content, although its product is not a schedule. This logic of flow versus catalogue, which Lotz (2017) derives from this analysis to theorise Netflix and Internet-distributed television, is useful in categorising entertainment content as well; although Miège's (1989) categorisation refers to the internal logic of media sectors, there is a relation shown by Lotz (2017) between the model and the type of content it favours. The impact on the importance of marketing and distribution for a single programme is key.

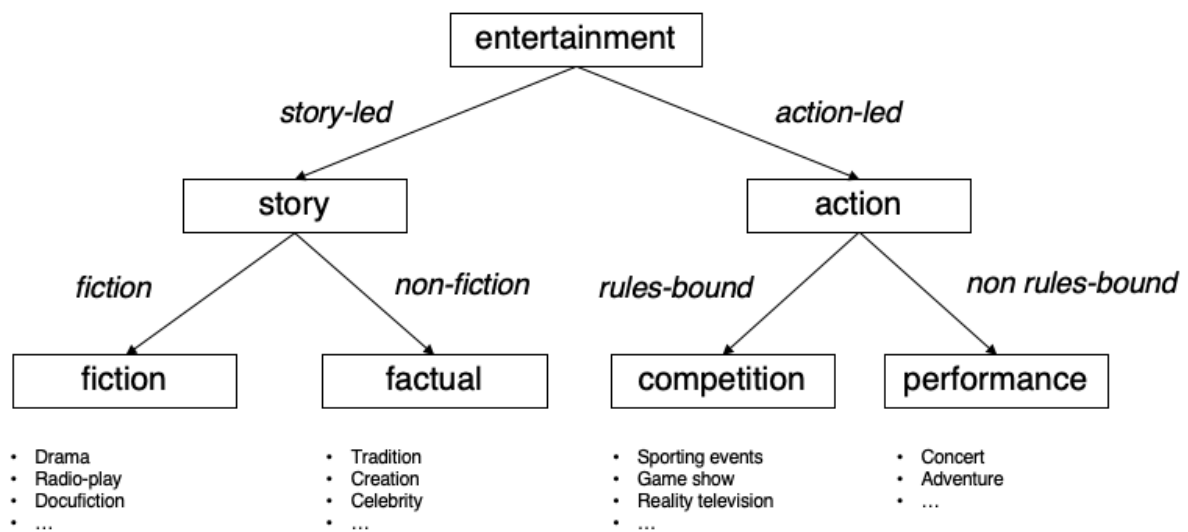
While I propose a typology of entertainment programmes, I must stress that any categorisation is a conceptualisation; as argued by Jason Mittell (2004) in regard to

dissociable de l'ambition politique : le service public doit aussi donner un savoir qui permet de prendre part au débat démocratique”.

genre: “television genre is best understood as a process of categorization that is not found within media texts, but operates across the cultural realms of media industries, audiences, policy, critics, and historical contexts” (p. XII).

The proposed typology is based on a set of conceptual criteria rather than reflecting the actual organisation of most public service media organisations.³⁵⁶ Those organigrams tend to reflect historic developments, managerial intentions, production processes, relative budgets, or target audiences.³⁵⁷ The typology of entertainment programme categories is presented in the following figure.

Figure 9: Typology of entertainment programme categories



This classification is independent of the channel through which the programme is broadcast. Thus, they can be consumed through radio, television, Internet or, indeed, virtual reality. For instance, the broadcast of a football game, whether through radio, Internet, television, always fits in the same category, as its content is action-led and rules-bound. The typology aims at being mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive.

The typology of entertainment content categories builds on four criteria that separate them and are useful to think about in a digital age. The four criteria are: rules-bound; scripted; timeliness; and interactivity. The first two are binary; the latter two are on an continuum. The categories of entertainment content and the criteria are represented in the following table.

³⁵⁶ An analysis of the organigram of PSM in entertainment is a study that goes beyond the scope of this project.

³⁵⁷ The hypothesis here is that each category can contain programmes for a specific audience, such as children or family. Those two audiences are sometimes found as departments within public service media. Other audience segments one could think of are not divisions anymore, for (perhaps) it would not be politically adequate. It appears that, reflecting broader shifts in management, matrixial organisational charts are prevalent at PSM.

Table 13: Criteria for categorising entertainment content

	Story		Action	
Category	Fiction	Factual	Competition	Performance
Scripted	Yes	Yes	No	No
Timeliness	Low	Medium	High	Medium
Interactivity	Social	Social	Yes	Yes
Rules-based (explicitly)	No	No	Yes	No
Position of the viewer	Spectator	Explorer	Supporter	Fan
Examples	Telefilm; radio-play	Tradition show; travel show	Sporting event; game show	Concert; adventure show

First, scripted: whether the content is filmed based on a pre-determined filming plan, or not. While the script of a television series may be adjusted and built during filming, it is scripted content. A factual programme is also typically scripted, while leaving space for surprises.³⁵⁸ About the script, the determining point is not whether the show is scripted, but whether it is perceived to be. There have been scandals in both sports and game shows in which it turns out the outcome was scripted. Following this logic, professional wrestling, a scripted form of combat, is a factual entertainment rather than a competition. In rules-bound programmes, the audience knows the rules, while in scripted content, the audience does not typically know the script; this in turn is reflected in the major interest in the story, or the action.

Second, timeliness: the extent to which consumption needs to be in real-time (high), at the same time as other viewers (medium), or at any time (low). Consumption at any time implies that the main consumption period is not during the original broadcast or availability on the podcast; its potential is as content in a back catalogue for later consumption, as opposed to mainly consumption in the flow. Timeliness relates to the capacity of a programme to build an active catalogue, and thus the potential for a re-run (no timeliness) or later viewing with a diminished enjoyment (timeliness). For instance, the consumption of sports programme for entertainment is linked to the event itself and viewed in real-time; viewing a Wimbledon 2005 tennis match will most likely not be linked to entertainment, but to leisure, for example in trying to improve one's

³⁵⁸ A feature's editor will typically ask, before commissioning the content: "What's the story?", "What's the pitch?" To this extent, the script is the equivalent for a story to the rules of a sport or game show.

technical tennis performance by studying the players' technique. High timeliness means that the programme is a flow content, as opposed to catalogue.³⁵⁹

Third, interactivity: the extent to which viewers may interact with the show. This is partly linked to the timeliness criteria but also goes beyond that. Interactivity is a technique increasingly used by broadcasters to capture an audience and mirrors the shift in the music industry from album sales to concerts as the main revenue stream of major artists, or from mediated content to live experience. A programme can be re-run while being accompanied by a publicity push on interactive social media or allowing the audience to interact with characters of the crew in some other manner, for example through a live Q&A with the crew (social), as is common for sitcoms. Typically, a reality TV show would allow the audience to vote out contestants based on events in the past week. A live audience also strengthens the interactivity for instance in a game show (social and live audience = yes).³⁶⁰

Fourth, rules-bound: the degree to which the programme responds to clearly defined rules. This comes with two additional, key points: the outcome is uncertain; there are winners and losers. Competitions respond to clearly defined rules and aim to bring the audience to support a party in the game, knowing that a team or player will win, others will lose, and it is not known from the start which is which. The respect of the rules is key, and any breach of rules, particularly if it is organised to make the content more spectacular, leads to a massive scandal. This happens periodically in professional sports with the phenomenon of doping. It also happens in game shows, with participants cheating or the producers rigging the game dynamics to create characters out of participants and to enhance the drama of the game.³⁶¹ The rules are linked to outcome uncertainty; one will watch a show because one understands the rules but does not know who will win. This is the key reason sports content are less viewed once one knows who won, which relates to our second criteria, timeliness.

These criteria help us understand why domestic competitors of public service media support or oppose specific types of content when competing for audiences and advertisers.

These categories of entertainment encompass a range of programme types, which must be continuously reinvented: "[t]he authors and editors, directors and presenters who professionally produce entertainment have the most difficult of all television jobs.

³⁵⁹ Netflix' initial strategy was to build an extensive catalogue, rather than flow content. Even sports-related content was built to be catalogue content, through documentaries for instance.

³⁶⁰ A soap opera filmed in front of an audience is a special case in story. Typically, a story is not filmed in front of an audience.

³⁶¹ Tim Wu (2016) describes how in the late 1950s, a series of fixing scandals of game shows including *Dotto*, *Twenty One* and *The \$64,000 Question* led to an investigation by the US Congress.

They must continue to develop a pioneering spirit. The entertainers are always sitting in front of a blank sheet of paper that has to be filled with new ideas.” (Felix, 2003, p. 153).³⁶² This fact is the ground for the rise of the formats industry.³⁶³ Technological development is one of several conditions evolving and compelling the entertainment industry to continuously reinvent itself.

What is the share of these categories in PSM? The relevant literature does not give a clear answer. Each PSM reports its categories differently, reflecting its organisational and legal mandate. Furthermore, many formats are included under the banner of entertainment in PSM. However, there is a lack of available information on the type of entertainment contents made available on public service media. While classifications exist regarding the development of the funding of public service television throughout Western Europe (see for instance Siune & Hultén, 1998), or regarding the percentage of acquired content at several European PSBs (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016), there is a lack of an overview of the categories of entertainment content and their source (acquired or produced) included in PSM’s programs as broadcasts.

To sum up, I propose four types of content that are conceived of as entertainment: fiction, factual, competition, and performance. They are either catalogue or flow content. These programme categories thus differ notably in their timeliness and the position of the viewer. Having conceptualised the audience as citizens and defined a typology of entertainment programmes, I turn to propose a model of mediated public service entertainment.

3.2.5. Proposing a mediated public service entertainment framework

This section turns to propose a definition for the concept of mediated public service entertainment, building on the previous considerations in this chapter. I then go on to introduce a framework that provides an overview of these concepts and propose a way to use the framework. Finally, I discuss some limitations of this conceptual framework.

3.2.5.1. Defining public service entertainment

What is public service entertainment? As any mediated public service mandate, it is based on the three key ideas of citizenship, universalism and quality. But what does that mean in the context of entertainment in particular?

³⁶² Translated from the original German: “Die Autoren und Redaktoren, Regisseure und Moderatoren, die professionell Unterhaltung produzieren, haben den schwierigsten aller TV-Jobs. Sie müssen weiterhin Pioniergeist entwickeln. Denn die Unterhalter sitzen immer wieder vor einem leeren Blatt Papier, das mit neuen Ideen gefüllt werden muss.” (Felix, 2003, p. 153).

³⁶³ On TV formats in trade, to get a sense of the industry size and practices, see Chalaby (2011).

Public service entertainment addresses a viewer as a citizen on at least one of three levels (co-decider, contributor, or individual) to provide him or her enjoyment with the purpose of reaching a positive impact on the individual physical system, psychological system or the collective social system.

This definition is composed of three key ideas. First, the addressee of public service entertainment is the citizen, specifically on at least one of the three levels (co-decider, contributor, or individual). Second, public service entertainment provides the citizen enjoyment, the centre of the psychological experience of entertainment. Third, this enjoyment should have a secondary positive effect on one or more of the individual physical or psychological system, or on the collective social system.

As a positive institution, public service media and in particular public service entertainment should thus foster positive subjective emotions and positive individual traits for the social system.³⁶⁴ The motivations driving the consumption of entertainment may be hedonic and/or eudaimonic. Public service entertainment does not *per se* explicitly exclude any hedonic motivations, as long as the positive impact exists after consumption on the physical, psychological or social system. Public service entertainment is thereby provided by positive institutions. This specific point may exclude organisations that pursue other goals than citizenship to offer public service entertainment and any support that may be linked to it. Positive institutions are not happy-go-lucky institutions, but rather organisations that foster values that are considered socially preferable, such as justice, civility, leadership, tolerance. It may however include organisations beyond the public service media organisation, such as libraries or museums.

Mediated public service entertainment is distinct from other forms of public service entertainment, for example theatre, because it is transferred by a media to the audience. It thus typically reaches a larger scale. This definition is anchored in the normative public sphere theory, whereby a society's political decisions and societal problems are met by collective discussion in social life.³⁶⁵ It aims to reduce the contrast or contradiction that has long existed in the "gap between professional and spectator

³⁶⁴ Both positive subjective emotions and positive individual traits are to be understood as defined by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) and previously discussed in the psychology research stream.

³⁶⁵ The concept of public service entertainment can be linked to the trend for constructive journalism, whereby journalists report on positive news primarily, and in a manner that attracts attention. This movement and academic field emerged as a response to click-bait and the competition for emotions-driving and negative coverage. Public service entertainment as defined above, however, does not necessarily mean only positive content. It must provide enjoyment during consumption, yet it may drive learning or catharsis through suspense, leading to a positive impact on the social system through raised awareness for instance.

culture” (Bourdon, 2011, p. 227).³⁶⁶ This gap refers to the mismatch between the professional practices, which perform a vision of public service, and the spectator view, which may not notice public service and composes a patchwork of programmes received from a range of media. This, in turn, implies that policymakers or scholars who defend public service media “must be able to state clearly that the ambition is justified even if these addressees are not necessarily aware of it” (Bourdon, 2011, p. 228).³⁶⁷ As such, this definition aims to allow the PSM to articulate its reasoning in its approach to its global offering as well as to a single programme.

3.2.5.2. *The mediated public service entertainment framework*

Beyond the conceptual definition, I introduce a framework that presents an overall view of mediated public service entertainment. The framework aims to serve as a checklist for a single piece of content, as well as for a portfolio with one specific audience in mind or the overall offering strategy.³⁶⁸ It articulates the five layers of a public service media,³⁶⁹ linked to the three normative principles of public service media. This matrix serves as a conceptual tool to describe the functions of public service media to define and fulfil its public service entertainment mandate.

Based on an extensive literature review, Born and Prosser (2001) identify the three key principles that ensure the normative basis for PSM. These are citizenship, universality and quality. While these remain to be operationalised in specific PSM contexts, these principles can be applied to each of the layers described below. The three principles can be specified as described in the following table, thus representing the framework for mediated public service entertainment.

³⁶⁶ Translated from the original French: “écart entre culture professionnelle et culture spectatorielle”.

³⁶⁷ Translated from the original French: “doit être capable d'affirmer clairement que l'ambition est justifiée même si ces destinataires n'en sont pas nécessairement conscients”.

³⁶⁸ There is a fundamental challenge in breaking down audiences into categories (youth, educated, etc.) when one could individualise based on criteria that may not be externally obvious (and one may increasingly be expected to do so); yet the PSM must arguably address the citizen in a transparent and accountable manner. This may limit the applicability of certain segmentation techniques. There are similar challenges in government, with the notional shift from the universal citizen to the individualised service. In France, the government is not allowed to use algorithms if it cannot explain the decision, de facto excluding the use of machine and deep learning. In PSM, its competitors use such technologies to improve the curation and personalisation, as well as the creation.

³⁶⁹ Building on work by Goodman and Chen (2010), discussed in chapter one.

Table 14: Framework for mediated public service entertainment

Principle	Citizenship			Universality		Quality	
Function	Co-decider	Contributor	Individual	Unity	Diversity	Audience development	Audience research
Meaning	Address the viewer as a participant in the decisions of the political community	Address the viewer as a participant in the community through taxes and/or time	Address the viewer as a person in search of meaning and learning	Contribute to creating an imagined community	Respond to specific audience needs, present and strengthen ties across diversity of audiences	Adapt audience to suit content	Adapt content to suit audience
Level of analysis	Single programme			Offering portfolio		Single programme & offering portfolio	

Each of these principles can be applied to every layer of public service media networks introduced by Goodman and Chen (2010), namely connection, creation, curation and infrastructure.³⁷⁰ I further divide the infrastructure layer into the hardware and the software, or the wires and the code, in a nod to Benkler (2000), to make explicit the separate importance of hardware and software choices. This also reflects the typical organisation of information systems departments, with separate teams handling software and hardware. I thus consider five layers of a networked public service media: connection, creation, curation, software, hardware.³⁷¹ The model is presented in the following table.

Table 15: Five layers of public service media networks

Connection	Engaging the public with public service media content across platforms
Curation	Identifying content & applications of particular value and supporting broad access to the public
Creation	Creating content & applications the market does not support
Software	Logical infrastructure used to transmit public service media content & applications
Hardware	Physical infrastructure used to transmit public service media content & applications

From Goodman and Chen (2010, p. 128) and Benkler (2000, p. 562)

³⁷⁰ This model is discussed in chapter one.

³⁷¹ In particular, all levels must not necessarily be delivered by the same player. For instance, private platforms could obtain a remit for public service curation, if they demonstrably contribute to reaching policy goals; or inversely, they could be subject to a tax or regulation to ensure they respect given criteria. This raises the issue of the common confusion related to the concept of public service, between the functions or layers and the public organisation PSM.

By combining the three principles and the five layers, I propose a framework for mediated public service entertainment.

A specific organisation can customise this model to fit its mandates and principles by adapting the questions it aims to answer both on a global offering level and on a single content level. The framework does not aim to provide final answers but rather to structure reasoning and questioning. I turn to discuss the three principles and the five layers in the framework.

The citizenship principle refers to how the PSM addresses its viewers as citizens. Previously I described the three roles of the citizen as co-decider, contributor and individual. In particular, the psychological model of entertainment, from an audience's perspective, feeds into the notion of citizenship and the three roles of the citizen, and in particular in the individual, which is the basis for both other levels.³⁷² Addressing the viewer as a citizen on an individual level means fostering positive subjective emotions (notably well-being, satisfaction, hope, happiness) and positive individual traits (notably capacity for love, courage, perseverance),³⁷³ which in turn impact the individual psychological and physical system. A happy, learning individual can then in turn contribute to his or her community as a contributor and to the nation as a co-decider.

The principles of universality and quality must be considered in particular in the context of the attention ecology, and hence in a highly competitive perspective, focusing on audience reception. The universality principle addresses a double imperative for PSM. On the one hand, the organisation derives its legitimacy from providing content for all its audiences in their diversity, be it geographical, demographic, socio-economic.³⁷⁴ Diversity is specifically measured along variety, balance and disparity.³⁷⁵ On the other hand, the PSM must articulate a sense of unity. This may imply branding tactics for connection in diversity while offering a sense of a public sphere, or a content that reaches across the diversity of audiences, as do some major sporting events. Entertainment is public-specific: what will be entertaining to some may bore others. In this sense, universalism does not mean one specific content for all and every content for all, but rather some for all. This can relate to market orientation and should be

³⁷² The search for meaning and learning thus are key to each level of the PSM relating to the individual.

³⁷³ Both positive subjective emotions and positive individual traits are drawn from Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) research on positive psychology.

³⁷⁴ The discourse around cultural diversity and data builds on a paradox. On the one hand, some argue that algorithms allow platforms to lock each of us into our bubble. On the other hand, data allows platforms or media to effectively measure consumption and ensure effective diversity in exposure rather than solely in broadcast (Durand, 2016).

³⁷⁵ These three concepts were discussed in chapter two.

linked to clear criteria on how to measure the meaning and happiness for that specific audience segment.

The five layers of PSM in a networked era build on the economics of media and entertainment. Software and hardware infrastructure choices are typically not related to one particular piece of content, but rather are common to all programmes. Thus, infrastructure is typically common to all content yet must satisfy the criteria of the three principles. Infrastructure is “by definition invisible, part of the background for other kinds of work” (Star, 1999, p. 380), yet it also “is sunk into and inside of other structures, social arrangements, and technologies” (p. 381). There is room for experimentation using specific content, as I discuss in chapter five on innovation at PSM, for which technological innovation is a major domain. Universalism in infrastructure means working on accessibility for people with disabilities; in the early days of PSB, it meant geographic reach.³⁷⁶

Connection, curation and creation, on the other hand, are linked to specific content and may vary from content to content, or from channel to channel, through separate branding and outreach strategies for instance. This is typically the case of public service radios that have a youth programme. In an ecology of attention, the layers of connection and curation are particularly important to give the created content a chance to attract attention.

Connection is the engagement by a public with public service content. It is intimately linked to the idea of universalism. For a PSM to legitimately exist, it must engage with all audiences and exist for them as their media. This requires an active connection, one of the greatest challenges for PSM. Branding is a key element of connection.³⁷⁷ In the early days of public service media, and until the end of its monopoly on national broadcasting, connection was an easy task. With increased competition for viewers’ attention, it means fitting in the spectator culture, or as Bourdon (2011) puts it, “it soon became impossible, after the time of the beginning and of the ambitious monopoly, to give expression to public service in this spectator culture” (p. 228);³⁷⁸ without a clear public service branding and identifiable values, the viewer does not make a distinction between public and private broadcasting in a zapped flow of similar content. The key challenge in connection is to establish a clear, public service link to every person in the

³⁷⁶ See chapter four.

³⁷⁷ For a discussion of the evolution of the role of branding in the context of a PSM’s commercial activities, see Catherine Johnson (2013).

³⁷⁸ Translated from the original French: “il est très vite devenu impossible, passé le temps du commencement et du monopole ambitieux, de donner une expression au service public dans cette culture spectatorielle”.

territory as a citizen. This challenge is compounded by the fact that the discourse around PSM is not an argument that attracts every person.³⁷⁹

Curation refers to the identification of both content and applications that have specific value to a given public or individual. In public service entertainment, curation typically is related to the media policy objective of diversity, and particularly of exposure diversity (Burri, 2015), which in turn builds on the functionalities of aggregation, search and social bookmarking (Miel & Faris, 2008). The Internet and algorithms have allowed the potential for increased individualisation in curation.³⁸⁰

Creation in public service entertainment can be viewed through two angles. First, its production: to what extent does the organisation work with the local entertainment and film industry, schools and civil society? Commissioning independent producers has been a preferred strategy of PSM since the late 1990s, to externalise part of the production and foster the emergence of a local television industry. Second, the issue of content. What messages does the programme carry? Having reviewed the five layers and the three principles, I turn to discuss how to use the framework.

3.2.5.3. *Using the framework*

This framework is conceptual by nature. Building on a definition of public service entertainment, its main use is as a conceptual tool. It has four main target audiences. First, policymakers, in order to structure the mandate for a given PSM in regard to public service entertainment.³⁸¹ Second, senior management at the PSM, with the purpose of refining their offering strategy in a coherent manner. Third, programming managers to select their portfolio and outreach strategy, as well as choices in regard to single programmes. Fourth, ombudsmen or viewer boards to evaluate the choices of senior management and programming managers in relation to the mandate, *ex post*. Each of these target audiences can use this framework to evaluate or conceive the offering both at the global level and for each single programme.

This framework may be used as a tool to conceive and to evaluate the public service entertainment offering on two levels. First, on the level of the global offering, from a viewer's perspective. Second, for a single programme. To ensure editorial freedom, evaluation of programmes is typically done *ex post* by an ombudsman or a viewer

³⁷⁹ See the discussion on paternalism in chapter two.

³⁸⁰ Individualised, or personalised, curation is a key sales argument of services such as Spotify and Netflix.

³⁸¹ The layers approach allows in particular to discuss the issue of unbundling aspects of PSM, or of federating across PSM, in particular on software and hardware. The discussion around hardware may echo policymakers' discussions around a European technology industrial policy and proposals to fund the development of a European operating system or funding for technology firms in deep tech.

board.³⁸² Thus, the PSM mandate typically includes a set of principles which PSM management is then free to implement, using a governance system to validate program choices *ex post*. Indeed, it should offer the opportunity to discuss whether a content fits in a public service entertainment mandate, while also ensuring programme autonomy. It can be used by a content board validating after the broadcast, or content availability, its suitability if contested by third parties. Such mechanisms of programme boards or ombudsmen exist in some countries, or combined with public value tests,³⁸³ and make sense as they offer citizens and competitors the chance to raise a question and to get an answer. The process, in turn, aims at enhancing legitimacy and trust, which both are essential in a digital age.

The dominant, necessary condition is that of citizenship. If a content does not address the viewer as a citizen on one of the three levels, it is not public service entertainment. Universality and quality are scales that allow to ensure a coherent overall offering. On those two principles, the analysis takes place in relation to the remaining offering.

In the separate function of infrastructure (both software and hardware), this model also allows identifying friction points on which a PSM loses its viewer; for instance, if the content does not load, which points to an issue on the software. PSM executives can use it to monitor their performances or flag issues.

In particular, the use of this view of the citizen is not to build a direct impact model showing that there is a change in behaviour related to a specific public health issue, for instance; but rather that any content can, overall, be argued to respond to one of these three views of the citizen. The third view, that of the happy, empowered individual, is a broad category that should reflect the capacity for learning. In turn, a content that would not contribute to realising one or several of these views of the citizen would not suit a public service remit unless it contributes to political decision making or social cohesion.³⁸⁴

To discuss one single piece of content, the three driving questions for each layer are:

- 1) Which citizen role(s) is this content addressing and how?
- 2) Which audience(s) is this content addressing and how does it fit in the existing portfolio for that audience(s)?
- 3) How is this quality content in its reach and what impact is expected?

³⁸² There may be a need to ensure the diversity of the board evaluating the content in case of a recourse. It cannot be only academic and professional experts from one demographic group. There must be a sufficient representativity of the population, in particular about the age group and educational background. Since this eventually plays back into the feedback loop on what content is allowed and what is not.

³⁸³ Public value tests typically take place *ex ante*, prior to the introduction of new digital services. See the discussion in chapter two.

³⁸⁴ There is evidently a degree of interpretation in the degree to which a single piece of content contributes to this. In specific contexts, some ombudsmen have developed criteria to determine what content is appropriate and suitable for a public service mandate.

This analysis can take place while defining the content, to make explicit hypotheses and to signal an intention. It may also take place *ex post*, based on observational data. Thus, I suggest using the model to formulate a hypothesis as to which citizen levels are addressed by these programmes and how. Ideally, the analysis is then completed by audience research to confirm the hypotheses, both quantitatively and qualitatively. To discuss an offering strategy, the three driving questions will be:

- 1) Does our overall offering address all citizen roles in an overall effective manner?
- 2) Do we have content for all audiences, both as part of a whole and as a specific audience?
- 3) Is our overall offering of good quality in both its reach and the impact we expect?

3.2.5.4. *Limits*

To be useful in practice, the model must allow its users to explicitly exclude specific contents as not being relevant for public service entertainment or to identify blind spots that are insufficiently covered to correspond to the universalist principle in terms of audiences or diversity. Eventually, the evaluation of whether one specific program does belong to public service entertainment or not depends on a collective decision-making process. The schedule or programme director should be able to consider that according to his or her analysis, the television programme at hand does address the citizen on one of these three levels; if he or she cannot define the addressee as a citizen, then that programme does not belong in the offering of the PSM. However, as a PSM and its offering must reflect the diversity of population in regard to a range of demographic criteria, including age, education, and economic status, it is important to ensure that the PSM reflects the diversity of society. This means in turn that what may be considered by one group of population as fitting within a public service mandate may not for another and vice versa. The governance system of a public service media should allow to reflect this diversity. Specifically, this means that addressing younger audiences also means involving younger audiences in the production of this content and in the governance and evaluation of whether the content fits within the mandate or not. This thesis explicitly formulates three roles of the audience as a citizen that the media can address. Proceeding in this way allows the PSM to reduce or mitigate the risk of the PSM acting in a paternalistic manner, referring here explicitly to the view or perception of dominant demographics defining what is appropriate content for the people.

A risk in the use of any criteria to produce programmes is to end up with bland content. In constructing an attempted European television, managers ended up with what

Channel 4's first director-general, Jeremy Isaacs, coined "Europudding", a bland mix built on a range of criteria (Bourdon, 2004). This model is best used to evaluate *ex post* a single content or *ex ante* to develop a global strategy. The development of content should, however, be granted programme freedom.

Furthermore, there may be some tension between different parts of the model, for instance, the tension between privacy expected by the citizen viewer and personalisation that may appear in the software layer for curation; the latter requires user data to be effective, which must be collected and treated in balance with the former. Showing these tensions allows PSM and policymakers to make informed decisions in that matter.

Conclusion

In their summary of a history of 5'000 years, Will and Ariel Durant (2010, p. 101) argue to "[c]onsider education not as the painful accumulation of facts and dates and reigns, nor merely the necessary preparation of the individual to earn his keep in the world, but as the transmission of our mental, moral, technical, and aesthetic heritage as fully as possible to as many as possible, for the enlargement of man's understanding, control, embellishment, and enjoyment of life". In line with this reasoning, I have discussed in this chapter how closely entertainment and power are linked, and how there is potential for further research in this field.

Entertainment, known in Antiquity as poetry, has long been understood as an instrument of power as well as an object of power struggles. While mechanisms of entertainment are visible in many fields including politics, information and religion, it also remains a field of its own. Entertainment was long under-studied and under-conceptualised, but there are three types of academic approaches to it: focusing on the text-audience relationship; focusing on the industries and business models; and focusing on the psychological effects on the audience member.

In defining entertainment for this thesis, there are two key ideas to keep in mind. The first, as we have seen from the psychology stream, is that entertainment is in particular about the reception by a segment of an audience, rather than certain identifiable features of the content itself;³⁸⁵ there are different effects of entertainment, from a psychological perspective, and I have proposed a way of viewing the effect that should be aimed for in a public service media mandate. At the same time, I also recognise from an economics or industrial perspective that certain types of content are *per se*

³⁸⁵ Arguably, this focus on reception is part of a broader trend, as marketing moves away from focus groups down to observing individual consumer behaviour, through interviews or aggregated through large-scale A/B testing online.

categorised as entertainment programmes. These are specifically fiction, factual, competition, and performance. These are produced by public service media to explicitly fulfil their entertainment mission. They are also required by organisational logics of budgets, scheduling, and staffing.³⁸⁶

Public service entertainment, whether mediated or not, addresses the viewer principally as a citizen, in one or more of his or her key roles as a co-decider, contributor or empowered individual. The individual seeks out meaning and learning. The empowered individual allows the citizen, in turn, to play his or her role as a contributor and a co-decider. Thus entertainment, the third in the Reithian triad, is an instrument to an end, supporting the citizens in their three roles.

A complete approach to public service entertainment that goes beyond the support to the domestic film and television industries does not stop at the content creation; in an attention economy the competition is such that connection and curation are arguably more important. These three layers of a networked public service media build on infrastructure, both software and hardware.

The specificity of public service media entertainment is that it should attract the audience to shape it and engage with it, in line with the approach to audience development to foster positive subjective emotions and positive individual traits. The audience can be drawn to content for two purposes: hedonic or eudaimonic; the search for short-term pleasure, escapism or meaning.

This chapter has introduced key concepts of public service entertainment. The model of public service entertainment builds on both the production of entertainment programmes and the reception in an entertainment experience. In particular, it is based on the principles of PSM and the five layers of a networked PSM to define principles that allow a coherent entertainment offering. This conceptual tool should contribute to the PSM being positioned as a positive institution, contributing to positive subjective emotions and positive individual traits with beneficial impacts on the social system.

In the next chapter, I turn to the evolution of entertainment in public service media as it has been practised in the evolution of technological, economic and regulatory conditions in the case of Switzerland.

³⁸⁶ Even though in news the tasks required of journalists increasingly include the ability to create mashups for social media or multi-media competencies.

Chapter 4: A brief history of entertainment in Swiss public service media: culture, technology and society

*La Suisse n'existe pas.*³⁸⁷ Ben Vautier

*Resistance to Television in Switzerland alone would deserve a volume or at least a thesis, since it is so much a matter of psychodrama.*³⁸⁸ Nicolas Bouvier

And television also emerged from the travelling medicine show, where people would say, 'If you watch this I'm going to turn a chicken into an elephant, but first, are you having trouble with your bowels? Here's a pill that might help you.' So it's an advertising medium: but that's a legitimate human form. Art and mass entertainment and propaganda, they can all be plotted on the same graph, but there is a difference. And I'm proud of this show. Is it being used to sell stuff? Sure. But I'm going to hell in good company. David Mamet

Introduction

Following World War II, public service media executives began exploring ideas for bringing Europe together around an entertainment programme. Through the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), a group led by SRG SSR director-general Marcel Bezençon decided to create an international song contest and thereby test an international live television broadcast. The first *Eurovision Song Contest* took place in Lugano, Switzerland, on May 24, 1956. The Swiss contestant, Lys Assia, won this competition. Beginning with only seven participant countries, the *Eurovision* now includes over 40 participating nations and is one of the longest-running television programmes. Nowadays, the finals are broadcast over four hours and are viewed by approximately 180 million people. Every year, this show puts social and geopolitical tensions on display. This special television programme illustrates how entertainment has been used to experiment with technology and reflects social and political issues. This pioneering programme fits in the discussion of entertainment in Switzerland's public service media.

Public service broadcasting was imagined, created and funded before the market took hold of this industry. One can wonder whether a public service media system would emerge in the current conditions, given the market forces and market logic that gained traction in the 1980s. New Public Management (NPM) changed PSM. In its early

³⁸⁷ Motto of the Swiss pavilion for the 1992 Universal Exhibition in Sevilla.

³⁸⁸ Translated from French: "La résistance à la Télévision en Suisse mériterait à elle seule un volume ou au moins une thèse, tant elle relève du psychodrame" (Nicolas Bouvier, 1979, pp. 47-48).

instalment, public service broadcasting reflected a political intention linked to the legacy of the Enlightenment, a humanist view of the educated citizen making use of the new technology of broadcasting. Switzerland's system of semi-direct democracy required an informed public. The political project of public service broadcasting served several political objectives, including defence, education, economy and infrastructure. In the federalist, decentralised Swiss system, this political project was shaped by many diverging groups.

This chapter addresses the development of public service media from radio broadcasting through television to the Internet, its third pillar; it presents a study of the evolution of the mandate for entertainment.³⁸⁹ I attempt to demonstrate that entertainment, at the interplay of society, economics, technology and culture, was and remains key to public service media; at the same time its understanding in practice and the controversies that surround it have evolved. The evolution of entertainment reflects broader shifts in society, in the notion of the public sphere and in politics. This project takes a historic view of these developments, as past choices constrain and inform current and future political, strategic and operational choices.³⁹⁰ Furthermore, I attempt to systematically show the parallels and differences compared to today's settings. This historical review allows me to draw eleven lessons grouped in four clusters.

Entertainment is the first cluster: I show that entertainment formats are reinvented to fit the practices that new technologies enable. Also, entertainment is a driver of mass adoption of new devices. The positioning of entertainment content in the Swiss PSM's schedule also evolved, shifting from a time-filling broadcast to a response to a better understanding of audience needs in an increasingly competitive environment.

In the Swiss context, this history illustrates how new technology, the second cluster, raises both hopes and fears in relation to entertainment and the public sphere. I demonstrate that recurring fears around the health impact, social impact, commercialisation and threat to cultural identity emerged with radio, television and the Internet. The policymakers' and PSM management's response was largely one of exploring new technology before developing a regulatory framework and institutionalising organisations.

³⁸⁹ While I use the notion of "public service", the terminology used in Swiss legal Acts is that of "universal service". This reflects the importance granted to universalism in a federal Switzerland.

³⁹⁰ Douglas C. North (1990, 1991) studies the economic history of institutions, which he defines as "the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interactions" (1991, p. 97). North also argues for path dependence, meaning that past choices constrain current and future choices. In particular, he discusses how change can be slow because institutions are created and maintained to protect their beneficiaries; furthermore, culture also impacts change. Lastly, the sociology of organisations shows that norms and values tend to freeze over time.

I show how market dynamics, the third cluster, evolved constantly. There was a shift in the discourse around the type of content that the public broadcaster should provide. I find that private media, notably the press, who compete with PSM for attention and audiences, shift their argument against PSM over time. The argument went through several phases. First, it was argued that PSM ought to provide entertainment and no news. Later, private media argued that PSM could provide controlled news, then educate the population through culture. Then, they argued that PSM should renounce offering entertainment that the market could provide. This reflects a shift in the economics of these sectors and a focus on the segments that were most profitable for PSM competitors at the time they argued against the PSM providing that type of programmes. Simultaneously, the relationship between private and public media became increasingly a form of cooptation in the face of stronger competition from abroad for the audience's attention.

Swiss policymaking, particularly related to culture, is the fourth cluster. Prior to World War II, radio broadcasting from abroad forced the government to define a cultural policy and a shared identity in the context of the national Spiritual Defence policy. Diversity is central to this identity. A corollary of diversity is strong local identities, which resist centralisation and change. In the Swiss context of a strong semi-direct democratic system, institutions are fragile and maintaining legitimacy is a permanent task for policymakers and PSM leadership alike. The Swiss PSM requires a broad consensus to be developed and continued.

The history of entertainment and technology is essential to this project because technological and political decisions from the past structure the current media systems, an idea known as path dependence.³⁹¹ This is particularly the case in infrastructure, because past technical infrastructure choices largely constrain the actions of public service media organisations.³⁹² While new media replace existing ones, the latter

³⁹¹ Path dependence theory aims to explain technology adoption processes. It departs from the standard, neoclassical economics approach whereby there is one single equilibrium. Rather, path dependence argues that the process to get to the equilibrium determines the equilibrium. Examples include standards that are adopted, such as the layout of letters on a keyboard or the VHS video recorder standard; geographical clusters can also be explained using path dependence theory, combined with network effects. In the words of Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti (1994): "[w]here you can get to depends on where you're coming from, and some destinations you simply cannot get to from here." (p. 179).

³⁹² As an example, let us consider the impact of global infrastructure choices in the late 19th century on today's Internet. In an extensive study of the role of global communication systems and infrastructure between 1860 and 1930 based on substantial archival research, including intercontinental cables, telegraph systems and news agencies, Winseck and Pike (2007) argue against the dominant view in literature that the emergence of this global system was mainly driven by the logic of imperialism and the struggle between imperial powers, but rather by the globalisation of capitalism. In particular, they argue that the "web of interconnections and interdependence constituting the global media system of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth could also be seen in governments' willingness to rely on foreign firms to meet their foreign communication and military needs" (Winseck & Pike, 2007, p. XVI). Furthermore, and of relevance for the current dialogue around global media systems, "the advent of electronic communications media was constantly shaped by the dialectic between the free flow of

rarely disappear entirely, but rather, evolve. For instance, radio is going through a revival permitted by smartphones, podcasts and new consumption practices during commutes. Furthermore, radio programmes are increasingly filmed.³⁹³ The levels of public service media, connection, curation, creation, software and hardware all build on existing practices and legacy systems. Furthermore, the dynamics of the interplay of technology, society and culture in the past carry lessons for today and tomorrow. As Neil Postman (1993) describes, new terms appear for new technologies. But, “new things also modify old words, words that have deep-rooted meanings” (p. 8).³⁹⁴ I explore recurring themes in the impact of new technologies on entertainment, and in particular on public service entertainment, as well as to the Swiss case specifically. In this chapter, I start by justifying the choice of the Swiss case. After discussing some methodological considerations, I move on to introducing the Swiss context, some key data, and current information about the organisation of the public service media, SRG SSR.

The core of the chapter is a historical overview of the development of radio, television, and the Internet in Switzerland through the lens of public service media, focusing on entertainment. This overview draws somewhat on experiences and comparisons with other countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. Several sections are completed by considerations on a specific programme, technology or event.

This chapter ends with two results from this historical overview. First, I draw eleven lessons from recurring themes in the development of public media in Switzerland, lessons that may remain relevant to PSM policy in the future, as well as to the fields of infrastructure, media or culture policy. These lessons pertain to entertainment, the introduction of new technology, market dynamics, and Swiss policymaking as it relates to culture. Second, I stress three fundamental challenges public service media face in a digital age.

information versus its control. That dialectic was at play notably in Britain’s use of free trade to maintain London’s position as the hub of world communication and as a means for enabling surveillance and censorship” (Winseck & Pike, 2007, p. 344); this period is particularly interesting to study nowadays, because “[t]he global cable system did not become obsolete with the advent of wireless and long-distance telephone service. Indeed, the majority of our global communication still depends on a vast net of fiber-optic cables that spans the globe. And while the character of cartels is no longer the same, these networks are still owned and managed by highly complex ‘strategic alliances’ consisting of the largest private and government-owned telecommunications operators in the world” (Winseck & Pike, 2007, p. 345).

³⁹³ Particularly interviews, allowing users to watch the interview online and television journalists to use the clip for their programmes. Likewise, radio comedy is increasingly recorded with video for online distribution.

³⁹⁴ As an example, the notion of “friend” on social media, specifically Facebook, illustrates the evolution of an established word, even though it had a long-established prior meaning.

4.1. Choosing a case: Switzerland's SRG SSR

In this chapter, I discuss the case of Switzerland and its public service media organisation, the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation SRG SSR. This case is relevant to readers for two reasons.

First, Switzerland is a compelling case of a country in which citizens have recently expressed their support for the idea of a public service media. As a semi-direct democratic system, Switzerland allows its citizens to have a strong say in policymaking. On March 4, 2018, the Swiss voted on the *No Billag* popular initiative,³⁹⁵ which proposed to abolish the licence fee that funds public service media. This popular initiative was rejected by 71.6 per cent of the population and all cantons. Had it been accepted, it would have been a serious blow to the future of the organisation. This vote was closely observed by PSM around the globe.³⁹⁶

Second, Switzerland is an interesting comparative case in and of itself, because three, and later four broadcasters with a relatively large degree of freedom regarding programmes operate with the same mandate but with different cultural contexts, staff, organisational understandings of the mandate and competitive environments. These differences produce different practices and texts.³⁹⁷

Furthermore, Switzerland is a specific media market as its three largest language regions each share a language, German, French, and Italian, with a neighbouring country. The Swiss public broadcasters thus compete with the offering of Germany (and to a lesser degree Austria), France, and Italy respectively.³⁹⁸ The domestic market size is relatively small; a sufficient private offering is difficult to achieve.³⁹⁹ Thus, “[e]ach language region contains its own media market” (Puppis & Künzler, 2011, p. 169).

To introduce this case, I discuss two ideas that are constituent of Switzerland, namely federalism and semi-direct democracy. Then, I address the organisation of SRG SSR

³⁹⁵ To be accepted, a popular initiative, which is always on a constitutional level, requires the double majority of cantons and of the population voting for it. The next section presents two key principles of Switzerland: direct democracy and federalism.

³⁹⁶ Swiss votes follow extensive campaigns. The Swiss PSM and the government made particular efforts to explain the organisation's activities; SRG SSR announced substantial savings programmes before the vote, and the licence fee was cut by the federal government from CHF 451.- to CHF 365.- (or to one franc per day), announced in October 2017, five months before the vote. Thus, the initiative did have an impact even though it was not accepted.

³⁹⁷ This refers to the categories of the industrialisation of culture framework (Havens & Lotz, 2016): Switzerland is an interesting case because it presents similar mandates and conditions, but within several regional cultures, and producing different practices and texts. In this framing, a text is any cultural product.

³⁹⁸ In 2013, Germany had 82 million inhabitants while German-speaking Switzerland had 5.6 million; France, 65 million, French-speaking Switzerland 1.9 million; Italy 60 million, Italian-speaking Switzerland 0.34 million.

³⁹⁹ In 2017, the permanent resident population included nearly 8.5 million people, of which 63.9% reside in the German-speaking region, 22.7% in the French-speaking region, 8.1% in the Italian-speaking region and 0.5% in the Romansh-speaking region, according to data from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office.

and introduce a substantial, long-term research project on the history of the Swiss PSM.

On Switzerland: federalism and semi-direct democracy

Federalism and semi-direct democracy are two concepts that are central to the history of modern Switzerland and impact all areas of policymaking.

The federalist system aims to solve issues at the level closest to the problem or the citizen, a principle named subsidiarity. Thus, Swiss states, called cantons,⁴⁰⁰ have broad policy-making competency in fields as central as mobility, healthcare and education. This decentralised political system has maintained strong cantonal identities throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Typically, a citizen will interact more frequently with his or her local cantonal authorities than with the federal state. The ability to address and discuss issues at the local level, combined with semi-direct democracy, may be one of the reasons for the population's high trust in the political system.⁴⁰¹ Unlike France, Switzerland does not have a national education system,⁴⁰² but coordinated cantonal education systems.⁴⁰³

The Swiss decision-making system is based on semi-direct democracy. Citizen participation on all levels is guaranteed by the Federal Constitution, which indicates that, beyond standing for election, citizens can launch or sign popular initiatives and referenda on a national level.⁴⁰⁴ An initiative is a proposal for a partial or total revision of the Federal Constitution.⁴⁰⁵ A referendum is a call for a vote to challenge a new federal act; it is compulsory on certain topics, including related to significant international treaties. These extensive political rights ensure that all political acts come from the people (through election or initiative) and are presented to the people (through compulsory or optional referenda). These instruments are a means to ensure that the government takes the interests of all major population groups into consideration. An agreement that does not consider all groups risks being challenged and blocked by a popular referendum.⁴⁰⁶ It is interesting, in the context of public service media, to briefly

⁴⁰⁰ Switzerland is composed of 26 cantons and semi-cantons of varied sizes.

⁴⁰¹ An OECD (2017) study found that close to 80% of the Swiss trust the government, nearly double the OECD average, which is 42%.

⁴⁰² Under the responsibility of France's Ministry of national education (*Ministère de l'éducation nationale*), with schoolteachers hired by the national state and sent around the country.

⁴⁰³ Decentralisation is somewhat reflected in the economy, as several major Swiss national corporations are federations of regional actors, such as the cooperative supermarkets Migros and Coop. National banks such as Credit Suisse and UBS compete with public cantonal banks.

⁴⁰⁴ Similar political rights exist on the cantonal level, though with specificities in each local context.

⁴⁰⁵ It requires 100'000 signatures from citizens eligible to vote.

⁴⁰⁶ This form of participatory political decision-making was introduced in the Swiss federal constitutional revision of 1874 and was viewed as a way of counterbalancing the necessary centralisation of the military on a federal level (Maissen, 2015).

mention how these political processes contributed to constructing the Swiss nation. Semi-direct democracy aimed to ensure that the whole population, beyond the wealthy, was involved in decision-making. To ensure this, measures such as free public schooling, and free equipment for soldiers were introduced (Maissen, 2015). The requirement to collect 100'000 signatures to launch an initiative necessitates an organised political structure; this led to the emergence of national parties, which were previously only really organised on a cantonal level. Likewise, the creation of trade organisations dates back to the late 19th century and to the need to communicate the economy's interests to the broad population in the face of regular votes. However, effective access to semi-direct democracy has always been limited: indeed, women were only granted the right to participate in federal votes in 1971. Foreigners and people under 18, over 30% of the resident population, cannot participate in national political life through votes. Even so, participation in national elections and votes is on average below 50 per cent of the population entitled to vote.

Political decision-making by the population requires an informed public and a healthy public sphere, in which mass media are essential. This chapter shows how broadcasting technology was viewed through a political lens: as a threat from foreign propaganda combining entertainment and information, but also as a tool for social cohesion and nation-building. In turn, this explains the fundamental political logic of public service broadcasting. The public sphere argument is visible in the constitutional mandate calling to contribute to the free formation of opinion.

Federalism and semi-direct democracy thus are two constituent ideas of Switzerland's modern political history. They also continuously evolve, notably through the extension of political rights and the share of people entitled to these political rights,⁴⁰⁷ as well as through increased centralisation of policy-making competencies.

In chapter three, I introduced the three-level model of the citizen as the addressee of a PSM. In the context of Swiss federalism, there may be an evolution in the general notion of the citizen.⁴⁰⁸ This view of citizenship relates to Peter Dahlgren's (2000) dimensions of a media audience as citizens: civil (rights), political (democratic participation), social, and cultural.

⁴⁰⁷ Debates such as extending voting rights to foreign residents or youth aged 16 to 18 years old are ongoing.

⁴⁰⁸ While being a citizen of a place long meant taking part in the political life, what we observe is arguably a trend to a broadening of the meaning of citizenship, particularly in a context such as Switzerland that restricts the access to citizenship. Historically, to be a Swiss participating citizen with full political rights meant to pay taxes, to vote, to go to the military and to be a man. Citizen participation nowadays, beyond voting (co-decider) and participating in the army, also may effectively be based on attending football games, being active in an association, or taking part in local cultural events (contributor); this, in turn, takes place within social infrastructures, as conceptualised by Eric Klinenberg (2018).

I now turn to describe the Swiss public service media, SRG SSR, in its current organisation and discuss whether it is a public service media from an academic standpoint.

SRG SSR: the Swiss public service media organisation

The Swiss Broadcasting Corporation SRG SSR, founded in 1931, is the association that operates the Swiss public service media, itself a company.⁴⁰⁹ The association, organised around four regional companies, has 23'000 members, residents with an interest in media and media policy. It includes five business units producing content in the four national languages and has 6'000 employees. The five business units are:

- Radio Télévision Suisse (RTS – in French)
- Radiotelevisione svizzera (RSI - in Italian)
- Radiotevisiun Svizra Rumantscha (RTR – in Romansh)
- Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (SRF – in German)
- Swissinfo.ch (SWI – in ten languages)⁴¹⁰

The first four operate and distribute content through radio, television and the Internet. SRG SSR offers three radio channels in German (SRF 1, SRF 2, SRF 3), in French (La Première, Espace 2, Couleur 3) and Italian (Rete Uni, Rete Due, Rete Tre) and a channel in Romansh (Radio Rumantsch). Furthermore, it has complementary radios (German: SRF Musikwelle; French: Option Musique), an information channel SRF 4 News, and a German-language youth channel, Virus. SRG SSR also offers Radio Swiss Classic, Radio Swiss Jazz and Radio Swiss Pop.⁴¹¹ In regard to television, each language region has two channels (German: SRF 1 and SRF zwei; French: RTS Un and RTS Deux; Italian: RSI La 1 and RSI La 2). Programmes of RTR are broadcast on RSI La 2, SRF 1, SRF zwei. Online, SRG SSR has an offering for each language region (srf.ch; rts.ch; rsi.ch; rtr.ch).

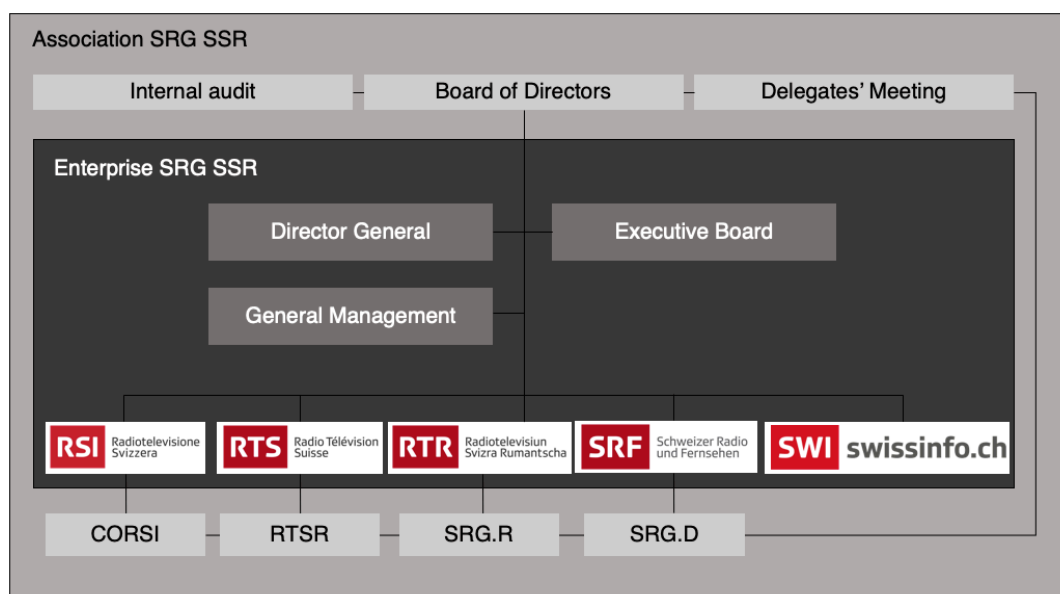
SRG SSR is managed by a director-general supported by a management team. Management is accountable to the association's board of directors. The organisation and governance of SRG SSR are represented in the following figure.

⁴⁰⁹ As a reference to the public service mandate of the organisation, its name was "SRG SSR idée suisse" between 1999 and 2011.

⁴¹⁰ These are: English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese.

⁴¹¹ The 2019 concession allows SRG SSR to sell channels; it announced in 2018 it was open to sell Swiss Pop, Swiss Jazz and Swiss Classic. It announced the sale of Radio Swiss Pop to BNJ Suisse SA on March 5, 2020.

Figure 10: Governance of SRG SSR association & enterprise



Created based on a SRG SSR representation

Other organisations are related to SRG SSR through shareholding, including the producer of teletext pages Swiss TXT.⁴¹² It also holds shares in organisations such as TV5 Monde, a Francophone satellite broadcaster, the Agence télégraphique Suisse (ATS), and Euronews.⁴¹³

Having addressed the organisation of SRG SSR, I now consider whether SRG SSR qualifies as a public service media. To do so, I discuss the criteria defined by David Hesmondhalgh (2013) regarding the rules framing the work of SRG SSR. While each national context displays variations, he finds that public service media are usually characterised by accountability to the public, public financing, content regulation,⁴¹⁴ universal service, and audiences considered as citizens.

Regarding the first criterion, SRG SSR is accountable to the public beyond the market in two ways: first, being structured as an association, any resident can become a member of the organisation and influence it as a member. Second, the PSM operates within the framework of the concession, which is adopted by the federal government,

⁴¹² Swiss TXT, a company 100% owned by SRG SSR, was founded on December 23, 1983 after receiving a concession on December 19, 1983 from the government for the teletext service. Its services have included live subtitling since 1988 and an SMS news service starting in 1999. On February 19, 2006, it reached a record of 2.2 million people who used Teletext to be informed on the *Torino Olympic Games*. The company progressively became a technical competence centre for SRG SSR, developing players for the business units, such as SRF+, RTS+ and RSI+ in 2013.

⁴¹³ Euronews is a transnational European news channel broadcasting in seven languages, founded in 1993.

⁴¹⁴ Regulation of content at a public service media is more stringent than that of commercial broadcasting, which generally only excludes certain types of content categorised as illegal or sets rules around advertising on specific categories of products such as alcohol and cigarettes. PSM content regulation includes rules pertaining to impartiality, balance, and content for different audiences and groups in the country.

after a consultation process of all cantons, political parties, relevant interest groups and interested citizens.⁴¹⁵ It fulfils Hesmondhalgh's first criterion.

The majority of SRG SSR's funding comes from the license fee collected from companies and households.⁴¹⁶ The remaining quarter of funding comes from advertising and other revenue sources. Unlike a commercial broadcaster, it does not distribute profits to its shareholders; rather, all revenues are reinvested in the programmes.⁴¹⁷ Thus it fulfils his second criterion.

Regarding content regulation, SRG SSR is required to contribute to "free public opinion-forming through comprehensive, diverse and accurate information especially regarding political, economic and social matters" (Federal Act on Radio and Television, art. 24, al. 4 let. a) and to "cultural diversity and the reinforcement of the country's cultural values as well as the promotion of Swiss culture, with particular emphasis on Swiss literature and Swiss music and film, especially by broadcasting Swiss productions and programmes it has produced itself" (art. 24, al. 4, let. b). It is also expected to broadcast educational and entertainment content (art. 24, al. 4, let. c and d). So content is regulated at SRG SSR, so it fulfils his third criterion.

PSM typically have a comprehensive public service remit requiring universal service, both geographically and in terms of audience interests. SRG SSR includes four business units providing a programme in the four national languages. It is required, according to the Federal Act on Radio and Television (art. 24), to "[supply] the entire population comprehensively in terms of content with equivalent radio and television programme services in the three official languages" (al. 1, let. a). Hesmondhalgh (2013) stresses one particular success of the PSM model: "near-universal service. Huge amounts of money were spent ensuring that remote regions were given access to national broadcasting systems, which would have been unthinkable in a commercial system" (p. 140); as this chapter attempts to show, this is particularly true in the case of Switzerland, with its difficult, alpine geography and its plurilingualism. This point can be illustrated by the fact that the minority French- and Italian-language broadcasters

⁴¹⁵ However, SRG SSR is independent regarding programming, following art. 93 of the Federal Constitution (al. 3: "The independence of radio and television as well as their autonomy in deciding on programming is guaranteed".)

⁴¹⁶ Federal Act on Radio and Television, art. 34: "SRG SSR is mainly financed by radio and television fees. Other sources of finance are available to it, unless this is restricted by this Act, the Ordinance, the licence or relevant international law". According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, in 2018, of the CHF 1'394 million collected through these fees, CHF 1'233 million went to SRG SSR, CHF 69 million to local and regional radio and television channels with a concession, with the remainder allocated to the collecting organisation (CHF 62 million) the regulator (CHF 4 million), and specific topics such as audience research (CHF 3 million), subtitling (CHF 3 million), archiving (CHF 1 million), and investment in new technologies (CHF 3 million).

⁴¹⁷ Federal Act on Radio and Television, art 35, al 2: "SRG SSR shall use the share of fees allocated to it solely to cover the costs resulting from the broadcasting of radio and television programme services and the costs of the other journalistic services".

are financed partly by funds collected in the German-speaking region. So SRG SSR fulfils his fourth criterion.

Lastly, a PSM addresses its audience as citizens rather than as consumers. According to the Federal Act on Radio and Television, “SRG SSR provides a service for the community. In so doing, it does not attempt to make a profit.” (art. 23). It is mandated to “[promote] understanding, cohesion and exchange between the parts of the country, linguistic communities, cultures and social groupings and [take] account of the particularities of the country and the needs of the cantons” (art. 24, al. 1, let. b) and to foster links with the Swiss citizens residing abroad. It contributes to the public sphere by supporting the “free public opinion-forming through comprehensive, diverse and accurate information especially regarding political, economic and social matters” (art. 24, al. 4, let. a), of particular relevance in the direct democratic regime of the country. SRG SSR fulfils Hesmondhalgh’s fifth criterion and thus all five criteria; it is a public service media, according to its regulatory conditions.

As a large organisation with prominent visibility in the country, SRG SSR is a trusted media brand, as research by the University of St. Gallen shows. I turn to discuss trust in SRG SSR.

Trust in the societal contribution of SRG SSR

A public service media needs the trust of the public to be legitimate. The Public Value Atlas⁴¹⁸ provides one measure of trust. This recurring study of the societal benefit of large national and international organisations based in Switzerland is conducted by the Center for Leadership and Values in Society of the University of St. Gallen. In this study, respondents⁴¹⁹ were invited to evaluate the public value contribution of large Swiss organisations they are familiar with based on four dimensions: task fulfilment; social cohesion; quality of life; morality. The aggregated score is the unweighted average of the result on each dimension. Overall, SRG SSR ranked number 18 out of 106 organisations in 2017. The ranking is led by organisations active in healthcare and social services, (Rega, Spitex, Swiss Paraplegic); last in the ranking are international sports federations and oil companies (Tamoil, UEFA, FIFA).

For the study, SRG SSR was presented under the name of its regional units (SRF / RTS / RSI), more broadly recognised and localised. It is compared to four Swiss-German media organisations which come from print: NZZ, Tages-Anzeiger, 20

⁴¹⁸ The atlas can be accessed under <https://www.gemeinwohl.ch/en>.

⁴¹⁹ In 2017, 14'502 individuals took the survey. They were aged 18-92, resided in Switzerland's German-, French- or Italian-speaking regions.

Minuten, Blick.⁴²⁰ SRG SSR business units ranked number one on the aggregate within media⁴²¹ as well as in each dimension, except for task fulfilment, in which it is slightly behind NZZ.⁴²²

Of particular relevance for this study is the fact that organisations discussed in this thesis, including big players in advertising (Coca Cola, rank 92), technology firms (Facebook, 98, and Amazon, 97), sport clubs (FC Sion, 101, FC Zürich, 99) and sports associations which organise major sporting events (UEFA, 105, FIFA, 106), are ranked low on their societal contribution. Two hypotheses may be drawn to explain the contrasting evaluation of these organisations and SRG SSR. First, it may be due to the focus on the PSM as a provider of information, while the entertainment organisations are viewed primarily as such, suggesting a lower perceived societal value of entertainment as opposed to information. Alternatively, SRG SSR may be perceived as providing societally beneficial entertainment, as required by its public service remit. The study does not provide a reason to argue for one or the other.⁴²³

The Public Value Atlas regularly surveys the largest, most recognised organisations in Switzerland. SRG SSR is a particularly familiar brand and has been the object of one of the most extensive research projects into the history of a Swiss company. I turn to review this long-lasting project.

“History of SRG SSR”, a reference research project

Between 1993 and 2012, SRG SSR financed a large-scale research project exploring and charting the company’s history. In 1993, then director-general Antonio Riva mandated researchers to conceive and conduct a large research project, “History of SRG SSR”. The researchers were granted financing and unrestricted access to the organisation’s archives while being guaranteed scientific independence (Drack, 2000). The variety of scholars’ backgrounds, from different universities, disciplines and linguistic regions, aimed to ensure a broad view of the organisation’s history. The sources for the ambitious research project stem mainly from archives based in Bern, namely the archives of the direction of SRG SSR, the Swiss federal archives, and the

⁴²⁰ Both Tages-Anzeiger and 20 Minuten belong to TX Group; Blick, to Ringier; NZZ, to NZZ Mediengruppe. Ringier and TX Group (formerly Tamedia) are the two largest private media groups in the country and are active throughout the country with a range of print titles and digital offerings.

⁴²¹ This has been the case in previous versions of the study, in 2014 and 2015. In 2015, the sample also included Disney and SonntagsZeitung, a TX Group newspaper.

⁴²² NZZ (Neue Zürcher Zeitung) is regarded as the German-language Swiss newspaper of record.

⁴²³ For a discussion of how an organisation’s contribution to society is the basis for its legitimacy, which can lead to the organisation being challenged if its contribution is viewed as insufficient, see Neumann (2018). This is one approach to analysing the *No Billag* initiative.

archives of PTT.⁴²⁴ It also included research in the archives of regional and member organisations. As the product of full access to archives, scholarly freedom, a multidisciplinary approach and building on several conferences, this project is a solid secondary source of access to information and analysis.

The results of this research were progressively published in a multilingual version. The total of four volumes amount to over 1'000 pages in three different languages, one of the most extensive research projects on a firm in Switzerland. These include: “La radio et la télévision en Suisse: Histoire de la Société Suisse de radiodiffusion SSR jusqu’en 1958”⁴²⁵ (Drack, 2000a), which addresses the early days of radio until the beginning of a permanent television service in 1958; “La radio et la télévision en Suisse: Histoire de la société suisse de radiodiffusion SSR 1958 – 1983” (Mäusli et al., 2006), considers SRG SSR from the start of its permanent television service until the liberalisation of the media market in 1983; “La radio et la télévision en Suisse: Histoire de la société suisse de radiodiffusion SSR 1983 – 2011” (Mäusli et al., 2012), which discusses more contemporary developments. Within each period, the project has some thematic focuses reflecting the shifting points of contention in the development of the organisation and its mandate in the face of changing conditions: while the first period focuses on federalism, national identity and the increasing professionalism of the media,⁴²⁶ the second period addresses the evolution of society and of programmes, while the third addresses the liberalisation of media markets and the increased audience orientation it calls for, as well as the challenges of the digital transformation. A complementary source to official documents, the results of this research are a reference point for this project.

This is not the first extended research on a public service broadcaster. Starting in the 1960s, academic research into the historical development of broadcasting in the national political context of the United Kingdom (Briggs, 1961, 1985) and Germany (Bausch, 1980) was conducted. As of the 1970s and 1980s, the historiography moved beyond written sources to include audiovisual archival material, related to the emergence of national institutions tasked with managing audiovisual archives: examples include the Institut National de l’Audiovisuel (INA) in France and the Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv (DRA) in Germany (Bignell & Fickers, 2008). Likewise, the “History of SRG SSR” builds on audiovisual archives as a source of material.

⁴²⁴ Postal Telegraph and Telephone agency of Switzerland.

⁴²⁵ This is a double volume, as its main, chapter-based volume, is accompanied by a volume of pictures illustrating the developments. The next two volumes include pictures in the text, albeit less extensively.

⁴²⁶ Specifically, it is organised around five fields of research: SRG SSR and the media scene; SRG SSR and intercultural communication; SRG SSR and democracy; SRG SSR and social transformation; SRG SSR as a company.

4.2. Methodological considerations

In his research on European public service television covering the period 1950-2010, Jérôme Bourdon (2011) explains how, building on the work of other historians, he aims to analyse the “co-texts” (programme schedule in particular) and context (social and otherwise), rather than the televisual texts (individual shows). He works with broad national television histories built on audiovisual and documentary archives. I take a similar approach. Furthermore, Bourdon (2011) stresses how a comparative approach shows that efforts and challenges that are presented as specific to a nation are often common to many; he mentions the broadcasting of American entertainment content, the crisis of fiction and the criticism against the star-presenter as examples of issues that arose in several nations he studies. However, while Jérôme Bourdon (2011) structures his work thematically, I divide my work into time periods. This choice is driven by the long timeframe under consideration. Joining Bourdon (2011) on the broader trends within PSM in Europe, I propose at the end of this chapter eleven key lessons, some of which are specific to the case, and others which may be generalised. The challenges of convergence and digital platforms are, in fact, similar in many countries. In addressing methodological considerations, I review the multidisciplinary and comparative approach, data sources and limitations.

Multidisciplinary approach

The history of public service media and mass media more broadly is a story of technological development. It is also a story of culture and industry. David Edgerton (1999) argues that “to say that the study of the relations of technology and society should be the study of technology in use is a mere truism” (p. 112); he is right. However, as he points out, most of the work done by historians of technology focuses on technological innovation rather than its use, the former telling us little about the relations between technology and society. A multidisciplinary approach is key to getting a fuller picture of public service entertainment in its historical context. This chapter thus includes a range of focus points on specific programmes and topics, to illustrate the use of technologies in the Swiss context of the time.

This review is necessarily a multi-dimensional history. A history of technologies first; a history of audiences next. To quote Fernand Braudel (Flichy, 2004, p. 10-11), “an innovation is only ever as effective as the social impulse that supports and imposes it.”⁴²⁷ When discussing the history of entertainment in television, I necessarily address

⁴²⁷ Translated from the original French: “une innovation ne vaut jamais qu’en fonction de la poussée sociale qui la soutient et l’impose”.

the technologies that enable it as well as create it. I also discuss society, the evolution of its needs and the competitive environment surrounding the PSM. Indeed, the story of radio, television and smartphones is one of increasing individualisation of consumption, a step beyond the practice of family listening to the piano, the phonograph, and later the radio (Flichy, 2004); it is also the story of increasing personalisation, linked to and facilitated by technological development including miniaturisation. To be very schematic, the consumption of mass media moved from the public cafés to everyone's smartphone through a range of intermediary steps, allowing mobile and social solutions for personalised curation and consumption.

This chapter builds on an approach fitting in the sociology of knowledge, and in particular, the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, (1967), allowing us to stress how the role of PSM and its discourse shaped the reality of its regulation and uses. This approach is relevant, as public service media are organisations created by a political intention, carried in the Swiss case by a support of the population, and continuously produced by the actions of its employees. To quote Thomas Eberle (1992), social construction is about “reality construction in interaction and conversation, by means of internalized social objectivations and typifications, stabilized by routines, institutionalizations and legitimations, and so on” (pp. 498-499).

Entertainment in public service is a political intention that is put into practice by PSM managers, by programme creators, by schedulers, and which in turn is justified towards policymakers, competitors and the public. This justification takes the dual form of a quality requirement and an audience success requirement. Entertainment, in this sense, is a political intention, the specific realisation of which evolves with technology and society.

Comparative approach

While the case focuses on Switzerland, its policymakers, industrialists and technologists were heavily influenced by developments abroad. It is therefore key not to consider the case in a void, but rather to include regular references to foreign developments. These cover in particular the US and the UK, pioneering countries in technological developments as they relate to media, yet with two very different policy approaches. The UK represents the model for PSM and was an influence in the Swiss case; the US represents the commercial model against which many PSM were conceived. Certain developments in neighbouring France, Germany and Italy are also

mentioned, as these media markets partly include Swiss audiences.⁴²⁸ The European broadcasting sector faced swift technological evolution. However, each national broadcaster held a monopoly in its domestic market. Given no, or limited, direct competition, European broadcasters favoured professional exchanges across borders and developed a common vocabulary to meet these shared challenges. Thus, developments abroad impacted domestic choices.

In Switzerland, the intention of the regulator is to direct the bulk of the licence fee revenues to SRG SSR to achieve one coherent, complete public service media organisation. However, public service in media is not only provided by SRG SSR. On a local and regional level, a range of radio and television broadcasters have a concession with a mandate – and a (minor) share of the licence fee. This chapter focuses on SRG SSR, while occasionally mentioning local and regional broadcasters.

Industrialisation of culture framework

The analysis throughout the chapter refers to Havens and Lotz's (2016) industrialisation of culture framework and its levels of analysis discussed in chapter one. This may be illustrated by showing the interplay of conditions (particularly technology) and practices. Indeed, one cannot consider programmes without the transmission and reception devices. As such, this is the story of the development of technology and the contents it made possible.⁴²⁹ For example, many Swiss gathered around their newly acquired television sets to watch the first moon landing in 1969. This event is often considered as information, yet it could be argued it was entertainment since the audience enjoyed it.

With public service media, not all opportunities the medium offers are used; in fact, regulation and the mandate strongly constrain the opportunities for seizing technological innovation;⁴³⁰ this, in turn, is the by-product of a legitimising instrument, namely the regular co-definition of the PSM's mandate. For instance, early radio broadcasters in Switzerland were not allowed to broadcast news, thus foregoing one of radio's main added values: fast diffusion of news. Today, not allowing the use of the technological innovation offered by platforms for entertainment would mean foregoing one of the main added values of platforms. Reviewing the development of

⁴²⁸ This point relates to the reception of broadcasters from abroad by the Swiss population, the SRG SSR domestic broadcasting monopoly notwithstanding.

⁴²⁹ For instance, radio broadcasting and political propaganda on a scale unattainable by posters; similarly, voice was more compelling than text with the same message in the early days of radio.

⁴³⁰ An additional cause can be found in the universalism principle: to mandate the PSM to provide content using a specific technology, it must be sufficiently adopted. Adoption is thus an additional factor in driving the use of technological innovation by the PSM.

public service media since its inception allows us to address the early days of radio, a channel of public service media currently perhaps less studied than television and web-based portals but which carries lessons relevant to current policy developments.

Public service in media is provided by SRG SSR on a national level, and by private and associative radios and televisions on a local and regional level. SRG SSR receives approximately 94% of the Swiss licence fee, which represents approximately 70% of its budget. This is a similar share as for private radio and television channels. While I discuss private media, this chapter focuses on the main public service provider, SRG SSR.

Data sources

This chapter draws essentially on five types of sources or data types. First, laws, regulations and official reports; second, official statistics; third, reports from the public service media organisation; fourth, secondary sources including past research from Switzerland and abroad into public service media or communication and technology; fifth, programmes made available in online archives.

The following section follows the development of the legal framework surrounding the Swiss PSM, as it effectively is the basis for the state's intervention in the media market. The result of long and extensive participatory processes, a constitutional article, an act, an ordinance or a concession tell us a lot about how a society adopts technology.⁴³¹ The concession is of particular interest for this research. As it is renewed periodically in a process that requires extensive consultation, it ensures that the public service mandate regularly is at the top of policymaker's agenda and a focus of the public debate. The continuously evolving technological and economic circumstances ensure that this renewal is always a challenge. For a positive renewal of its mandate, SRG SSR participates publicly in the process, notably working with scholars, and through management interventions in media and at conferences. The outcome reflects the social and political evolutions given the technological possibilities of the time.

Concerning secondary sources, one significant past research project is particularly noteworthy, namely the twenty-year research project in SRG SSR's history discussed in the previous section; this research had privileged access to the organisation's archives, the institutional view, and is thus a particularly relevant source. Furthermore, the range of scholars who contributed to the project provides a variety of contextualised approaches to this history.

⁴³¹ There is a decreasingly lengthy and difficult process to change and adapt, if necessary, these normative and regulatory conditions.

Beyond this scholarly research project, official reports of the public media are relevant in particular as they show how the organisation's arguments when making its case shift perceptions and impact policymaking, as D'Arma (2018) shows in the case of the BBC during the regular renewal of the charter.

Furthermore, selected programmes could be viewed using broadly accessible archives material uploaded by SRG SSR, individuals or scholars to either SRG SSR's website, on various research project pages or on platforms such as YouTube.⁴³²

Limitations

When reviewing the history of entertainment in public service media, I must stress two caveats.

First, history can be used to justify nearly any story. In their praised summary of fifty years of work on a history of civilisation, Will and Ariel Durant note in their 100-page *The Lessons of History* that “[h]istory is so indifferently rich that a case for almost any conclusion from it can be made by a selection of instances” (Durant & Durant, 2010, p. 97). This limitation is true for this project as it is for any project in history.

Second, addressing the history should not turn into an exercise of nostalgia, but rather of critical analysis. In addressing the development of society, one may be tempted by nostalgia; or a longing for a lost national public sphere. However, when showing the evolution of public service media, “[w]e must be wary of viewing past cultural constitution with nostalgia and carefully weigh perceptions of lost common culture against the reality of how narrow a view of the world advertiser-supported, broadcast- and cable-distributed television permitted” (Lotz, 2017, p. 57). Thus, a limited supply of programmes meant mainly providing content for a portion of the population, which reflected a more restrictive view of the citizen audience of public service in media. This view has expanded since the early days of PSM.

Intermediate conclusion

Overall, in this chapter, I address the following questions: how did the mandate and practice of entertainment in Swiss public service media evolve over time, in the context of new technologies, regulations, industrial organisation, and practices of viewing and listening by the audience? This historical perspective shows how entertainment and

⁴³² One such page was initiated by RTS and the *Fondation pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine audiovisuel de la RTS FONSART* : www.notrehistoire.ch. Launched in 2009, this page allows individuals to upload media (pictures, film, sound) to the platform to document the history of French-speaking Switzerland. In 2017, the platform was extended to the Italian- and Romansh-language regions.

public service media are at the interplay of society, technology, politics, economics and culture.

I divide the review into six periods. These are not structured purely around legal documents or technologies, but rather a mix around major turning points. Before discussing this history, I provide key facts and figures on broadcast media in Switzerland.

4.3. Facts and figures on licence holders and broadcast content categories

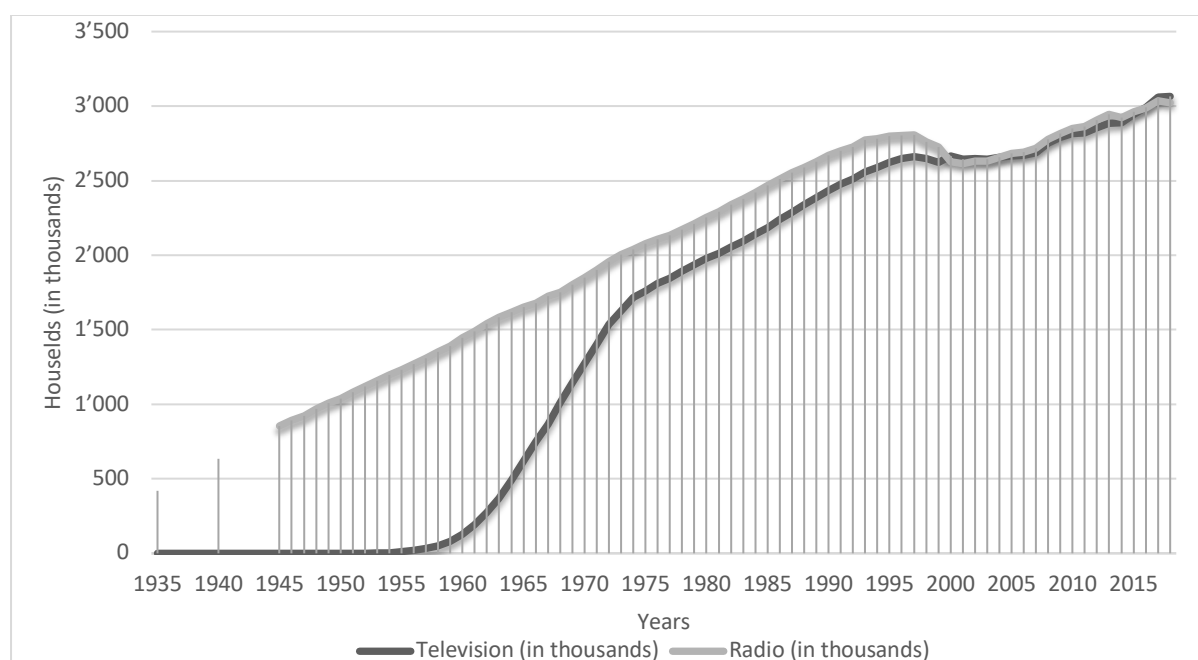
Beyond the organisation of the public service broadcaster, it is useful to consider figures to accompany the analysis of SRG SSR's development. To do so, this section builds on data made available by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. I review two data points: on the reception side, the number of households paying the licence fee, as a proxy for the adoption of the radio and television over the history of PSM; and on the broadcasting side, the share of categories of content broadcast in public radio in 2018 and public television over the period 2015-2018. I also include a short note on the relative market share in radio and television.

Development of licence fee paying households

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office provides data on the number of households paying the fee for radio and television.⁴³³ The basis for collecting the fee has slightly varied over time, notably through the introduction of professional and commercial fees (the first for entertaining and informing employees, the second to inform and entertain clients). The numbers in the following figure show a constant growth of the registered households paying the licence fee for both radio and television.⁴³⁴

⁴³³ This is an incomplete reflection of the number of households accessing radio, as some may access the service without paying the licence fee. In the early 1930s, next to the 200'000 licence holders, 1'000 people were fined annually for accessing the radio without paying the licence fee (Mäusli, 2000).

⁴³⁴ Part of this growth may be accounted for by the rise in the number of households in the country as a product of both rising population and declining average number of people per household.

Figure 11: Development of licence fee paying households in Switzerland (1935-2018)

The late take-off of television reflects the introduction of a permanent service on January 1st, 1958. While the numbers show the growth in user base for both radio and television, this period also saw a diminution in the average size of households.⁴³⁵ Also, this is an incomplete figure of real audiences, as audiences have always also been reached in public spaces such as cafés, restaurants and malls as well.⁴³⁶

Originally, the licence fee was due if one had a radio, or a television, or both in the household (originally separate fees).⁴³⁷ The fee was not increased with a higher number of devices. While one was expected to register when one acquired such a device, the organisation collecting the fee hired staff to visit households that did not pay the licence fee to inspect whether they had any such device.⁴³⁸ As of January 1st, 2019, all households must pay the licence fee, independently of whether they own a radio or television, in a move reflecting the increasing consumption of media through

⁴³⁵ According to the Federal Statistical Office, 53% of households including 5 or more people in 1930; this figure was down to 31% in 1970 and 14% in 2000. At the other end of the spectrum, 2% of households in 1930 were single-person households; this figure was up to 7% in 1970 and 16% in 2017.

⁴³⁶ Other measures of audience reach were introduced later, such as the ratings discussed in the history later in this chapter.

⁴³⁷ The household-based fee made sense in the early days of radio, as the device was a piece of furniture one installed in the lounge room. The introduction of transistor technology led to a surge of the number of devices, and later mobile devices. Policymakers could have imagined a shift to a device-based, or individual-based fee to reflect the growing individualisation of media consumption; yet it remained household-based, either as a legacy or for the convenience. A household-based fee is indeed easy to determine and collect, especially since it has been generalised as of January 1st, 2019.

⁴³⁸ This practice was unpopular. Until 1998, the fee was collected with the telephone bill. In 1998, Swisscom founded Billag, a firm dedicated to collecting the licence fees. The proponents of the *No Billag* initiative titled it as such against the unpopular fee-collecting firm. Ironically, it lost a tender in 2017 to renew its mandate, executed by Serafe AG since January 1st, 2019.

the Internet.⁴³⁹ Therefore, this graph also shows that a growing share of households, leading up to the entirety today, progressively became financers and stakeholders of the PSM.

It is also interesting to consider the share of types of content that the PSM broadcasts per canal, in hours, as an aggregate. I first discuss radio, then television. For both channels, I begin with the relative share of entertainment in hours of broadcast, before considering the share of contents within entertainment.⁴⁴⁰

Share of programmes broadcast on radio (2018)

Based on historical data published by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, the following tables present the share of content as a share of total broadcasts throughout all SRG SSR radio channels. The relative share of these categories remained fairly constant over the 2012-2018 period; the data shown below presents the figures for 2018.

Table 16: Share of information, education and entertainment content in hours of public radio channels broadcast, 2018

	Entertainment	Information	Education	Other
Share of broadcasts	74.4%	15.0%	7.4%	3.1%

In this project, I define entertainment more broadly than its restrictive understanding in the current concession, which relates particularly to types of programmes, reflected in the organisation and reporting of SRG SSR.

For the purpose of this table, the category “information” includes the hours of “information” broadcast. The category “education” includes “education”, “culture”, “religion”, and “science”. The category “entertainment” includes “sports”, “radiophonic play”, “music”, and “animation”. The category “other” includes “service”, “presentation/promotion”, and “other”.⁴⁴¹ This division takes the approach of dividing content into categories; naturally, a psychological, reception-based approach would argue that most culture, science, and information content may be perceived as entertaining.⁴⁴² However, this broadcast approach allows us to get a broad sense of the share of these categories as an aggregate and to get a sense of relative importance. It also reflects the logic of management handling a schedule and reporting on it. This share is, furthermore, driven by cost considerations: within “music”, the

⁴³⁹ There are limited exceptions.

⁴⁴⁰ In this section, entertainment refers to the categories of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office.

⁴⁴¹ As categorised by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office.

⁴⁴² See the discussion in chapter three.

production of a live concert or a radiophonic play is substantially more costly than broadcasting recorded music. The figure shows that nearly three-quarters of broadcast hours throughout the radio channels is entertainment content. The share of each content varies greatly from one channel to the next, depending on the channel's profile and target audience.⁴⁴³

The following table presents the share of contents broadcast within the entertainment category.

Table 17: Share of entertainment contents broadcast on public radio channels, 2018, by category

	Music	Animation	Sport	Radiophonic plays
Share of broadcasts	88.9%	9.5%	1.1%	0.4%

Nearly 90% of all entertainment broadcast time is music,⁴⁴⁴ while sports and radiophonic plays respectively represent only 1.1% and 0.4% of broadcast time, as shown in the previous table. Thus, SRG SSR broadcast 434 hours of radiophonic plays across all radio channels in 2018.

Share of programmes broadcast on television (2018)

Using official statistics about the number of hours of broadcasts throughout all SRG SSR television channels, the following table presents the share of content categorised as information, education, and entertainment.

Table 18: Share of information, education and entertainment content in hours of television channels broadcast, average 2015-2018

	Information	Entertainment	Education	Other
Share of broadcasts	41.0%	39.6%	11.9%	7.5%

Due to a higher variation from year to year than in radio channels, potentially caused by changes in annual events such as major sporting events, the data is presented as an average over the four-year period 2015-2018. This accounts for major sporting events such as the Olympics and football World and European championships. These

⁴⁴³ For a detailed discussion per channel, see Conseil fédéral (2016, pp. 51-55).

⁴⁴⁴ Concerning music, sub-categories are popular music (rock, pop, black, electro, country – 58'143 hours), classical music (20'779 hours), folklore/ethno (8'810 hours), jazz (9'979 hours), and other (2'111). This last sub-category includes live concert recordings by the channel, for a total of 1'525 hours.

figures do not distinguish between first broadcasts and rebroadcasts, a distinction that is present in the official statistics data. As the purpose is to show the broadcast categories, it is not relevant to consider whether it is a first or re-broadcast, but rather how the channel schedulers fill their time slots.⁴⁴⁵ The category “information” includes “information” and “documentaries”.⁴⁴⁶ The category “education” includes “culture”, “training”, “science”, “religion”, “children/youth”. The category “entertainment” includes “fiction”, “entertainment”, “sport”, and “music”. The category “other” includes “service”, “advertising”, “presentation / promotion”, “miscellaneous”, and “non-attributed”.

The previous table demonstrates that the two major categories of broadcast, as measured by hours of programmes, are information and entertainment. The split of categories within entertainment is displayed in the following table.

Table 19: Share of entertainment contents broadcast on public television channels, average 2015-2018, by category

	Fiction	Sport	Non-fiction entertainment	Music
Share of broadcasts	57.2%	29.7%	10.6%	2.5%

Fiction thus represents the biggest category as measured by hours of television broadcast, while radiophonic plays are a negligible amount of radio broadcasts. Music, the largest content in radio entertainment, is minor in television. Sports represent nearly a third of broadcast hours, while non-fiction entertainment represents just over ten per cent.

These brief descriptive overviews and analyses are of limited pertinence in a world of non-linear consumption.⁴⁴⁷ However, I have argued that this distribution is relevant in showing the thinking of the public service media officials in the share of broadcasts. Furthermore, linear consumption is still relevant to a large share of the population. The data shows that radio is largely devoted to entertainment, and in particular to music. This aggregate data does not reflect the specificities of single channels; each regional unit has specialised channels devoted to specific types of content (e.g. news) or audience segments (e.g. youth). Entertainment is one of the two most important

⁴⁴⁵ However, a content broadcast several times is only available as one content online. Therefore, this chart does not reflect the content available online, for which metrics would not be broadcast based, but rather catalogue split or consumption in hours.

⁴⁴⁶ The classification has limits: a documentary could be considered entertainment. I argue here that a documentary is a catalogue type of information, as opposed to the flow of news in information. In fact, this distribution is a model that may not reflect fully the variety of the programme itself.

⁴⁴⁷ Most content made available online was conceived for broadcast through radio or television channels. As such, this analysis is not irrelevant, although an incomplete proxy for the online offering.

categories in television, jointly with information. Within entertainment, fiction is the largest category (57%),⁴⁴⁸ followed by sport for nearly one-third of entertainment broadcast time. This shows that fiction and sports are largely visual, while music is largely not.

Market share and relative importance of radio, television and Internet

In 2015, the Swiss spent most of their daily media time on the Internet (over three hours), followed by radio, television, and then newspapers; these figures vary based on age (Conseil fédéral, 2016). In radio, SRG SSR channels had a 65.8% market share, while private radios reached a 28.5% market share and foreign radios 5.7%. In television, foreign private channels are popular, reaching a 50% market share in 2015, while Swiss private television had a 4.6% market share. SRG SSR channels had a 29.7% market share; foreign PSM, 15.6% market share (Conseil fédéral, 2016). With this contextual information, I now turn to discuss the history of public service media and entertainment in Switzerland.

4.4. A brief history of Swiss public media and entertainment

The history of Swiss public media and entertainment can be divided into periods based on a range of criteria, including major legislation, changes in PSM leadership, or technological developments. I structure this history in six periods, organised around key policy choices linked to technological developments.⁴⁴⁹ These six periods are the following:

1. Until 1931: Experimenting with radio broadcasting and developing a radio policy
2. 1931-1938: Realising a Swiss public service broadcaster
3. 1938-1958: Ensuring the national Spiritual Defence
4. 1958-1983: Rolling out a television monopoly
5. 1983-2006: Introducing competition
6. 2006-2018: Facing the challenges of digitalisation and *No Billag*

In each period, I successively sketch the major legal and regulatory changes as well as the organisational modifications they imply, discuss technological developments and their introduction on the Swiss market, and review programmes that illustrate relevant trends. While some sub-sections do not directly address entertainment, they

⁴⁴⁸ This may be in response to economic incentives: imported fiction content is relatively cheap per minute as slot filling content.

⁴⁴⁹ While the periods are not equivalent in duration, they are structured to show major evolutions or shifts and to group experimentation and transition periods. Thematic unity is considered more important than equal period length.

address issues or developments that impact the conditions (technological, regulatory, economic) surrounding the work of the PSM and thus indirectly affect the entertainment offering of the PSM. Before discussing the periods in succession, I explain why specific years mark the transition from one period to another.

1931 is the year SRG SSR was founded and the first concession was granted by the federal government. The period prior to 1931 saw local and amateur experimentations lead up to the identified need for professionalisation and substantial investments, which brought the authorities to create the public radio broadcasting organisation in 1931.

1938 marked the introduction of a national Spiritual Defence policy, one year before the 1939 suspension of the concession to SRG SSR. The national Spiritual Defence policy defined the media system for the two following decades, in the face of a world conflict and extensive propaganda efforts before, during and following the conflict. One can argue that the Swiss national cultural policy was largely created as a defence against foreign propaganda.

1958 saw the launch of a permanent television service, after a period of experimentation, broadcast from Zurich and Geneva. Facing growing audience expectations, SRG SSR underwent a reorganisation to adapt to television broadcasting and foster collaboration and coordination throughout the organisation. It opened the way for expanding its channels, both in number and in broadcasting periods, leading to more choice for audiences.

1983 marked the end of SRG SSR's monopoly, the introduction of competition and a shift in the offering from which the audiences could choose. Under the pressure from pirate radios offering music young listeners craved, the dual broadcasting system of public and private suppliers was introduced. Digital technology progressively transformed processes within broadcasters. Broadcasting technology evolutions enhanced the competitive environment further, leading in turn to an internationalisation of programmes.

2006 was an important year for public service media and the media industry in Switzerland.⁴⁵⁰ On March 24, the Federal Parliament passed the revised Federal Act on Radio and Television; the expectation was that the legal framework was now fit for technological developments. Little did lawmakers know that developments on the other side of the Atlantic would come to massively impact the media system and require fundamentally rethinking this Act. Indeed, that same year, companies that have come to define Internet-age entertainment were making great strides: Facebook

⁴⁵⁰ I explain the choice of this year in more detail, as it is a divide that was not addressed in the "History of SRG SSR" project, which considered the period 1983-2011.

opened its platform to anyone as of the age of 13 with a valid email address; Netflix launched a competition prize worth one million dollars for an algorithm that improves its prediction of customer ratings by over 10%; Amazon launched Amazon Video, its first VOD platform; Twitter was founded; Google acquired one-year-old YouTube for USD 1.65 billion; and *Time Magazine* named “You” the person of the year, “Yes, you. You control the Information Age. Welcome to your world”, as the cover page announced.

Four authors, in particular, are referenced repeatedly in this section, because their complementary analyses are relevant to this research, as a contextual input to analyse and discuss the Swiss case. First, sociologist Patrice Flichy (2004) for his excellent *A History of Modern Communication*, offering a broad history of communication, at the interface of technology and society. Second, media historian and sociologist Jérôme Bourdon (2011) for his cultural history of European televisions 1950-2010. While he focuses on France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom, he also addresses smaller nations. Combining a national perspective with a European view, he discusses the tension between national mass culture and the technocratic dream of European integration. While staying away from both idealisation and demonisation of PSM, he addresses the recurring issues of Americanisation of European television. Third, media and technology law scholar Tim Wu (2016) and his *Attention Merchants*, in which he reviews the history of (mostly) media through the lens of the attention economy, arguing that the key business model for all media is, eventually, that of the massive collection and resale of human attention: “[b]eginning with the radio, each new medium would attain its commercial viability through the resale of what attention it could capture in exchange for its ‘free’ content”. (Wu, 2016, p. 6). This, in turn, has an impact on a societal, or species, level: “‘*homo distractus*,’ a species of ever shorter attention span known for compulsively checking his devices” (Wu, 2016, p. 6). This latter book, in particular, is largely focused on the American market, which is sensible to the extent that a lot of the pioneering work and first use cases for these technologies took place in America after World War II.⁴⁵¹ Fourth, Yves Citton (2017) and his *The Ecology of Attention*. The cultural theorist goes beyond the notion of economy of attention to argue for an ecological approach, which I view as particularly relevant to the discussion of a public service media. Maximising the harvest of individual attention should not be the sole measure of PSM performance; rather, it should consider the best social use of collective and joint attention.

⁴⁵¹ However, as opposed to the Swiss case, the US broadcast media system did not build on a solid public service broadcaster from the start.

For each period, the analysis refers to the levels of Havens and Lotz' (2016) framework for the industrialisation of culture.⁴⁵² Concerning culture, I attempt to show both the national commonalities, around direct democracy, federalism, and diversity, but also the cultural specificities of different language regions within one common national regulatory mandate. Furthermore, I discuss the interplay of the evolution of technological conditions with the practices (in particular audience consumption), regulatory conditions, and economic conditions (competition notably). To illustrate broader trends, I discuss texts, referring here to programmes. Overall, the organising principle is that of the timeline, rather than adhering to a strict approach along the levels of the framework.⁴⁵³

Throughout this history, I identify recurring themes relating to four clusters: entertainment related to technology and the audience; the adoption of new technology by the Swiss PSM and the population; the relationship between private and public media; and Swiss policymaking, particularly relating to culture.

I now discuss these periods in turn. After briefly addressing the key findings from the developments in the period at hand, I discuss the period, while illustrating key points with examples or considerations on programmes, technologies and societal developments.

4.4.1. Experimenting with radio broadcasting and developing a radio policy (until 1931)

Starting in the early 1920s, the first phase of radio broadcasting and the way the federal government dealt with this technology is relevant to setting the scene for public service broadcasting in the country. Indeed, the infrastructure, governance and organisational setup developed in the beginning partly explain later choices. This section, covering the first ten years in Swiss radio broadcasting history, presents the following argument. As with many communication technologies, first use cases for radio broadcasting technology were in the field of the military. This technology attracted researchers and amateurs' interest, the latter setting up experimental radio broadcasters. The need for regulation led to looking abroad to two archetypes: the public interest entrusted to a public organisation (British model), or the public interest entrusted to private organisations in the market (US-American model). These two views are rooted in different relations between high culture and entertainment within society.

⁴⁵² The framework is discussed in chapter one. As a reminder, the framework comprises the following levels: culture; social trends, trends and traditions; mandates; conditions (regulatory, technological, and economic); practices; texts.

⁴⁵³ Concepts introduced in chapter three are also included in the analysis.

Making radio viable required its adoption by the general population. A key vector for mass adoption was entertainment. This was partly because people had more leisure time and also because incumbents lobbied for content regulation, thereby preventing the new media from competing with them by broadcasting the news. Eventually, disputes on the distribution of concession revenue led to the state deciding to unite authorised radios into one new national radio broadcaster and invest in the infrastructure that would allow it to cover the whole territory while fostering national diversity and broadcast in the national languages. Radio broadcasting emerged in a context of increased leisure availability and the introduction of federal social policies. Indeed, the emergence of radio as a means of entertainment is linked to both social conditions and technologies: Gabler (2000) shows that electrification and improved labour conditions, both in terms of money and leisure time, allowed the broadcast and consumption of entertainment content. In the Swiss context, the interwar period saw the development of some of the first federal social policies; the 1920s were a period during which the legal framework that would lead to creation of the pension system was defined, including the introduction of a constitutional article adopted in 1925.

Radio technology and initial use cases: military and music

The paternity of the invention of radio is not clear; the technology appears to have emerged simultaneously in several places.⁴⁵⁴ Guglielmo Marconi is typically credited with bringing it to the market.⁴⁵⁵ Lee De Forest, an American researcher who played an important role in the development of the radio,⁴⁵⁶ organised a musical programme in 1908 that broadcast from the Eiffel Tower and reached 800 kilometres away. Unlike Marconi, De Forest did not have a plan to market his technology; instead, Marconi pitched the broadcast of music to entertain the public and workers (Flichy, 2004). Thus, the mass success of radio technology was later also driven by entertainment as a response to a demand for leisure, since the people newly had time on their hands, given an evolution in labour laws. While Marconi was the largest economic actor in the radio industry, researchers and amateurs alike were tinkering with radio technology.

⁴⁵⁴ This was the case for several technologies at the time, including for instance photography.

⁴⁵⁵ As often with new technologies, the first use cases and investments were in the field of the military, which had a need for cable-less telegraphy; for instance, the British army contracted with Marconi as early as 1898 for the Boer War (Flichy, 2004); the company also worked for commercial purposes with shipping companies.

⁴⁵⁶ By inventing the triode, a vacuum tube that serves as an amplifier, allowing the use of radio technology on a long distance.

Introducing radio to Switzerland: the researcher, the military, the amateur and the need for regulation

The first experimental research on radio in Switzerland was conducted at institutes in Basel, Geneva and Zurich.⁴⁵⁷ Early tests were conducted by the army in 1905. Private concessions for radio were first awarded in 1911 and granted based on strict conditions, with most requests related to reception of the time signal from the Eiffel tower.⁴⁵⁸

Radio emitters were installed by the Swiss army at the aerodromes of Kloten and Dübendorf in 1921, then in Geneva and Lausanne in 1922. However, civilians did not await official regulations for setting up clubs and broadcasting first concerts, such as Roland Pièce, a Lausanne-based amateur who broadcast music in the autumn of 1922, and a first live concert on October 26, 1922 (Schade, 2000). In early 1921, a first club of radio amateurs was founded in Geneva, leading to a national federation, the Swiss Radio-club, created on November 26, 1922.

In the continuous dispute between civilians and the military for access to radio, it was only in 1923 that the federal authorities authorised first experimental broadcasts for entertainment and information (Schade, 2000). This tension is explained by the innovation that radio represented. This technology was fundamentally different to the telephone, the latest technological development in communications. Indeed, there was a qualitative shift, described in 1974 by Vilém Flüsser (2006), from a network system such as the telephone to the radio system. This was a shift from a bi-directional communication in which a large number of participants are inter-connected (telephone, telegraph) to a unidirectional communication from one central point to many. This shift made the political power of such a mass communication system evident. It was thus natural that governments would regulate radio systems (first radio broadcasting, later television broadcasting). This reasoning, as well as frequency limitations, impacted the development of civilian as opposed to military uses of radio technology.

Radio euphoria led to the apparition of several private radio stations throughout Switzerland built on the model of cooperatives.⁴⁵⁹ Furthermore, the opening of the market and the surge in sale of receptors interested economic players in Switzerland, yet the federal administration remained sceptical. There was a need to regulate this

⁴⁵⁷ The country did not contribute substantially to the development of the radiotelegraphy or radiotelephony on an industrial level until the end of World War II, through Brown Boveri & Cie (now ABB).

⁴⁵⁸ Obtaining time was pure information, not subject to much debate. It was technical, useful for business purposes, or for gadget lovers in a use case that was not really what would currently be described as a “killer app” for massive adoption.

⁴⁵⁹ A cooperative is a company that is owned in part or fully by its employees or customers. This model is also used in Switzerland to this day as the corporate structure for the two largest retailers, Coop and Migros.

emerging technology. In considering how to deal with the radio, policymakers naturally looked to experiences abroad, and in particular the UK and the US.

The BBC and the invention of public service broadcasting

The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) was founded in October 1922 and financed by the radio device industry. Radio was viewed as “a miracle of science, a sacred and blessed realm that ought be free from commercial instruction. It was to be for the education, entertainment, and enlightenment of the public and should always deliver ‘the best of everything’ as John Reith of the BBC put it” (Wu, 2016, p. 101). The BBC had a limited mandate to prevent it from competing with newspapers; it could not broadcast political debates or advertising (Schade, 2000). The BBC faced a challenge to its legitimacy because it was originally created as a private monopoly. John Charles Reith, the BBC’s first director-general, successfully lobbied for the transition of the BBC to a public corporation. This meant fulfilling a public service mission based on a monopoly, solid financing and the awareness of its moral obligations; it was to be seen as the “Trustee for the national interest”, as described in its charter (Schade, 2000c). Within the framework that was made available to the BBC, director-general Reith understood the organisation’s mission very distinctly from that of a market-based offering: “[i]t is occasionally indicated to us that we are apparently setting out to give the public what we think they need – and not what they want – but few know what they want and very few what they need [...] In any case it is better to over-estimate the mentality of the public than to under-estimate it” (quoted in Briggs, 1961, p. 353). He refused to view the audience as consumers, and rather considered the BBC as a social tool for educating its listeners.⁴⁶⁰

This view largely influenced the approach to radio by Swiss federal authorities in the twenties and thirties, as it did most European nations that set up public service radio broadcasting monopolies.⁴⁶¹ In Switzerland, this happened at a slower pace than in neighbouring countries due to federalism and the strong distribution of power, as discussed in the previous section. However, Switzerland could have chosen another path: entrust the market with the public interest, following the US model.

⁴⁶⁰ For a discussion of this view, see chapter three.

⁴⁶¹ Historically, the British and French understanding of the concept of public service is different. In the United Kingdom, public service described a service to society, while in France it meant provision by the state. Today, both are synonymous, yet they demonstrate the parallel development and conceptual merging of the content and the organisation providing it (Puppis & Schweizer, 2015).

The United States and the bet on the public interest in the hands of the market

The United States is often pictured as the opposite of a media system built on a strong public service broadcaster. However, the early radio policy choices are more nuanced and anchored in the American perception of the role of the public sector. Idealism was apparent in the early days of the radio broadcasting and the US policy. In the words of Herbert Hoover in 1922, “[i]t is inconceivable that we should allow so great a possibility for service, for news, for entertainment, for education, and for vital commercial purposes to be drowned in advertising chatter” (Hoover, 1950, quoted in Wu, 2016, p. 86). It is telling to observe here that this statement could just as well have been made in the 1990s when addressing the Internet. And yet, with radio as with the Internet, the advertising model arguably won. In the 1920s in the US, “radio stations were trustees of the public airwaves and were required, by federal law, to conduct their broadcasting ‘in the public interest’”, as required by the Radio Act of 1927, which also established the Federal Radio Commission tasked with regulating radio for “the public interest, convenience, or necessity” (Wu, 2016, p. 97, p. 361). In other words, while the UK entrusted an organisation, the BBC, with defending the public interest, the US entrusted the market, in an approach in line with the concept of a marketplace of ideas. Even though the legislation imposed public interest broadcasting, the US saw a strong development of commercial radio in the 1920s and 1930s. It was heavy on advertising, inspired by the UK’s effective war propaganda in the 1910s. Public radio was only introduced in the US in the 1970s with the creation of National Public Radio (NPR).⁴⁶² Commercial radio did not however prevent quality content being broadcast: over the 1930s, Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) successfully produced content that was “both popular and highbrow” (Wu, 2016, p. 102), for instance broadcasting New York Philharmonic concerts, or an experimental drama show with avant-garde plays. Such content would not have been out of place as an entertainment content on the schedule of a European public radio broadcaster. It was also on CBS that Orson Welles played his highly effective radio broadcast of *War of Worlds* as a series of news broadcasts, reportedly leading to some panic movements. According to Wu (2016), during the 1930s CBS was highly effective at balancing sufficient advertising with quality content.⁴⁶³ Thus, the dichotomy between the US and the UK was more nuanced. The perceived opposition between the two nations in this regard might also be explained by the assigned role of culture and entertainment in these societies.

⁴⁶² NPR emerged in the context of a backlash against the perceived commercialisation of all media.

⁴⁶³ I must stress here that CBS was only one of several radio broadcasters, meaning that the American listener had the choice to listen to other channels and programmes.

Europe and America: on the cultural background of entertainment in broadcast media

What might explain these two different approaches? Mass media policy is essentially about power, and the social and cultural history of Europe and America are crucial contexts to understand these two approaches. Gabler (2000) argues that the difference between US and Europe in relation to entertainment is that Europe had state religious authorities that quarantined entertainment, which they viewed as a threat, as a competing system of values that threatened the existing social hierarchy. This went back to the Renaissance, with the court's high culture and the people's bards. The 18th century rise of a middle class led to it aspiring to the upper class' culture, in order to distinguish itself from the rest of the people.⁴⁶⁴ By contrast, America at that time had neither the organised, state sponsored church, nor the cultural aristocracy; these circumstances allowed the emergence of what Gabler coins a "Republic of Entertainment". He argues that evangelism, the dominant 19th century American religion, was itself a form of entertainment rather than a doctrine, as it drew more from emotions.

In the American context, the fight over high culture versus sensationalism in entertainment can be seen as a class fight: "[m]ass entertainment may have begun as the democrats' revenge against the elites they despised" (Gabler, 2000, p. 29).⁴⁶⁵ Gabler (2000) explains this by arguing that the common man had little wealth or political power, and social mobility was limited. The only scope or field in which the person on the street could have power was culture. This power was expressed by pushing for the form of culture that one dominated, and which was abhorred by the wealthy: entertainment. As Gabler (2000) puts it: "nothing could have been more democratic than entertainment. Everyone had access to it, the majority ruled in it, and no one's aesthetic judgement of it was deemed better than anyone else's" (p. 30). Largely entrusting culture to the markets also gave the majority of consumers an important power, inasmuch as its preferences were arguably catered to.⁴⁶⁶ This idea of a high culture as reduced to an instrument of class warfare may thus also be a reason for the lack of a public service broadcaster, and for the paternalist tone of director-general Reith's description of the BBC's mission.

⁴⁶⁴ This was to be echoed in the 19th century with the emergence of photography as the *bourgeois* means to express status through photography portraits, as analysed by sociologist and photographer Gisèle Freund (1974) in "Photography and Society" (*Photographie et société*). The middle class brought the notion of the market to culture, rather than the patronage model of the aristocracy.

⁴⁶⁵ Gabler (2000) describes it in the context of the 1828 Andrew Jackson vs. John Quincy Adams presidential election. Thus, it is a fight about authority, reminding us that entertainment is an instrument of power. See also the discussion in chapter three.

⁴⁶⁶ For an extensive review of the evolving American cultural policy, see the research by Frédéric Martel (2006).

Beyond this historical difference, it is ironic that the United States would go on to impose its entertainment content and, through it, its values, on the world, first through Hollywood and, later, its television networks and programmes, in an illustration of the concept of soft power introduced by Joseph Nye (2004). This success on international markets is arguably due, in part, to the advantage the US entertainment industry has through the size and nature of its domestic market (Augros & Kitsopanidou, 2009). This domination of European markets is even stronger when it comes to digital VOD platforms and the values they represent.⁴⁶⁷ However, this is not a one way flow; as Joseph Straubhaar (1991) argues, while the relative size of markets differs greatly, smaller television and cinema markets influence the US-American market also.

Defining a regulatory frame for radio: communication or entertainment?

In the early 1920s, the need to regulate radio in Switzerland became evident.⁴⁶⁸ In 1921, the federal government thus introduced a draft Act defending the state's quasi-monopoly in communications.⁴⁶⁹ The government's main arguments centred around national security, both domestic and foreign (Schade, 2000).⁴⁷⁰ This approach conceived of radio through the lenses of infrastructure and defence rather than as a media. The initial regulatory framing led to the de facto inclusion of entertainment in federal regulations, although it was less of a focus point for incumbent media. After its passing by parliament, the Act came into force on January 1st, 1924.

The process that led to the implementation of the Act is informative; it shows the tension between the incumbent media industry and this new mass media on the types of content it should carry, argued from a public policy perspective but with a strong underlying economic interest. As soon as the parliamentary debates on the Federal Act were concluded, Federal Councillor Robert Haab got to work on the legal and economic conditions for radio broadcasting; to do so, he gathered representatives of the economy, academia, the state, the army and radio amateurs. Of particular relevance for this research, French-speaking delegates argued not to regulate the broadcast of entertainment programmes and music, as the regulation should, in their

⁴⁶⁷ This issue is discussed later in this chapter.

⁴⁶⁸ Until 1924 and the introduction of regulation on radio, the relevant law was the Federal Act on Telegraph and Telephone Communications, which did not address cable-less communication.

⁴⁶⁹ In 1923, some interest groups were opposed to a monopoly, favouring regionalisation of these radios. This posed an economic challenge, since the Swiss market was too small to offer qualitative radio content while covering their costs. For instance, the Zurich-based newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ) argued for building a radio system modelled on the United States to allow Swiss entrepreneurs to generate profits from this technology (Schade, 2000a).

⁴⁷⁰ The role of media in the general strike of 1918 was a reason to orient broadcast media for the public interest, aiming at an integration approach.

view, focus on the control of communications; this argument would have led to a focus of federal regulation on infrastructure policy rather than cultural or media policy, argued along the lines of subsidiarity and the lack of need for federal laws on entertainment content. Opposing this view, Rudolf Lüdi, head of the Swiss Telegraphic Agency (Agence Télégraphique Suisse, ATS), argued for combining commercial services⁴⁷¹ and entertainment content, with only the former being profitable. The federal commission for radio recommended that radio should not be a monopoly (Schade, 2000a). The federal administration's Directorate General of Telegraphy decided that four stations were sufficient for Switzerland and authorised the experimentation of radio transmitters at the aerodromes of Cointrin (Geneva), Champ-de-l'Air (Lausanne) and Kloten (Zurich), another symbolic link between the media infrastructure and the physical transport infrastructure.

On January 10, 1923, the federal government authorised the beginning of radio experimentations from these three transmitters. The conditions for an authorisation were: non-commercial exploitation, no monopoly, and surveillance by an independent authority to control programmes. These early choices, and the necessity to obtain an authorisation to broadcast even entertainment content, showed that entertainment was perceived as relevant by the authorities, but also that it was viewed as less of a threat by incumbent media industries than information broadcasts, because considered less profitable. This regulation opened the way for rolling out radio in Switzerland.

Granting local radio concessions: broadcasting when planes cannot fly

A key to the success for any broadcast technology is its adoption by users.⁴⁷² In both the US⁴⁷³ and Switzerland, radio broadcasts were essentially driven and established by radio hardware manufacturers,⁴⁷⁴ with the explicit aim of selling radio receivers.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷¹ Specifically, news which Lüdi believed to be profitable.

⁴⁷² France's Minitel for instance was only able to last so long because the public sector supported its adoption by promoting the acquisition of terminals by the population. The Minitel was a French videotext online service accessible through telephone lines.

⁴⁷³ For instance, NBC was owned jointly by Westinghouse and General Electric, two manufacturers and sellers of radio hardware; Merlin Aylesworth, NBC's first president is quoted arguing that the broadcaster's main aim was not profit, but rather to ensure the sale of radio hardware (Wu, 2016, p. 360).

⁴⁷⁴ In Switzerland, one such pioneer was Maurice Rambert, founder in 1922 of the Radio-Electrique SA. Furthermore, he played a leading role in establishing the International Broadcasting Union, based in Geneva. It later became the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). Rambert was director-general of SRG SSR from its creation in 1931 until 1936.

⁴⁷⁵ In an interesting reversal, contemporary software providers move into hardware to ensure consumers use their software; this, as opposed to the original move of hardware producers funding content to sell hardware. Amazon produces the Kindle e-reader and reportedly sells each unit at a loss, in order to sell ebooks and collect data; Google produces computers and phones. Both illustrate Marc Andreessen's (2011) argument that "software is eating the world".

While first radio concessions were granted to local, private, non-commercial organisations in Lausanne and Geneva, the high costs of producing programmes and the limited revenue from concessions led to a joint venture in 1923 of a “Société romande de radiophonie”, which failed one year later. Radio Genève was created in 1925 and broadcast sports reportage. These radio programmes were transmitted from aerodromes and were thus limited to broadcasts in the evenings and nights, as the equipment was used during the day to communicate with aircraft. The first authorisation in German-speaking Switzerland was only awarded 18 months after the first one in French-speaking Switzerland, due to the commercial orientation of initial projects requesting a concession. Radio Genossenschaft Zurich obtained a concession in 1925, before Radiogenossenschaft Bern (1925) and Radiogenossenschaft Basel (1926). This meant a sharing of the income amongst radios, while the number of radio concessions in households did not grow as fast as in other European countries.⁴⁷⁶ At the end of 1924, after the launch of Radio Zurich, German-speaking Switzerland had 15'000 households with a receiving concession and French-speaking Switzerland, 1'500. In late 1925, the figures were 30'000 and 3'500 (Schade, 2000b), thus showing a swift growth in adoption, arguably related to the increased availability of a local offering. The limited audiences was due to several factors, according to Schade (2000): the lack of financing to extend programming quality; the low quality of reception,⁴⁷⁷ in particular in competition with large, national emitters from neighbouring countries, as the federal state refused to authorise the construction of additional emitters by Radio Zurich; and constraints on their programme, such as the ban on social or political debates to prevent competition with newspapers. This last point was an early sign of a recurring consideration in content regulation for the future public service broadcaster in order to reduce competition with incumbent media.

In 1926, ATS was granted the monopoly for news on a national level; as radios were not in a financial position to develop their own professional news service, this arrangement suited most actors. The state was satisfied with a monopoly that ensured information circulation in case of a crisis (Schade, 2000b). This setup can be understood as typical of new technologies, starting with content considered as less politically risky and associated with limited cultural prestige, as people experiment on the fringes. As the new technology becomes accepted in (high) society, its content and its audience increase in value; or, to use Bourdieu's framing, the social and cultural

⁴⁷⁶ In 1926, every 76th person had a radio concession in Switzerland, as opposed to every 48th in Germany or every 21st in the UK (Schade, 2000b).

⁴⁷⁷ Early subscribers often lived near the emitters due to an enhanced quality of reception.

capital linked to the consumption of radio increase. This in turn leads to more prestigious content being broadcast; hence, the move from entertainment to news as radio became more widely adopted and recognised, at a time where news was considered more political than entertainment and therefore crucial during the world conflict. This led to higher consumption rates and allowed audiences to benefit from the radio's immediacy and speed, a key advantage of this medium compared to print media. This was a step towards the general acceleration of news, notably by enabling live shows. However, even within entertainment, early broadcasts were live orchestra concerts, which could be considered highbrow.⁴⁷⁸

Centralisation and money: building a national radio infrastructure and the Italian-language question

As of 1925, Radio Zurich requested the authorisation to build new emitters to expand into Eastern and Southern Switzerland. The federal government, favouring local radios, refused to grant the authorisations. Facing low adoption rates, local radios were struggling to finance their programmes. At that time, recording technology was not available. Thus, radios partnered to exchange programmes, through simultaneous live broadcasts across several radio broadcasters.⁴⁷⁹ In practice, this collaboration was difficult, and the financial situation of local radios remained challenging.

Following the request by the federal government to create a union of radios, the local radios began discussions that ended in disputes on the governance and financing of this union. Therefore, the federal state led discussions with the local radio broadcasters in 1926 and 1927. The conflict was thus the starting point for a process that led to the introduction of a share of redistribution of national tax revenues to finance smaller broadcasters. This process is typical of Switzerland's federalism: a disagreement on the regional share of financing or investment burden leads to a deadlock, allowing the federal state to intervene and impose a national solution.⁴⁸⁰

The financial dispute and the ensuing centralisation had a major impact for the Italian-speaking region, third by population, and on the national cohesion and perception of minorities more broadly. In developing the plans for a national system, the federal government mandated Peter P. Eckersley, the head engineer of the BBC. He

⁴⁷⁸ The debate around variety orchestras and popular culture in the following decades illustrates the pressure of competing programmes and audience tastes on the PSM offering.

⁴⁷⁹ The reasoning was one of economic gains in the absence of competition for local audiences due to the broadcasting technology of the time.

⁴⁸⁰ The introduction of railways in Switzerland followed a somewhat similar logic, with a decentralised operation and a late start, before a centralisation. The dispute around centralisation, which took place in the late 1920s, finds echoes to this day with the declared intention of the current management of SRG SSR to rationalise its locations and move staff from Bern to Zurich and from Geneva to Lausanne.

recommended obtaining three exclusive radio frequencies and building three high-power radio transmitters, one per language region (Schade, 2000b).⁴⁸¹ Thus, the idea of an Italian-speaking broadcaster was introduced by a British engineer. This shows how the important investments required in new equipment to scale radio broadcast technology led to effectively recognising Italian-speaking Switzerland as an equal third linguistic region next to German and French. As such, the new national broadcaster and the policymaking that framed its realisation became an important symbolic instrument for national cohesion and the involvement of minorities, as well as setting the stage for a dedicated broadcast programme in Italian. At that stage and until 1927, Radio Zurich was receiving the revenue from concessions in Ticino, with the obligation to take the interests of the Italian-speaking population into account.⁴⁸²

On these grounds, a technical commission of experts recommended in 1929 the funding of three radio transmitters, one for each linguistic region, financed and exploited by the federal state. The government followed this recommendation. In the context of an emerging regional-national solution, Eastern Switzerland founded its own local radio broadcaster in 1930: the Ostschweizerische Radiogesellschaft.

Having decided on the infrastructure, the tricky issue of governance of a national broadcast organisation remained. Representing the French-language view in this national debate, Maurice Rambert⁴⁸³ argued to structure the governance around three poles: technical; administrative; programmes. The first could be operated by the federal state; the second, by a national organisation; the third, in his argument, should remain in the competency of the local broadcasters (Schade, 2000b); this effectively came back to centralising the infrastructure layers while decentralising the creation, curation and connection layers. Considering financial constraints, Rambert also argued for a stronger redistribution of revenues across broadcasters; to reduce costs, he went as far as to propose that Radio Zurich externalise its radio orchestra, an issue that will long plague internal relations.⁴⁸⁴

Given the differing regional positions, the federal commission for radio started working on a draft concession and the statutes for the new Swiss national radio broadcaster, largely prepared by the administration. Two key points were largely discussed: programme autonomy, and the financial split of revenues. The negotiations resulted in a relative programme independence, albeit with some oversight from the national

⁴⁸¹ At the time, Romansh was not yet a national language.

⁴⁸² Ticino is the only fully Italian-language canton. Italian is also one of the three languages of the canton of Graubünden, next to German and Romansh.

⁴⁸³ Geneva radio pioneer and first director-general of the soon-to-be public service radio broadcaster.

⁴⁸⁴ The orchestra wars are discussed later in this chapter. This was a sign of two key questions: first, how resources were allocated to entertainment; and second how any investment in entertainment could be controversial.

organisation, and a progressive redistribution of the financial revenues from the concession to favour smaller regions. The technical infrastructure was handled by the state. The concession was to be granted to the new national public service broadcaster, rather than to each member organisation.

Period conclusion

Over a period of ten years, Switzerland saw the introduction of radio broadcasts in households, shifting from military applications over into the amateur's realm. Seven regional radio organisations emerged progressively: Société Romande de Radiodiffusion; Radio-Genossenschaft Zurich; Société des Emissions Radio-Genève; Radio-Genossenschaft Bern; Radiogenossenschaft Basel; Ostschweizerische Radiogesellschaft; Società Cooperativa per la Radiodiffusione Nella Svizzera Italiana. Their initial action was in the realm of entertainment, both spoken and musical. Financial difficulties and disagreements with written media in regard to content led to regulation and a decisive infrastructure choice: the state funded the installation of three radio transmitters, one per linguistic region, and the local radios were federated into one organisation, a new national radio broadcaster, which in turn was awarded a concession. Through decisions pertaining to broadcasting policy, the equal importance of the three language regions was anchored in the political vision for public service broadcasting, recognising Italian as an equal to German and French.

4.4.2. Realising a Swiss public service broadcaster (1931-1938)

The early days of the Swiss public service broadcasting organisation saw a lot of developments that had lasting consequences. This section addresses first the organisation, specifically its infrastructure and the mandate focused around entertainment and education. Next, it discusses two forms of content: sports, and music, illustrated by the debates around copyright and orchestras. Curation and connection were also a topic in the early days, as shown by the debate around the printed radio programme. Lastly, the merging of advertising and entertainment in American radio is addressed as an impactful development abroad. The period ends with an evident need for reforming the organisation, in a move that prepares the spiritual defence during World War II.

The Swiss Radiobroadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR) was created on February 24, 1931, as a national radiobroadcasting organisation. On March 21, 1931, Federal Councillor Marcel Pilet-Golaz, head of the Federal Department of Post and

Railways,⁴⁸⁵ addressed the first delegates' assembly and presented his political vision for radiobroadcasting, stressing in particular that radio is to be made for the public, and not the other way around. This position announces a political intention of fulfilling listeners' expectations rather than imposing content that is disconnected from these expectations, although the concession reflects a more paternalistic view in line with the mandates and practice of public service broadcasting at the time. In article 13 of the first concession granted to SRG SSR in 1931, the federal government defined what was expected of SRG SSR in terms of programmes, as follows:

- “1. The programmes broadcast by SRG SSR must defend and develop the country's cultural values and contribute to the spiritual, moral, religious, civic and artistic education of the public. They must provide it with information that is as objective, extensive and timely as possible, and meet its need for entertainment. Programmes must serve the country's interest, strengthen national unity and harmony and contribute to international understanding. Shortwave broadcasts should strengthen the ties that unite the Swiss living abroad with their country and contribute to Switzerland's influence in the world.
2. Programmes that are likely to endanger the internal or external security of the Confederation or the cantons, their constitutional order, or Switzerland's relations with international law are not permitted.”⁴⁸⁶

This first concession presented the three dimensions of information, education and entertainment; in regard to this last point, the concession explicitly referred to the need of the public for entertainment. In turn, the operationalisation of this mandate was both facilitated and constrained by the regulatory, economic and technological conditions. The original six radio studios and seven local radio organisations largely kept control of their programmes, while the three regional organisations were in charge of administrative tasks and accountable to the central SRG SSR. The studios expanded, moving into larger offices, and invested in new reporting vehicles.

⁴⁸⁵ This administrative governance reflected the administrative and political view of radio broadcasting largely as an infrastructure. The issue of the administrative responsibility for the public broadcaster says a lot about how the government views the role of the organisation.

⁴⁸⁶ Translated from the original French : “1 Les programmes diffusés par la SSR doivent défendre et développer les valeurs culturelles du pays et contribuer à la formation spirituelle, morale, religieuse, civique et artistique du public. Ils doivent lui donner une information aussi objective, étendue et rapide que possible, et répondre à son besoin de divertissement. Les programmes doivent servir l'intérêt du pays, renforcer l'union et la concorde nationales et contribuer à une compréhension internationale. Les émissions sur ondes courtes doivent resserrer les liens qui unissent au pays les Suisses demeurant à l'étranger et contribuer au rayonnement de la Suisse dans le monde. 2 Les émissions qui sont susceptibles de mettre en danger la sûreté intérieure ou extérieure de la Confédération ou des cantons, leur ordre constitutionnel, ou les rapports de droit international de la Suisse ne sont pas admises”.

Scaling radio broadcasting: the issue of infrastructure

For a broad adoption of the radio by citizens, it was essential to install technical infrastructure that would make it possible to receive the signal throughout the country.⁴⁸⁷ The federal state had decided to set up the infrastructure for the three language regions. It thus put in service its high-power radio transmitters in Beromünster (for German-speaking regions) and Sottens (for French-speaking regions) in 1931, and Monte Ceneri (for Italian-speaking regions) in 1933.⁴⁸⁸

The availability of the programmes throughout the country, as mandated by the concession, was a technical challenge, notably given the complex topography of the country. To reach this ambitious goal, the national Post, Telegraph and Telephone organisation (PTT) invested in technical equipment, both wire-based and wireless; at the time, PTT was responsible for the broadcasting infrastructure. To finance this investment, PTT received 50% of the concession revenue, the rest going to the new SRG SSR to cover the production costs of programmes. The surveillance authority thereby recognised the equal importance of the infrastructure and of the content to ensure adoption of radio. This distribution also showed a major limitation for SRG SSR: it did not have control of its broadcasting infrastructure.

Unity through diversity: the necessary creation of an Italian-language radio broadcaster

While the German- and French-language regions already had local radio broadcasters prior to the 1931 creation of SRG SSR, that was not the case of the Italian-speaking region. In the context of the pre-war period, there was broad support for the creation of an Italian-language radio to strengthen the legitimacy of a national media and to serve all regions. The Italian-language radio studio was created by the government of the canton of Ticino under the name of “Ente autonomo per la radiodiffusione nella Svizzera italiana” (Autonomous broadcasting authority in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland). Progressively and in line with the evolution of federal plurilingualism policy, it would later be extended to support *italianità* throughout the country, thus including Italian-speaking immigrants living in other linguistic regions.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁷ The original central organisation of SRG SSR reflected this focus on infrastructure: with a central staff of two, the SRG SSR was essentially tasked with liaising with the Directorate general for telegraphs, which was responsible for overseeing technical infrastructure. Thus, this regulator reflected the infrastructure angle on public radio at the time.

⁴⁸⁸ The location names would remain the reference name used by the general public to refer to the broadcasters for decades to come.

⁴⁸⁹ *Italianità* refers to the Italian culture and language. While the Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland (canton Ticino and parts of canton Graubünden) have cultural specificities, the large immigration from Italy to all regions of Switzerland in the 1960s and 1970s increased the share of Italian-speaking residents of Switzerland, broadening the appeal and the mission of the Italian-speaking public service media.

To ensure a quality programme in each linguistic region, a system of redistribution of the licence fee revenue was set up, effectively leading to a subsidy by German-speaking audiences of the smaller Italian- and French-speaking regions. This issue of revenue redistribution was one of the contentious points that led to centralisation in the first place.⁴⁹⁰

Public radio: limited to entertainment and education

Once the technological requirements were fulfilled, the debate shifted to programmes. The main point of contention was around news and information. Indeed, the radio's potential as a mass media led to increasing conflicts with newspaper publishers, the incumbent dominant mass media: publishers opposed radio broadcasting news.⁴⁹¹ After an extensive lobbying campaign by publishers, the surveillance authority decided in May 1931 that radio would be limited to education and entertainment, while political information was to remain in the realm of the press (Scherrer, 2000).⁴⁹² Beyond the lobbying of publishers, another factor influenced this decision: SRG SSR's limited resources to hire journalists. The only news broadcast on SRG SSR radios was the short news bulletins produced by ATS.⁴⁹³

The only exceptions were the results of important votes and elections, as well as major sporting events; press reviews specifically were forbidden (Schade, 2000c): "[p]ublishers have therefore succeeded in establishing a kind of 'division of labour' between press and radio: while the political debate remains reserved for newspapers, entertainment and education are entrusted to the radio" (Scherrer, 2000, p. 71).⁴⁹⁴ Radio thus became the locus of entertainment and education rather than of news information. An anecdotal exception to the ban on news reporting: Radio Genève was allowed to report on the League of Nations conferences. However, despite this exception, Marcel-William Suès,⁴⁹⁵ the main reporter at Radio Genève covering these

⁴⁹⁰ This was a time of fundamental discussion around the financial equalisation, or the redistribution of financial resources from the federal state to the cantons, and later between cantons or regions. With the creation of the federal state in 1848, the rights for post and borders were attributed to the federal state, while previously being collected by the cantons. This led to the first form of financial equalisation, the federal state contributing financially to roads, water and forestry. The system is now an extensive and regularly updated convention between cantons, as a balance to the fiscal competition across cantons in other fields of policymaking.

⁴⁹¹ At the time, the press was close to political parties and largely partisan; part of its funding was provided by political parties.

⁴⁹² At the time as today, the new mass media was viewed as a competitor by the press; in the 1930s, the radio, now the Internet.

⁴⁹³ The news bulletin was broadcast twice a day and was meant as a complement to reading newspapers.

⁴⁹⁴ Translated from the original French: "Les éditeurs ont donc réussi à instaurer une sorte de 'répartition des tâches' entre presse et radio: si le débat politique reste réservé aux journaux, le divertissement et l'éducation sont confiés à la radio".

⁴⁹⁵ He was known under the name of Squibbs.

issues, pivoted from reporting on international conferences to reporting on football, as it became increasingly clear that the League of Nations had failed its mission (Scherrer, 2000).

This focus on entertainment and education did not prevent the rise of radio. Rather, the difficult economic context was one in which the radio stood out by making it possible to access entertainment that may otherwise have become too costly, such as going to the theatre or concerts (Mäusli, 2000). A national survey of the population in 1932 found that listeners favoured entertainment content (light music, accordion, choral music) over information and educational programmes (Mäusli, 2000).

As radio devices appeared in houses, people tuned in for the miracle of the technology: being able to listen to a theater play, an opera from afar. Yet by the mid-1930s, the novelty factor had worn off and people wanted programmes created for the radio format, not just broadcast using radio technology. A new mode of listening appeared, as one tuned in during the evening. The radio would be playing during dinner. Disagreements on the type of music or programmes one should broadcast reflected socio-economic groups: workers, farmers, teenagers. The practice of listening in silence to the mid-day news bulletin during lunch was very prevalent in Switzerland: lunch was the time of peak audiences. As opposed to radio, the practice of watching television news would later not typically be accompanied by eating a meal (Mäusli, 2000).

The need for new adapted formats for radio led to considering sports as a way to attract new listeners through events.

Inventing events: sports on the radio

Sports would become an extremely resilient form of broadcast in terms of audiences; indeed, their listeners renew with each generation. While a given sport, for example football, remains the same, its rules, practices, business models evolve over time with technology. Thus, sport is a field that shows most plainly the mutual influence of conditions, mandates, social trends, practices and texts. For instance, early spoken reports on football games not only stated the number of goals, but also all red and yellow cards and other statistics. Ski and cycling reports included a listing of all Swiss athletes (Thurnheer, 2003); a practice that one could not imagine in the current attention environment, because the speed of information has increased, but also because technology provides this information through visual display.

It is in Ticino that sports were perhaps first fully understood for their promotional potential for the radio medium within the country. The director of the Lugano studio,

Felice A. Vitali, organised a bicycle race, *Coppa Pro Radio* (Cup for the radio), on September 7, 1933. Three years later, the concept of a reported sports competition was repeated on a national scale covering ten different disciplines, including running and a range of piloting disciplines (Scherrer, 2000). This is an example of the Swiss policy of experimenting on a local level before replicating or scaling nationally if successful.⁴⁹⁶ Since the radio was banned from broadcasting its own news, sports acted as a form of replacement for news, in some cases created for this medium. This allowed the new medium to display its functional advantage over newspapers in real-time coverage and in the use of voice to convey emotions.

The idea of using mass media to create events, be it to report on them far and wide, or seizing the audience's thirst for events to create one, was not unique to a Swiss context or to radio. Consider the *Tour de France*: the famous cycling race around France, a sign of national unity, was invented in 1903 by the editors of *L'Auto*,⁴⁹⁷ a French magazine, to face dwindling sales figures. The *Tour de France* became a major event and a driver of technological media innovation in France: first radio reporting, first cinema reel, television show, first live broadcast. The *Tour de France* is representative of the way sporting events can be mediatic creations and a driver of innovation for media. The power of sporting broadcasts to capture a nation's attention and emotions would soon be called upon to vehicle nationalism.

The practice of creating mediatic events through sports would go on to take over other fields, including politics. Contemporary political campaigns for high office are largely structured around major mediatic events such as broadcast debates organised by media houses.⁴⁹⁸

Radio and music programming: disc recordings and copyright

Music was central to early public broadcasting. I consider two related developments pertaining to early radio music. First, I discuss the impact of recording technology and copyright on music broadcasts. Later, I address the orchestra wars after the 1936 reform of SRG SSR.

Regulatory and economic conditions constrain both practices and texts. As an illustration of this, I now address the issue of copyright negotiations, as disc recording technology allowed the broadcast of recorded music as well as live radio orchestra

⁴⁹⁶ A practice typical of federal systems.

⁴⁹⁷ Now a daily known as *L'Equipe*.

⁴⁹⁸ The famous first televised presidential debate opposing Kennedy and Nixon in the US-American 1960 election arguably gave the former a lead and perhaps signaled the moment television overtook radio as the essential political media.

concerts, which are subject to different legal rights regimes. Pragmatically, the copyright dispute led to more music production from Switzerland. This in turn fit into the public service mandate and is a recurring theme of the broadcaster's central role for domestic cultural production.

Music was an important share of radio broadcasts in Switzerland: in the 1930s, roughly 2/3 of broadcasts were shows with music, notably from live orchestras. About 1/5 of broadcast time was from disc recordings (Scherrer, 2000). At the time, radio was broadcast only several hours per day. While payment of copyright to music rights holders was clarified as early as October 1931 with federations such as France's *SACEM* and Germany's *Gesellschaft für Senderechte* representing the authors, the issue with disc majors was more complex. Indeed, the 1922 Federal Act on Copyright and the 1886 Bern Convention on Copyright did not address radio nor the issue of broadcasting recordings. In September 1931, the Swiss Union of disc wholesalers initially agreed to allow the broadcast of recorded music, as long as the disc name and brand were mentioned, for up to two hours per day. The agreement was terminated within a year, as the International federation of the phonographic industry stepped in, as in other European markets.⁴⁹⁹ This led to a complex legal process that culminated in January 1936 with a court granting a disc the same copyright protection as an original work. This prevented the radio from broadcasting discs from major foreign labels: "[a]s a result of this whole affair, music produced in Switzerland is being given a greater place in radio programmes, which is perfectly in line with what is expected of SRG SSR. In addition, these recordings can now be exchanged or even sold to foreign broadcasters" (Scherrer, 2000, p. 80).⁵⁰⁰ In turn, an agreement was found in May 1937, whereby disc recordings could be broadcast two hours per day and per broadcaster for a fixed indemnity of CHF 80'000 per year (Scherrer, 2000).

Thus, technological (recording) and legal (copyright) conditions impacted the action of the radio broadcaster and fostered its public service delivery by forcing it to record and broadcast more local music. This also illustrates the creation of a value chain around recorded music, with different players having diverging interest and acting to defend them.

⁴⁹⁹ The impact of powerful international or national federation in entertainment would be lasting. The Motion Pictures Association of America MPAA, the trade association representing Hollywood's major studios, famously plays a role in lobbying foreign governments to relax film quotas as well as domestically for copyright protecting regulations in the face of piracy.

⁵⁰⁰ Translated from the original French: "Conséquence de toute cette affaire, la musique produite en Suisse se voit accorder une plus grande place dans les programmes radiophoniques, ce qui répond parfaitement à ce que l'on attend de la SSR. En outre, ces enregistrements peuvent à présent faire l'objet d'échanges avec des société de radiodiffusion étrangères, voire leur être vendus".

Connection and curation: the fight for the printed programme

While agreements with external partners were difficult, SRG SSR also faced internal tensions. At the time, all was not pacified between member organisations of SRG SSR: internal conflicts can be illustrated by the fight for the reference printed programme of radio content between the Zurich and Bern affiliates (for more, see Scherrer, 2000, pp. 73-75). The official printed programme is in itself an interesting document to study. It is an essential element for a schedule-driven broadcast to find its audience. By bringing the radio broadcast back to paper, it also competed with newspapers, albeit with different content. The printed programme was a tool with which a studio could strengthen its connection to its audience, editorialise on internal politics within SRG SSR, and hence defend the studio's position within the organisation. The printed programme remained a major factor of connection between a radio and its audience.⁵⁰¹

The small size of the French- and Italian-language regions led to a swift agreement on a unified regional radio programme (*Le Radio* and *Radioprogramma*). In the German-speaking region however, competition between Bern and Zurich led to two competing radio printed programmes. Ringier, a major publisher, seized the opportunity and eventually published the merged programme, the official *Schweizer Radiozeitung* as of 1936, sharing revenues with the German-language studios.

The regional printed programme was the first instance of a publicly mandated organisation providing content and information on a supra-local level, as opposed to previous local state culture focused around buildings, opera-houses, theatres, institutions that represented the tradition and the power of the state, local institutions founded in the late 19th century (Geneva's *Grand Théâtre*, 1876, Zurich's *Opernhaus*, 1891, etc.). Prior to the regional printed programme, the local printed radio programme fit within the tradition of local culture, in the absence of a national cultural policy at the time;⁵⁰² the fight for the local programme is thus a proxy for the organisation's programme autonomy.

Like radio broadcasts, the printed programme was centred around education and entertainment. Education is to be understood here both as general education and as education related to this new medium and the use of radio devices.⁵⁰³ This latter

⁵⁰¹ The radio programme also contributed to celebrity culture. The increasing personalisation of mass media throughout the 1970s made journalists into celebrities through the paper television programmes.

⁵⁰² The key exception, perhaps, is the national library, an institution founded in 1895.

⁵⁰³ This contrasts with the lack of public information in regard to the use of digital devices. This objective was pursued at a time when the majority of the population did not have a radio receiver at home. It can thus be reframed as an instrument to reduce a mass media divide; in current terms, it is equivalent to a measure to fight the digital divide.

function was also promoted by the *Pro Radio* campaign, launched by SRG SSR in 1931.

Promoting the radio: Pro Radio

Pro Radio's purpose was to promote radio as a medium, which required the costly acquisition by the population of a receptor device. The aim of the campaign was to enhance the concession revenues for the broadcaster. Initially organising conferences and events to present radio broadcasting to the population, *Pro Radio* was spun-off in an association promoting this medium and funded by a tax on devices. It also worked with schools, building on the theory that children had an important role to play in convincing their parents to invest in a radio (Mäusli, 2000).⁵⁰⁴

In the period building up to 1936, a lot of hope was placed in radio as a vector of peace and internationalism. The radio broadcasts, so went the argument, would allow people across Europe to listen to the same European concert, wherever they were. And yet, using music to attract listeners, the radio would become a formidable vector of propaganda for the Nazi regime (Mäusli, 2000). A shift in the advertising around radio is perceptible, whereby one argument to invest in a radio, up until approximately 1935, was to gain access to European and international radio; as off 1937, advertising focused on the Swiss public sphere (Mäusli, 2000). This illustrates the evolving expectations in regard to a technology and its impact.

Being perceived as a participant in the modern world and an informed citizen was a key driver of the acquisition of a radio device. The radio saw widespread adoption partly because it could be either luxurious or cheap, self-made; it was thus accessible to all. Acquiring a radio could represent one month of salary. Many advertising campaigns at the time pitched a credit to acquire a radio, a practice that later expanded to all home electronic appliances. The annual licence fee represented about one tenth of the cost of a cheap radio device. As opposed to Germany, the state did not produce a cheap, popular receptor (Mäusli, 2000); the role radio could play in shaping minds was becoming clear at that stage, yet the government's willingness to proactively use it varied.

⁵⁰⁴ This strategy is similar to the contemporary strategy of educating children about recycling to influence the parents' behaviour.

American commercial radio and the merger between entertainment and advertising

Beyond these European developments, a new practice was emerging in America that would become determinant for the further development of mass media worldwide: the merging of entertainment and advertising.

In the American commercial radio context of the time, advertising-supported content became ever more important, as the public interest practice de facto faded away. American radio arguably saw an “unlikely merger between the business of entertainment producers and that of advertisers” (Wu, 2016, p. 92). The National Broadcasting Company’s (NBC) show *Amos ‘n’ Andy*, a sponsored serial programme is an example: it featured the absurd dialogs of two caricatural Afro-Americans who moved from Georgia to Chicago.⁵⁰⁵ Indeed, prior to radio, attempts to include advertising in entertainment content such as silent movies or books had proven unsuccessful. This was arguably the first successful merger of advertising and entertainment, before soap operas would industrialise this union on a much bigger scale. The advertising supported business model for mass media would later be determinant for a new canal: television.

The early talk show: the radio conference

With soaring radio audience figures and Nazi propaganda coming from Germany, it became necessary to include political content on the radio. Beyond music, and without news, the majority of content was conferences, for which speakers were invited to address auditors, while attempting to remain distant from polemic subjects (see Scherrer, 2000, p. 82, on the polemic around a conference against disarmament). Before 1931, technical means for recording shows were not available and thus all shows were broadcast live; as recording technology evolved, shows were recorded and, later, edited.⁵⁰⁶

The absence of politics on radio however became an issue for both socialists and conservatives in the context of increased radio propaganda from neighbouring Germany. Thus, the government allowed political topics on the condition that they be presented in a strict format of thesis and antithesis.⁵⁰⁷ To monitor this programme

⁵⁰⁵ Wildly successful in a, granted, less competitive age, the show is believed to have attracted 40 million daily listeners by 1931 (Wu, 2016). This, Wu argues, corresponds to the invention of prime time, “the novel fact of an entire population listening to the same show at the same time every day could not help but create a new degree of shared awareness, even shared identity. Prime time was (and to a lesser degree remains) a massive ritual of collective attention, a force drawing people together” (Wu, 2016, p. 94). This show is also an example of the representation of racial prejudice.

⁵⁰⁶ It is only in 1949 with the introduction of magnetic tapes that it became possible to erase a recording and edit it on one single support.

⁵⁰⁷ A format that was less entertaining and attractive than an open contradictory debate, but easier to control.

innovation, a new position as controller of programmes was created, tasked with monitoring broadcasts and thereby reinforcing the power of the central office.

Build and learn: reforming SRG SSR

As tensions in neighbouring countries increased, under domestic political pressure and facing disagreements about funding distribution, SRG SSR underwent a reorganisation that led it to be closer to the state. This set the basis for a policy known as the Spiritual Defence.

In a 1936 reform process leading to a new concession, the relative power of local member organisations was reduced to the benefit of a stronger centralisation, particularly on the regional level. A programme commission was created in each linguistic region with the aim of fostering more specialisation by studios within each region. These commissions included external experts such as artists, scientists and groups critical of broadcasting. The new governance granted a stronger role to state representatives. Thus, more centralised and including representatives of varied social groups in its governance, SRG SSR became a pioneer of the Spiritual Defence policy (Schade, 2000c). The upcoming Spiritual Defence policy was, in a way, prepared by the member organisations before it was imposed by the state, which helped protect some of the organisation's independence during the war.

By that time, radio broadcasting had become an effective instrument for mass propaganda. While the UK used mass propaganda in World War I, Nazi Germany refined these techniques, notably through radio.⁵⁰⁸ Its audiences were enhanced by the Radio Guard (*Funkwarte*), military groups that gathered residents of neighbourhoods in front of a radio device when important announcements were to be made (Wu, 2016). While prior to the technology of broadcast the limit for a populist was the size of the stadium in which a speech was to be heard, broadcast allowed it to carry further.⁵⁰⁹ This posed a threat to Switzerland's cohesion, as the country was

⁵⁰⁸ Nazi propagandists went beyond radio, as they fully understood the potential of pictures. Leni Riefenstahl's movie about the 1936 Munich Olympic Games was supported by the Third Reich. In his short novel *L'Ordre du jour*, French writer Eric Vuillard (2017) notes : "[t]he world war and its preamble are swept away in this infinite film where you can no longer distinguish between the true and the false. And since the Reich has recruited more filmmakers, editors, cameramen, sound engineers and stagehands than any other protagonist in this drama, we can say that, until the Russians and Americans go to war, the images we have of the war are for all eternity directed by Joseph Goebbels". Translated from the original French: "La guerre mondiale et son préambule sont emportés dans ce film infini où on ne distingue plus le vrai du faux. Et puisque le Reich a recruté plus de cinéastes, de monteurs, de cameramen, de preneurs de son, de machinistes que tout autre protagoniste de ce drame, on peut dire que, jusqu'à l'entrée en guerre des Russes et des Américains, les images que nous avons de la guerre sont pour l'éternité mises en scène par Joseph Goebbels" (p.128).

⁵⁰⁹ To illustrate the importance of radio to the diffusion of the Nazi propaganda message, Goebbels, Hitler's chief propagandist, argued in his speech "The Radio as the Eighth Great Power" in August 1933 that "[t]he radio is the most influential and important intermediary between a spiritual movement and the nation, between the idea and the

exposed to broadcasts from abroad. This threat was addressed by the upcoming national Spiritual Defence policy. The strengthened collaboration within and across regions enabled an increase of the radio offering to ensure that the Swiss population could at any time choose between a spoken broadcast and a musical broadcast. The aim was thereby to prevent the population from turning to foreign broadcasters to tune in to music (Reymond, 2000).

Orchestra wars: culture versus entertainment in a melody

Orchestras played an essential role in the development of early public service broadcasting. The progressive merging of orchestras and the prestige linked to a studio hosting a classical orchestra, as well as the debate around introducing a smaller variety orchestra, are episodes in this lasting drama.

The relative centralisation can be illustrated by the merger of local orchestras, driven largely by financial considerations. The Geneva and Lausanne-based orchestras were merged into a new Orchestra of French-speaking Switzerland (*Orchestre de la Suisse romande*) in 1938; the new orchestra was based in Geneva.⁵¹⁰ This contentious episode became known as the war of the orchestras and is representative of the emotions linked to this issue and the animosity between local member organisations within one linguistic region.

Orchestras represented an employment opportunity for musicians; the need for a radio orchestra also could lead to the creation of a professional music scene. The development of the radio in Ticino is interesting for our topic, inasmuch as in 1935, of the five hours of content broadcast daily, two-thirds were music. However, the territory did not have enough professional musicians to fill this broadcast time, which led to hiring outside musicians. The professionalisation of the broadcast music led to the creation of a radio orchestra (nine musicians) in early 1935, which in turn contributed to the local music scene (Scherrer, 2000). Thus, the broadcasting technology

people". He also announced a plan to double radio listenership in Germany and promote the sale of hardware. In fact, "Goebbels determined that the right formula for forging the people's community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) was not unrelenting speeches but, rather, light musical entertainment punctuated by political material in place of advertising, and the occasional big event" (Wu, 2016, p. 117). In Goebbels' words from the August 1933 speech, "[t]he problems that we in the government face today are the same problems that face the man in the street. The problems we treat over the ether in plays, speeches, addresses and dramas are the problems that directly concern people. The better the radio recognizes them and treats them in fresh and varied ways, the better it will fulfill its tasks and the more the people will resolve to deal with these problems."

⁵¹⁰ The *Orchestre de la Suisse romande* exists to this day. Founded in 1918, it entered an agreement with Radio Genève to broadcast concerts for revenue in 1932.

facilitated the emergence of a professional music scene in the Italian language region.⁵¹¹

While all three regions had an orchestra, the French-language broadcaster founded a variety music orchestra in the mid-1930s, the Italian-language broadcaster in the early 1940s, while the German-language region faced a lot of resistance before its own variety music orchestra was created in 1946 (Egger, 2000).

The orchestra wars were renewed in the 1940s. In 1942, orchestras consumed 40% of the financial resources of the studios, while they produced only 9% of the broadcast time (Egger, 2000). For financial reasons, it was decided in 1942 that OSR would be the only symphonic orchestra for all three regional studios.⁵¹² The Beromünster orchestra was to be replaced by a variety orchestra, while Monte Ceneri would have a chamber orchestra. This organisational struggle was combined with a content struggle. Should the orchestra play classical music, or variety music? Should there be several orchestras? The debate around orchestras, which was discussed in the national parliament in 1943, is an illustration of the dichotomy between the political ideals and the pragmatic financial realities. The variety band led by Bob Huber and hired by Radio Beromünster in 1944 was dismissed for playing too much jazz, swing, and English-language pieces. It was replaced in 1946 by the *Cédric Dumont Orchestra*, based in Basel.

The issue of the cost for original, prestigious content, is recurring to this day, as illustrated by the discussions around original content such as television series. On one hand, they cost a hundred-fold the price of acquired content; on the other hand, they are essential to the citizenship principle (be it economic or social citizenship, as an economic actor or as a contributor to the public sphere). Orchestras, long an instrument of prestige for local studios, were progressively merged and made independent of the broadcaster to become cultural institutions in their own right or disbanded following debates on the type of music they played.

Period conclusion

Created in 1931 as the loose federation of independent local studios under one common concession, SRG SSR grew by 1938 into an instrument closer to the state

⁵¹¹ Public broadcasting played a role in the development of cultural institutions on a local level, particularly in Ticino, the main Italian-language canton. The *Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana*, created in 1935, became an independent foundation in 1991. Originally fully funded by the radio and hence inter-regional solidarity, it was partly funded by the canton as of 1969 (Aziz & Piattini, 2006). The French- and German-language regions already had local theatres and orchestras on a cantonal level before broadcasting technology.

⁵¹² This took place in a context in which the Beromünster orchestra (German-language region) did not have a variety band and was competing with other Swiss-German orchestras.

and more centralised, a foundation for the Spiritual Defence of the country during the turbulent times ahead. During its first period, the broadcasters focused on entertainment and education, seeing their attempts to introduce news limited by publishers and the regulator. Internal conflicts around funding, orchestras and the printed programmes showed the importance of local cultural resistance. The creation of sporting events for the purpose of broadcasting was to be a lasting innovation, both to attract new audiences and to test and demonstrate new technology. Technological and legal conditions evolved, as illustrated by recordings and copyright. The domestic production of music, including recorded music, was fostered as a consequence of foreign legal constraints around copyright and their financial impact; this is a reminder that national broadcast markets are not fully independent of foreign markets.

4.4.3. Ensuring the National Spiritual Defence: broadcasting as a cultural policy (1938-1958)

World War II raised the question of the role of radio in Switzerland, which was surrounded by countries where radio had increasingly become an instrument of propaganda. The Swiss national broadcaster's public service mission regarding entertainment was best understood as fitting within a broader cultural policy. It was developed in the context of both the rise of nationalism in Europe and of taking into account different cultural, linguistic affinities within Switzerland. In its essence, this new cultural policy aimed to define what being Swiss meant.

Geopolitical tensions led to the development of the national Spiritual Defence policy; World War II led to the suspension of SRG SSR's concession. The army stepped in and provided information, education and entertainment programmes. There was a cultural split in the focus of programmes: entertainment for French-language radios, and education for German and Italian language radios. Yet, as a medium, radio may have benefitted from the crisis, as its central role in defence on the domestic front was fully recognised. This, in turn, increased political support for further professionalisation of the radio near the end of the war. From a media policy perspective, the war was a period of crisis that had a lasting impact on the legitimacy of radio, on the organisation of SRG SSR and on its programmes.

Foreign propaganda and the necessary birth of the Swiss federal cultural policy

While people bought Swiss radio devices, they often listened to foreign broadcasters. This may have seemed more problematic in the German- and Italian-language regions prior to the war, due to the fascist nature of political messaging in the broadcasts. Even

during World War II, the lighter entertainment of German channels attracted Swiss-German listeners who changed channels after listening to the Swiss news, as they tuned out of the lectures or opera broadcasts by Beromünster (Mäusli, 2000). This was recognised by the printed programme, that also provided information on foreign shows and programmes. In the context of foreign propaganda, the public radio became one element in a broader, new federal cultural policy: the national Spiritual Defence (*geistige Landesverteidigung*).

On December 9, 1938, the Federal Council sent its “Dispatch on the organisation and task of safeguarding and promoting Swiss culture” to the Federal Parliament.⁵¹³ It defined Swiss culture as unity in linguistic and religious diversity; “[t]his concept, which was the motto of the time, encompasses several very different approaches, the common denominator of which, however, remains the definition of Switzerland in relation to other countries and the search for the Swiss specificity” (Scherrer, 2000, p. 86).⁵¹⁴ The Federal Council proposed the creation of an independent foundation, *Pro Helvetia*,⁵¹⁵ funded by the state and aiming to counter-balance propaganda from abroad to ensure continued independence and cultural dynamism. The government argued that, while the physical defence of the country was a state responsibility (through the army), the Spiritual Defence was the task and responsibility of each citizen individually and collectively; the state was to provide funding for this Spiritual Defence. It thus became the personal responsibility of the citizens to listen to the “right” broadcasts and to ensure that they were not exposed to or convinced by foreign propaganda. In the pre-war period, there was a notable social pressure to have a radio at home, which fostered the adoption of this technology; the radio device was proudly displayed in the kitchen or the living room (Mäusli, 2000). The broadcasting nature of radio may make the national Spiritual Defence abstract; the national exhibition of 1939 in Zurich made it tangible.⁵¹⁶

This Dispatch was received in the broader context of the search for a common Swiss identity, aiming to explain a community of fate (*Schicksalgemeinschaft*). A specific example of this legislative work is the recognition of Romansh⁵¹⁷ as the fourth national language in the Federal Constitution; the referendum held on February 20, 1938, saw

⁵¹³ A Federal Council Dispatch is the document containing draft Act and the explanation jointly submitted to the Federal Parliament.

⁵¹⁴ Translated from the original French: “Véritable mot d’ordre de l’époque, ce concept recouvre plusieurs approches fort différentes, dont le dénominateur commun reste cependant la définition de la Suisse face à l’étranger et la recherche de la spécificité suisse”.

⁵¹⁵ For more on the role of *Pro Helvetia* in the international diffusion of Swiss culture and Switzerland’s image abroad, see Kadelbach (2013).

⁵¹⁶ The public service broadcaster would systematically be present as a media partner and actor in such national cultural events, thereby going to meet its public where it was, beyond the radio device.

⁵¹⁷ Romansh is a Romance language spoken in parts of the canton of Graubünden.

91.6% of the voting population supporting the proposal. This symbolic act implicitly defined Swissness as the variety, diversity and capacity to successfully bring together three of the large European cultures, as well as the political will to protect domestic minorities.⁵¹⁸ In 1938, only 1% of the population spoke Romansh (Maissen, 2015).⁵¹⁹ The domestic popular support for the Spiritual Defence of Switzerland grew. Indeed, while the debate around news on the radio was addressed, the parliament considered that radio had a role to play to defend democracy against totalitarianism. With rising geopolitical tensions, the absence of news broadcasts from the radio was no longer tenable. In an evolution in its programmes, in mid-1939, SRG SSR was authorised to broadcast a news bulletin four times a day, largely due to the external threat and the risk posed by foreign propaganda (Reymond, 2000). As tensions between Germany and Poland rose in August 1939, the situation changed.

Wartime radio broadcasting: suspending the concession

On August 29, 1939, the government suspended the concession as of September 2. On September 8, it mandated the army to ensure the security of the country in regard to information. In the meantime, a new Swiss Radiobroadcasting Service (*Service de la radiodiffusion Suisse*, SR) was created under the leadership of the Federal Department of Post and Railways;⁵²⁰ it was run as a subsidiary of the Swiss PTT.

In this setup, studios were limited to one per linguistic region for a period of a few months, and the new director-general was made personally responsible for all programmes (Reymond, 2000); this move to centralisation in a context of war went against the tradition of federalism, yet it lastingly impacted the organisation of Swiss public service broadcasting. In terms of both staff and programmes, there was a relative continuity. Thus, the SR largely resembled the SSR.

The monitoring of media, both print and radio, was conducted by the army as of 1939. The army could censor the media, a mission fulfilled by a new Press and Radio Division (*Division presse et radio*, DPR).⁵²¹ Rather than banning listening to foreign radios, as was the practice in Germany and Italy, the DPR authorised tuning into foreign broadcasts; the objective was to make domestic programmes more attractive rather than compulsory (Reymond, 2000).

⁵¹⁸ Swissness was the shared access to the French, German and Italian cultures through fellow citizens from other linguistic regions.

⁵¹⁹ This discourse around cultural diversity as Switzerland's strength may have mitigated the potential class warfare that led to the creation of the country's socialist party in 1888.

⁵²⁰ Communications and transport infrastructure are essential in wartime. This was a recognition of the strategic role of radio.

⁵²¹ As of 1941, the control of the DPR went from the army to civilians (Federal Department of Justice and Police).

The army played a role in broadcasting with the creation in November 1939 of a new unit: “Army and Home” (*Heer und Haus*). It was tasked with the education and entertainment of soldiers and, as of 1941, a general information campaign for the population (Gerber, 2007). Programmes produced in each language had different titles, content and lengths (Reymond, 2000). Programming choices varied depending on language region, as I now explain.

“Il faut rire quand même”: regional broadcasting responses to the war

The Spiritual Defence policy took one of two approaches in its overall implementation in programmes and scheduling: either a focus on the production of serious content to educate the listener, or a focus on entertainment to ensure the citizen continued listening. The former was largely applied in the German-speaking regions, the latter in the French-speaking regions (Reymond, 2000, Schade, 2000).

Arguably, the principle during the war in French-speaking Switzerland was “*il faut rire quand même*” (it is important to laugh nonetheless). A survey of audiences of the Lausanne and Zurich studios in 1942 reveals that listeners had a marked interest for news and largely tuned in to variety shows, independently of the radio broadcasting it (Egger, 2000). To prevent audiences from tuning in to foreign broadcasters, Alfred Glogg, SRG SSR director-general, called for a radio that does not address only an intellectual elite, but also offers light programmes. French- and Italian-speaking executives did not see a contradiction in producing content that was culturally qualitative yet in a popular manner. For the German-language executives, however, making more popular programmes suggested necessarily lowering the quality. Yet in 1942, the discontent of large shares of Beromünster audiences led to questioning the serious editorial line of German-language broadcasts.

Music played an important role in radio broadcasts, yet audiences wanted different types of music. Music broadcasts remained different in each linguistic region. Contemporary music tastes vary, as does the language of songs. This musical diversity fits with the image of unity in diversity (Egger, 2000). In a study of the reception of jazz and the Spiritual Defence policy, Mäusli (1995) finds two different attitudes in Basel and Geneva, an illustration of cultural differences. Both cities’ youth belonging to the elite were drawn to jazz, but for different reasons. In Basel, jazz was viewed as compatible with the Spiritual Defence policy because it was considered to be in opposition to Nazi values. In Geneva, jazz was seen as closer to French culture and used as a means to distance oneself from the Spiritual Defence policy, perceived to be a Swiss-German artefact.

Beyond music, producing informational content that was entertaining was a real challenge. During the war, radio broadcasts increasingly included historical shows and programmes that were considered social, as they addressed the young, the ill and women (Reymond, 2000). The radio also addressed the nation overall: in August 1941, the country celebrated its 650th anniversary with a three-day ceremony in Schwyz. The spectacle was broadcast live across the country, which was considered a demonstration of both the prowess of radio technology and its role in strengthening national cohesion.

The “Fifth Switzerland” and Swiss Radio International

These celebrations were also broadcast to the Americas, where a large number of Swiss emigrants lived. The Swiss living abroad are referred to as the “Fifth Switzerland”, complementing the four linguistic regions.

The Service of Short Waves (*Service des ondes courtes*),⁵²² whose original mission was defined in 1937, contributed to Switzerland’s influence abroad (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000) and to foster the nation’s soft power, including by maintaining a connection with the many citizens living abroad. A new short-wave emitter was built in 1938 in Schwarzenburg. It was used to broadcast programmes to Europe and the Americas. These broadcasts addressed the Swiss living abroad, as well as foreign audiences with the aim of broadcasting the national culture, attracting tourists and ensuring a positive view of the country (Reymond, 2000). In the 1950s, shows were produced in the national languages as well as English, Spanish, Portuguese and Esperanto. Estimates show a regular audience of 3 million and an occasional audience of 11 million in the late 1950s (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000).⁵²³

Another way to make the country and its culture known abroad was through the exchange of programmes with foreign radio broadcasters. Prior to the war, there was a focus on the international exchange of programmes, of which over 80% were music, the remainder was comprised of sports and cultural events (Reymond, 2000). These international ties were focused on sports and music as non-political and partly non-language specific content; it was one economical way to fill broadcast hours with ready-packaged content. It was also linked to an idealist view of radio programmes as fostering world peace.

⁵²² This broadcast was made possible using short-wave broadcasting, a technology, introduced in Switzerland in 1932 with Radio-Nations using an emitter based in Prangins. Radio Nations broadcast news from the League of Nations to the world.

⁵²³ As a reference point, there were 4.7 million people residing in Switzerland in 1950.

Preparing for the post-war period: the director-general's vision and civil society

Nearing the end of the war, the future of post-war radio was discussed, including both programmes and channels. During the war, public radio had been an official communications organ. At the same time, some foreign radios may have become more advanced in terms of the professionalisation of programmes. In this context, groups were formed calling for more proximity, more democracy in the radio institution, and more entertainment and news programmes. Amongst others, the idea of doubling the channels for each linguistic regions gained traction, to offer a broader choice, and in particular an entertainment offering (Egger, 2000).

In 1945, the director-general of SRG SSR, Alfred Glogg, argued for a programme that would include more news and entertainment, presented by better-trained personnel. Furthermore, the programmes must fit the habits and the needs of the public. This implied producing not only live concerts, theatre plays and conferences; but moving over to radiophonic plays, debates and reports, as well as live shows recorded with an audience. Radio was increasingly to be understood as a debate area, a “Landsgemeinde”⁵²⁴ with the aim of bringing the listener to build an informed opinion (Egger, 2000).

Yet before discussing programmes, the legal framework had to evolve: the existing system was developed in the 1920s and did not seem adapted to the evolution of the radio in society. The concession, which had been suspended in 1939, expired in 1941. Before developing a new concession, SRG SSR management asked for the development of a Radiobroadcasting Act, with the aim of clarifying its independence from the government.

In 1945, the concession, which had been suspended at the beginning of the war, was reinstated. This led to works on a secret draft Broadcasting Act, which was transferred to parliament in July 1945. Over a period of several years, different projects were discussed while civil society and interest groups actively lobbied and formulated proposals. One example of a group that worked on proposals is an unofficial commission based in Basel and led by Carl Miville, cantonal education minister; its results are interesting in the proposals they formulated and the resistance these ideas faced due to the history of SRG SSR. In the summer of 1945, this commission published a vision for a reformed SRG SSR. It called for a clear separation of a popular entertainment programme and of a high-level cultural programme with music and spoken shows. To finance this additional programme, the commission proposed to

⁵²⁴ The “Landsgemeinde” is a format of direct democracy using an open voting system. Still in use in two Swiss cantons (Appenzell Innerrhoden and Glarus), it requires citizens to vote by raising their hands.

reduce the number of studios to one per language region, or three nation-wide down from the existing six. Furthermore, the commission proposed to invite the population to become voting members of the studios, thus participating in decision-making. This proposal ignored the existing structures and had limited potential for success. This is an illustration of the idea of path dependence, strengthened by the federalist tradition. Due to a lack of constitutional basis, this was unsuccessful. It is not until 1991 that a dedicated Act would regulate radio and television.

As an example of an interest group actively involved in the process, the Swiss Catholic federation expressed doubts as to the possibility of making high cultural content accessible to the broad public. Their voice gained traction when the central region of Switzerland created its own radio society, the Innerschweizerische Rundspruchgesellschaft in January 1946. In October of the same year, a newly created Romansh-language radio was launched: Cuminanza Radio Rumantsch. The two new organisations requested to join SRG SSR, to the resistance of existing member organisations, fearing a dilution of their relative power. It was only six years later, under the pressure of the federal government, that these two organisations joined SRG SSR.

In 1950, SRG SSR director-general Alfred Glogg resigned. He was replaced by Marcel Bezençon, director of Radio Lausanne. Further tensions arose with the forced integration of the two additional studios in 1952, the distribution of financial resources across the three language regions in 1958 and the permanent location of television studios in 1959. A new concession was adopted in 1953. The new concession recognised six studios, nine member organisations, and granted the latter the ability to define their programme schedule. They were expected to reflect the diversity of geographical, cultural and spiritual groups in their activities (Ehnb-Bertini, 2000).

While the active war was over, geopolitical tensions did not end. The Cold War and its ideological confrontation were ground enough for the Spiritual Defence to be continued until 1962 (Maissen, 2015).⁵²⁵ Some institutions founded in the process, such as *Pro Helvetia*, continue to this day.

When looking back on war-time radio, it is striking that the national importance of radio was recognised by the message it carried to the population: “[i]n this sense, the radio

⁵²⁵ Beyond the Swiss case, war-time propaganda impacted the governance of post-war media systems. After the war, three types of lessons were learned by world powers: the Soviets decided to expand their propaganda; West Germany “reconstituted the broadcast infrastructure so as to make it notably ill-suited for government or corporate propaganda. Both radio and television were decentralized, the network broken up into independent non-profit regional broadcasters” (Wu, 2016, p. 121), in a structure that has largely survived to this day as ARD. The independence of these broadcasters is ensured by a licensing fee paid by every household. To a certain extent, this lesson was learned by other countries, as the word “propaganda” became pejorative. While the Allies did not rebuild a broadcasting system from scratch, they did arguably keep away from state-run broadcasting.

may have used the Spiritual Defence and the extraordinary conditions of the World War as much as it was a victim of it.” (Reymond, 2000, p. 113).⁵²⁶ Thus, radio gained legitimacy because it was viewed as critical to maintaining national independence. Furthermore, radio executives used the argument of the Spiritual Defence to expand their activities, notably in news. The paradox of the situation is that, while regulation may appear to be bad news for a medium, it shows plainly how much influence the medium actually has in reflecting and shaping public opinion; this was true for radio then, as it is for social media like Facebook and Twitter today.

Innovating and investing: radio after World War II

Two key lessons were drawn from the war in regard to programmes: attractive entertainment content ought to be provided; and there was a need for professional, quality debates. Both of these were achieved by better sharing resources and continuing the professionalisation of SRG SSR. During the post-war period, innovation and experimentation took place on several levels: on infrastructure, on curation, on content, and on connection.

To catch up with foreign radio, SRG SSR had to invest to modernise its studios and to extend broadcasting periods, as well as to acquire modern news vans. The development and professionalisation of SRG SSR required additional funding: the licence fee was increased in 1947, allowing the PSM to fund more programmes. The fee rose from CHF 15 to CHF 24, of which two-thirds went to SRG SSR and 1/3 to PTT (Egger, 2000); this new distribution showed a relative strengthening of content over infrastructure.

Preparing for the post-war period also meant developing new programmes that were better adapted to the radio and audience expectations. In the summer of 1944, the Lugano studio set up an experimental studio tasked with the search for artistic forms adapted to radio as a medium. Its work covered both content and techniques, for instance illustrating read texts using music (Egger, 2000).

SRG SSR was also involved in infrastructure innovation. Given the constraints of limited radio frequencies and failing international negotiations to coordinate their attribution, SRG SSR experimented with the PPT and radio industry as of 1948 with frequency modulation (FM) as opposed to amplitude modulation (AM). It came into use during the 1948 *St. Moritz Olympic Games*, sending signals from the different competition locations to the radio studio, up to 15 kilometres away (Egger, 2000). This

⁵²⁶ Translated from the original French: “En ce sens, la radio s’est peut-être autant servie de la Défense spirituelle et des conditions extraordinaires dues à la guerre mondiale qu’elle n’en a été une victime”.

technical development was particularly relevant for isolated regions, yet it required investment both from PTT for the emitters and the user since the receptor device was different (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000). Infrastructure investment allowed both to improve reception around the country and to broadcast on a second channel, making slots available for more entertainment programmes. Further investments in the 1950s included extending the network, new studio space and new buildings, as well as adjusting salaries. The challenge of federalism in a small plurilingual country was a drain on resources. The federal government decided to increase the radio licence fee by 40% in 1955. This decision was opposed by many in the press, suspecting this spike was used to finance television. In 1957, Swiss radiobroadcasting included 358 permanent employees, excluding orchestra members, while producing broadcasts in four languages.⁵²⁷

Public broadcasting and audiences

After the war, the radio had a hard time transitioning from an education media to a proximity media, particularly in the German-speaking region (Egger, 2000). With growing radio subscriber numbers came the need to broadcast content that people wanted to listen to.⁵²⁸ Programmes evolved to include more audience participation; a first survey was conducted to gain a sense of what the audience wanted.

While most radiophonic plays were theatre plays, it is upon request by auditors that, as of the 1930s, radiophonic plays were written and produced specifically for this medium (Egger, 2000). Sports reporting was often focused on events, including football games and cycling events (Egger, 2000). These elements show how important entertainment – be it music, or sports, or fiction – were for radio as a mass media. They also show how formats had to be adapted and reinvented progressively to fit the new medium.

When technology allowed it, meetings with the population were organised, such as the public show *Wir fragen – Sie antworten* (We ask – you answer), which brought across knowledge with an entertaining approach (Egger, 2000). This was part of a broader shift, a trend to include the public in the broadcasts themselves. A programme is not only the experts, the journalists, but also the audience, the applauding public. This showed any citizen that not only he or she could be there, that he or she belonged in this programme – but also that each citizen should be concerned with the matter

⁵²⁷ This compares to centralised PSM which produced programmes from one centralised location in one language in some other nations.

⁵²⁸ In 1945, seventy percent of households had a radio. In December 1949, the millionth auditor concession was granted (Egger, 2000).

discussed in the programme. This had the purpose of strengthening the connection between the people and their radio.⁵²⁹ Before that, a less interactive format allowed listeners to address questions in writing, which the speakers answered, such as the show *Questionnez, on vous répondra* (Ask us, we will answer) on Radio Sottens.

The need to better understand audience preferences led to the first attempt at audience research. In a first large survey in 1957, radio listeners stated that the programmes being created in Switzerland were a reason to listen to SRG SSR radios. In the three language-regions, the average daily listening period was over two hours (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000). The favourite programmes were those that allowed participation in shows one cannot attend physically, including variety, theatre plays, series, music. Specific programmes more closely corresponded to the needs of specific audiences, including shows for children, shows in agriculture, gymnastics classes, shows in Romansh and jazz (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000). The universalist principle was clear in the fact that traditional folk music has long had its own shows, in particular, to reach the elderly and people in the countryside. There was enthusiasm for shows that allowed for direct participation, including radio broadcasts of music requested by audience members, the *Swiss Variety Cup*, which was recorded around the country, or contests that drew tens of thousands of postcards sent by participants.

The radio also became an instrument to mobilise the crowds for a good cause. In an early form of crowdfunding, the French-language radio launched in October 1946 a show called *La Chaîne du Bonheur* (The Chain of Happiness). This weekly show called upon its listeners to contribute funds to specific projects, such as organising vacations for children and the sick, or organising celebrations for the homeless. The creation of this programme fit within a broader Swiss strategy of positioning its foreign policy on humanitarian topics (Egger, 2000). The show became one of the first funders of humanitarian aid in Switzerland. It was replicated in the other Swiss regions and led to international joint shows in 1948. The *Chaîne du Bonheur* became an independent foundation in 1983, another example of the PSM spinning off a new cultural or social institution.

The population wanted more radio. This meant longer broadcasting hours, more channels and therefore higher licence fees.

⁵²⁹ It also transformed the production process itself, as the direct audience feedback allowed SRG SSR to evaluate the interest in a programme in real-time.

Doubling the channels: the beginning of domestic choice and the offer of continuous entertainment

Following the increase in the licence fee in 1956, a second radio broadcasting channel using frequency modulations was started on December 16, 1956, in the German, French and Italian-language regions (II. Programm; RSR II; Rete Due). Initially broadcast during two hours daily, in the evening during the week and the afternoon on Sunday, this channel aimed to offer a domestic choice in their language for national audiences. As of 1959, this programme was extended by one hour. This evolution is significant: by offering light music in the early evening, radio broadcasting aimed to keep the Swiss worker, looking for after-work entertainment, tuned in to local channels. In the words of then director-general Bezençon: “[t]he listener who is dissatisfied with our production will not go to any other broadcaster in the country but will seek his satisfaction on the foreign airwaves. That's why we feel that, on balance, it's best to try to keep them tuned in to our programmes, whatever they are” (1958, quoted in Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000, p. 190).⁵³⁰ Beyond this intention, there was the major issue of limited financial and human resources, leading managers to worry about the quality of programmes. The central office favoured programme exchanges, both domestic and foreign. Domestic exchanges were complicated by disagreements on the distribution of the licence fee across language regions (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000). The tension between political intentions and management regarding programmes and the limited budgets constraining operations is a recurring theme in the Swiss PSM case. The strong attachment of the population to “its” radio became visible in the debate around the introduction of television when some feared it would reduce funding for radio broadcasting.

Adding the visuals: experimenting with television

As with radio, it is worth considering the initial introduction and setup of television broadcasting in Switzerland, for its lasting consequences on organisations, the market and practices. After early experiments before World War II focusing on the technology, an experimental service was introduced under the leadership of the federal state. Television faced a broad set of resistances and fears.

Early work on television in Switzerland was the object of research and experimentation as of 1936 at the Zurich Polytechnic School. The focus on technology over

⁵³⁰ Translated from the original French: “L’auditeur que ne satisfait pas notre production ne passe guère sur un autre émetteur du pays mais va chercher son contentement sur les ondes étrangères. C’est pourquoi nous estimons qu’à tout prendre il vaut mieux tenter de le retenir à l’écoute de nos émissions, quelles qu’elles soient”.

programmes is clear in the following anecdote from a live demonstration during the national exhibition of 1939 in Zurich. While the scholars had planned around the technical aspects, they had forgotten to plan for the content. Members of the radio cabaret in a neighbouring exhibition area joined and sang for their first appearance on experimental television (Felix, 2003). The discourse around television at this early stage was addressed to specialists rather than the general public aiming to demonstrate pride for national research. However, the war interrupted work on television. This was not an exception: while the BBC started its regular television broadcast service in November 1936, it was suspended for the duration of the war.⁵³¹ Television became topical again after the war. As television was successfully introduced in neighbouring countries, SRG SSR, the federal state and PTT drove its introduction to Switzerland. During the discussions around the new concession, SRG SSR requested the mandate to work on “visual radiobroadcasting”. Technical experiments were conducted in 1948, broadcasting Radio Zurich performances as a visual support to radio broadcasts.

Audiences, particularly in the Italian and French-language regions, showed an interest in television.⁵³² By the time a first television broadcast from Televisione della Svizzera Italiana TSI took place in 1961, Ticino already had 10'000 television subscribers (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000). For both French- and Italian-language speakers, television was seen as a tool to affirm one's identity against the German-speaking majority within the country. However, both the press and radio organisation members of SRG SSR had an interest in opposing a national television.

The Federal Council chose an experimental approach to introduce television in Switzerland. While radios were still largely cantonal institutions, the Federal Council decided in favour of a state monopoly in television. The key at the time was for Bern to prevent the decentralisation of television, to avoid the organisational and financial difficulties they experienced in radio. Building on the new concession adopted in 1953, SRG SSR took charge of the experimental television service and the international radio service, thus becoming a producer of content in its own right next to the six studios (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000).

To finance an experimental television, the federal government addressed a Dispatch to parliament on June 4, 1951. The Spiritual Defence policy was the key argument for an experimental public service television, beyond that of the cohesion of the country.

⁵³¹ Reportedly, the last broadcast before interruption was an episode of *Mickey Mouse*, on September 1st, 1939. When service resumed in 1946, the same *Mickey Mouse* episode was played following a short ceremony (Rohrer, 2006).

⁵³² For instance, private citizens installed radio bridges to carry the Italian RAI to Ticino in 1951. These were deemed illegal and removed.

After its acceptance in parliament, a temporary concession was issued to SRG SSR headquarters for a public service television programme on February 28, 1952. This *de facto* excluded the member organisations from the programmes, a major difference to the development of the radio in Switzerland. Local radios opposed it as the television became a potential competitor for audiences' attention and funding.

The experimental television service met resistance, with fears of an invasion of foreign content, the production of morally controversial or culturally insignificant content, or the standardisation of programmes throughout the country. This latter fear was that programmes would be conceived to suit the average Swiss, without considering the local specificities (Cordonier, 2009). Additional fears around television are recurring fears in the introduction of any technology, notably in their impact on health and social mores. To address these fears and educate the population about the technology and its use, a weekly magazine, *Radio TV Je vois tout* presented instructions and information in French-speaking Switzerland (Cordonier, 2009). Moving on from health risks, further arguments addressed the content of broadcasts, arguing that television destroys families and social cohesion. Yet beyond these social issues, another category of issues arose: the fear of the commercial model and the loss of cultural identity. While US-American television was admired, its advertising-based revenue model was not considered conducive to the production of educational content. With World War II still in the recent past, television was viewed as a potential propaganda weapon. The fear of cultural domination from outside existed within the country as well, as minority language regions fear cultural domination by German-speaking national television and requested studios in each of the three large linguistic regions. A more cynical view would suggest that a national television project undermined potential regional and cantonal television projects.

Thus, in 1951, a petition was addressed to the federal government to request the creation of a federal commission for the study of cultural questions related to television. Created one year later, this commission brought together church representatives, and cinema and cultural workers.⁵³³ Its main task was to advise the state and in particular propose regulations for the creation of programmes.

While both French- and Italian-speaking regions had expressed a strong interest in television, the first headquarters for television was set in Zurich. An additional centre was integrated into SRG SSR as of 1954 in Geneva. The Italian-speaking regions would wait until 1961 to get their own television, as national investment priorities shifted to international network connections.

⁵³³ The participation of church representatives in this commission reminds us of the impact it had on society at the time.

After the experimental period, the permanent television broadcast was not introduced in 1955, as initially planned, even though the Federal government and parliament approved it. Some viewed television as a luxury for a minority and actively opposed it. So the government extended the experimental period to late 1957 and funded it through an urgent federal decree, which is not subject to a referendum; this decree proscribed advertising as a source of funding and the use of radio funds for television (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000).

To provide the necessary legal grounds, the federal government proposed introducing an article on radio and television broadcasting in the Federal Constitution. This object was rejected by 57.2% of voters on March 3, 1957. Significantly, it was accepted in all French- and Italian-language cantons. The vote followed a campaign in which opponents argued against linking radio and television due to a fear of defunding radio for television and denounced the risk of television “dumbing down” the population. In this situation, the government could not contemplate funding a permanent television service directly due to the animated campaign against public funding for television. In order not to miss this technological development, given a clear demand from the audience, it invited SRG SSR to request a concession with external funding. Newspaper publishers, fearing the competition for advertising revenue from television, agreed to pay SRG SSR CHF 20 million over two years, provided it renounced advertising until it reached 180'000 viewers. That figure was reached in 1961, earlier than expected, demonstrating the popular appeal of this new media.

Following the failed constitutional modification and with the aim to nonetheless launch a permanent television service, the federal government published the relevant Dispatch on July 9, 1957. In it, it invited the parliament to approve a permanent service, the funding of television by newspaper publishers and a loan to SRG SSR. In 1958, a new concession was granted to SRG SSR for a permanent television service. Thus, Switzerland introduced a permanent television service without the state investing directly in its development and without using the revenue from the radio licence fee (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000).

No money: the fertilizer of creativity

“Swiss entertainment is 'Grüezi' entertainment” (Felix, 2003, p. 139),⁵³⁴ since it was largely in Swiss-German dialect, had country-specific content and cost as little as

⁵³⁴ Translated from the original German: “Schweizer Unterhaltung ist ‘Grüezi’ Unterhaltung”.

possible.⁵³⁵ While less important in other language regions, the accent issue was important to Swiss-German public media in connecting with local audiences and as a differentiating factor from foreign channels. The lack of financial resources meant that a lot of entertainment content was based on humour and creativity, both of which did not cost much. Overall, televised entertainment was cheap to produce compared to other forms of television content: it was often filmed in pre-existing theatres, before the construction of dedicated studios (Bourdon, 2011). The most successful light entertainment show in Swiss television was *Teleboy*, which was broadcast between 1974 and 1981. Centred around a game of competing couples answering questions, it included a live orchestra and sketches.

Another creative approach to generating content with limited means was through co-productions. Beyond the *Eurovision Song Contest*, which I discuss further in this section, SRG SSR participated in a range of co-productions, either across European nations or between countries sharing a language. A multinational competition programme, *Jeux sans frontières*, produced by the EBU and in which SRG SSR participated, was broadcast between 1965 and 1999. The premise of the show was a competition between national teams in strange games.⁵³⁶

A third creative approach to an insufficient amount of entertainment content was developed by SRG SSR director-general Marcel Bezençon: the *Rose d'Or de Montreux*, launched in 1961. This festival aimed to identify and reward the best entertainment programmes, with the goal of fostering international programme swaps. Thus, SRG SSR members used three main strategies to ensure a supply of entertainment programmes, despite their limited financial resources: creating cheap content playing on humour or using existing infrastructures (orchestras, theatres); favouring international co-productions; and encouraging international programme swaps.

The quiz show: gamified education

The quiz show became one of light entertainment's most popular genres. Jérôme Bourdon (2011) shows how early televised entertainment in the 1950s was used as a bridge to culture on two levels. First, entertainment content was typically placed just

⁵³⁵ In a 1956 report on the financial costs of SRG SSR, Probst benchmarked the average cost of an hour of production, installation included: approximately CHF 8'000 for the BBC, CHF 6'500 for the RAI, CHF 3'100 for Bayerischer Rundfunk. In 1954, an hour of broadcast cost on average CHF 1'030 for Beromünster, CHF 759 for Sottens and CHF 505 for Monte Ceneri (Ehnb-Bertini, 2000).

⁵³⁶ This format was apparently proposed by Charles de Gaulle to Konrad Adenauer to strengthen the Franco-German friendship, after the French President saw the national version of the show, *Intercités*. This show was itself based on the Italian show *Campanile Sera* (Bourdon, 2011).

before informational or educational content, hoping to attract and keep audiences for the following programme. Second, entertainment programmes had a strong educational colouring, as illustrated by quizzes: even while US-American quiz shows appear particularly erudite on modern standards, European PSM quiz shows often invited specialised scholars providing detailed answers. In Switzerland, the first television quiz show went live on November 29, 1953 (*Wer hät's?*, Who has it?). It was followed by *1-2-0, eifach, dopplet oder nüt* (1-2-0, simple, double or nothing) starting on December 9, 1956.⁵³⁷ The show was broadcast to only 19'971 concession holders, although many people gathered in public places to watch and play together in a practice of collective watching and playing along (Felix, 2003), in an example of joint attention.

Quiz shows are a good example of a paradox that Bourdon (2011) analyses around the Americanisation of television: even as PSM claimed its cultural mission, it copied the fundamental principles of US-American shows, albeit localising them by adapting the length, name, programming, etc. It is only in the 1980s that the copying of programmes became more direct, through the acquisition of formats from the American television markets or Anglo-Saxon markets, which were exposed to competition early. As Bourdon puts it, “public television officials are hostile to American formats because they appear as machines for attracting the public, far from the ‘televised Enlightenment’ that are seen as the central mission of television” (2011, p. 152).⁵³⁸ A further reason not to directly acknowledge the American influence is that public television is legitimised in its creation of content for the national market; in drama as in game shows. Recognising an American influence in television programmes would have undermined that argument and hence the PSM legitimacy. Practices, such as canned laughter or the studio floor manager who cues the audience to cheer and laugh, were imports from the US that took nearly thirty years to arrive in continental Europe (Bourdon, 2011). As opposed to American television, pan-European television is often viewed critically, related to the *Eurovision Song Contest* or “Europudding” series. I discuss the use of entertainment in international collaboration for innovation.

⁵³⁷ This show was based on the concept of the US-American television show *The \$64'000 Question*. In this show, a participant selected a topic and doubled his or her gains with every correct answer; a wrong answer and the sum was lost.

⁵³⁸ Translated from the original French: “les responsables de la télévision publique sont hostiles aux formats américains car ils apparaissent comme des machines à attirer le public, loin des “Lumières télévisuelles” que l’on voit comme la mission centrale de la télévision”.

The Football World Cup and the Eurovision Song Contest: entertainment for technological progress and international collaboration

Beyond light entertainment, television created and used major event broadcasts to innovate and foster international cooperation. Entertainment content became a driving force to experiment with broadcasting technology, particularly in competitive time-bound events. Four key reasons explain this. First, the limited duration of events such as a *Football World Cup* makes it adapted for a trial. Second, strong interest from partner organisations, namely foreign broadcasters, allows testing in a real-life setting. Third, these competitions, while often symbolically pitting nations against one another, are not mainly about politics. Lastly, these competition formats are time-bound: there is value in live broadcast, or else the results are printed in the newspaper. Sports competitions and song contests were therefore the right content to experiment with international live broadcasting. In the post-war period, Switzerland played a role in advancing international broadcasting technology as it hosted three major events: the 1948 *St. Moritz Winter Olympic Games*; the 1954 *Football World Cup*; the first *Eurovision Song Contest* in 1956.

The 1948 *St. Moritz Winter Olympic Games* drew large international interest: over 25 foreign broadcasters wanted to cover this sports competition. SRG SSR used this occasion to experiment with industry players and PTT on a new radio transmission technology: frequency modulation (FM), allowing it to liaise between the different competition locations (Egger, 2000).

The *FIFA Football World Cup* in 1954 took place in Switzerland, culminating in the victory of West Germany during the so-called “Miracle of Bern”. The images were broadcast on television for the first time; this was an organisational and technical success that led to increased sales of televisions (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000). It is, again, an entertainment programme that strengthened collaboration between international broadcasters – the *Eurovision Song Contest*, which took place for the first time in May 1956 in Lugano and included seven participating nations (Felix, 2003).⁵³⁹

Thus, SRG SSR and its domestic partners in broadcasting played a role in facilitating international collaboration with broadcasters and partners around the world by focusing on events that would draw large audiences, drive the adoption of consumer technology while largely staying away from politically sensitive issues. At the same time, these events allowed the PSM to experiment with new production and broadcast technologies at scale.

⁵³⁹ Incidentally, the first *Eurovision Song Contest* winner, Lys Assia, was the Swiss contestant (Ehnimb-Bertini, 2000).

Period conclusion

Initiated in 1938, the national Spiritual Defence policy represented the first step in the development of a Swiss national cultural policy; it was largely developed as a response to foreign propaganda, which attracted Swiss listeners with music and entertainment content they did not find on their local radio. Radio broadcasting thus played an essential role in initiating a cultural policy. The Spiritual Defence policy included the creation of institutions such as *Pro Helvetia* and it defined the federal cultural policy as defending the nation's diversity. The radio played an important role in the Spiritual Defence. It emerged from the World War II period strengthened: it had showed its relevance, enabling it to gain funding for expanding and further professionalisation after the war. Increasingly, the need to answer audience preferences grew. One answer was to add a second channel in each language region, enabling the Swiss citizen to find entertainment without tuning into foreign channels. A first survey of audiences was an attempt at audience research that showed the relevance of entertainment programmes, music included.

The 1950s were a decade that saw the introduction of television, including on an experimental basis in Switzerland. Yet, fears of television “dumbing down” the population and funding transfers away from radio led the population to reject a constitutional grounding for radio and television broadcasting; this was particularly the case in German-speaking Switzerland. However, a permanent television service was nonetheless launched in 1958; to do so, the press provided funding on the condition that television initially renounce carrying advertising. Given limited funding, SRG SSR was particularly creative in using existing infrastructure and international collaboration to lower the cost of programmes. Entertainment and major events were drivers of technology experimentation and adoption, both in production and broadcasting and by the population. A greater need for entertainment and programmes the population wanted was recognised, in particular for specific audience groups. Sports and entertainment programmes were drivers of technological innovation and international collaboration.

4.4.4. Rolling out a television monopoly (1958-1983)

This section turns to the period between the introduction of a permanent television service in 1958 and the launch of an experiment on private local radio channels in 1983, which opened the way for the liberalisation of the Swiss broadcasting market. Over this period, SRG SSR remained a monopolist on the domestic market, yet it faced competition from foreign broadcasters as well as from other mass media, in particular newspapers. While the previous periods allowed policymakers to solve major issues

around infrastructure and the role of SRG SSR as a contributor to Swiss identity, the 1960s and 1970s introduced debates around the relation between programmes and society (Mäusli & Steigmeier, 2006b). It was largely a period of gains in broadcast journalism and news. At the same time, the PSM expanded its broadcasting time and therefore needed more programmes; it also faced an imperative to respond to audience needs. These two factors led to an increase in entertainment content on both radio and television.

Television was a strong and swift popular success: by 1970, every second household had a television (Vallotton, 2006). The 1960s was the decade of television. As the number of subscribers rose, so did the investments in the network infrastructure by private firms as of 1963, leading Switzerland to have, with Belgium and the Netherlands, one of the densest cable networks in Europe (Müller, 2006). Colour television was introduced in 1968 following substantial investments by both PTT and SRG SSR (Müller, 2006). As a response to emerging cable and satellite broadcasting, SRG SSR's general direction proposed a second television channel; this project was suspended until the early 1990s largely due to financial considerations (Müller, 2006). Radio was limited by the development of television: it had to reinvent itself to compete with the new medium, while its programmes were developed to complement the television offering (Schade, 2006). The major shift in strategy consisted of repositioning the radio from an active listening medium to an accompanying medium, as listeners tuned in while driving. Within SRG SSR as well, fears appeared as to radio being replaced by television (Mäusli & Steigmeier, 2006a). To reflect the launch of a permanent television service, SRG SSR was renamed the Swiss society of radio and television broadcasting (*Société Suisse de radiodiffusion et télévision*) on July 5th, 1960. Although it added television to its full name, the acronym remained (Mäusli & Steigmeier, 2006b).

The missing legal ground: the repeated refusal of a constitutional article for radio and television

It took the government three attempts to successfully introduce a constitutional article on radio and television. After refusals in 1957 and 1976, the article was accepted by the population and cantons in 1984, confirming an established order that was developed under temporary regulatory regimes. Until the end of the 1960s, there was a broad consensus on the organisation of the Swiss broadcasting system and the relative position of SRG SSR, with its focus on public service rather than on viewer needs. Previously, the 1950s had seen intense debates around television, an

emerging medium.⁵⁴⁰ In 1957, 57.2% of the voting population rejected a new constitutional article on radio-television anchoring a television and radio monopoly, arguably due to fears around the experimental television service (Schneider, 2006). Indeed, there was mistrust of television, which was perceived as a threat to radio by potentially diverting its funding. The draft constitutional article included the following text: “[t]he Confederation shall entrust one or more institutions under public or private law with the establishment and execution of the programmes. The spiritual and cultural needs of the cantons, as well as those of the various parts of the country, the various population groups and the various linguistic regions must be taken into account on an equal footing.” (draft article 36 bis, al. 3);⁵⁴¹ it thus anchored the notion of spiritual and cultural needs, as well as the link to the cantons, population groups and linguistic regions. Following this rejection and given a lack of additional funding, it became necessary to build a television without money from the radio or public subsidies (Ehnb-Bertini, 2000); this implied a separate licence fee for television, a loan from the state and a financial contribution by newspaper publishers on the condition that the television did not carry advertising for a limited period.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the consensus around a broadcasting monopoly was challenged. A growing number of groups, including churches, publishers and political groups, announced their intention to set up their own broadcasting systems. Left-leaning political groups set-up pirate radios, which PTT was tasked with blocking (Schneider, 2006). Entrepreneurs and publishers saw a commercial opportunity. These tensions were further enhanced by technological innovation including satellite and cable, as well as teletext.

A new constitutional article, developed between 1967 and 1976, was rejected on September 26, 1976, by 56.7% of voters. The article would have introduced an independent complaints body and was otherwise similar to the article rejected in 1957.⁵⁴² It was more precise on the expectations in regard to programmes (alinea 4), in particular in regard to reflecting a diversity of opinions, representing all regions of the country as well as social and cultural diversity. However, it did not build on a coherent, comprehensive media strategy, which had been called for by numerous groups. The parliamentary and public debates surrounding this constitutional article denoted a political fight for the control of SRG SSR. At this stage, the federal

⁵⁴⁰ While these debates were addressed in the previous period, I detail some points here that are relevant to the period at hand.

⁵⁴¹ Translated from the original French: “La Confédération charge une ou plusieurs institutions de droit public ou privé d’établir et d’exécuter les programmes. Les besoins spirituels et culturels des cantons, comme aussi ceux des différentes parties du pays, des divers milieux de la population ainsi que des diverses régions linguistiques doivent être pris équitablement en considération”.

⁵⁴² The context was different, as the permanent television service had successfully been launched.

government considered that it could not act on the numerous concession requests it received from private organisations for lack of a regulatory framework.

To gather first practical insights, an ordinance allowing the experimentation of local private radio was in force from 1977 to 1981. While it aimed to gain first experiences before regulating, it was largely too restrictive and did not solve the question of financing. These constraints were dissatisfying for the media scene and entrepreneurs who wanted to broadcast legally, while facing competition from SRG SSR as well as youth groups setting up illegal pirate radios locally across the country, particularly in large cities.

On August 22, 1979, Roger Schawinski, former chief editor of *Kassensturz*,⁵⁴³ announced during a press conference the launch of Radio 24, a pirate radio based in Italy and broadcasting music, news and advertising towards Zurich. This was a wake-up call for Bern; it was a move by a major media figure, rather than a youth group.⁵⁴⁴

In June 1982, under pressure from the popular success of Radio 24, the government passed an ordinance allowing the experimentation on the local and regional level for radiobroadcasting, with up to 15 minutes of advertising per day. On November 1st, 1983, the state granted SRG SSR a concession to experiment with a third radio channel; at the same time, it granted a concession for an experimentation to 36 local radios, seven television and three teletext services (Schneider, 2006). These experimentations were anchored by the 1984 constitutional article, which confirmed the then established order rather than reforming it: a system with a strong national SRG SSR and local regulated markets with a private offering (Schneider, 2006). While the approach of experimentation was attractive, temporary decisions tended to become permanent, for instance, the temporary location of television studios (Zurich and Geneva) was confirmed in 1960 by a final decision of the federal government (Ehnb-Bertini, 2000). This period thus displayed the experimental approach of policymakers to regulate media markets in the context of rising competition, audience needs and repeated popular refusal of a constitutional article.

In this context of progressive expansion in the offering of channels on television and radio by SRG SSR and later private local media, the PSM underwent several reforms with continuous tension between centralisation and decentralisation.

⁵⁴³ *Kassensturz* is a television programme broadcast on the German-language public service television since 1974. It provides consumers insights on the products on the domestic market, in a half-hour factual format.

⁵⁴⁴ The national state later negotiated with its Italian counterparts to have Radio 24 closed down on several occasions.

Centralisation: the middle ground of language regions

To reform the organisation and further centralise, SRG SSR leadership relied on external audits to legitimise such proposals. Two such reports marked the history of the PSM: one by Probst in the late 1950s, and one by Hayek in the 1970s.

To adapt when confronted with growing tasks and audience expectations, a reorganisation was necessary to adapt SRG SSR to television and radio broadcasting in the 1960s; SRG SSR mandated Rudolf Probst to analyse the work of Swiss radiobroadcasting between 1955 and 1957. His internal audit report identified the key issue: the need for enhanced collaboration and coordination to reach the objectives in terms of rationalisation. While some proposals were politically unfeasible, such as reducing the importance of orchestras, the need for reform was agreed upon by SRG SSR's general assembly on December 20, 1958 (Ehnb-Bertini, 2000). One of his recommendations was to coordinate specific types of content for specialisation within language regions: this led within the German-speaking region to coordinating news in Bern, entertainment and culture in Basel, and classical music in Zurich (Ehnb-Bertini, 2000).

In 1964, another step was made towards centralisation with the creation of regional organisations replacing the local radios. On November 25, 1964, for the Radio- und Fernsehgesellschaft der deutschen und der rätoromanischen Schweiz and November 30, 1964, for the Société de radiodiffusion et de télévision de la Suisse romande. CORSI already existed for the Italian-region (Aziz & Piattini, 2006).

The economic crisis and inflation in the early 1970s blocked investments and the development of programmes. The general management hired a consulting firm to evaluate the overall situation of the organisation and formulate suggestions to reform its structure. In a first report in 1972, Hayek Engineering AG recommended clarifying roles and responsibilities, leading to a stronger centralisation of management at SRG SSR headquarters, while operational responsibilities by language region broadcasters were reinforced, notably by the creation of one single director for both radio and television per language region. This aimed to reduce the competition between the two media. Thus, the period saw a strengthening of the role of regional units as well as a centralisation on the national level of the general management responsibilities and a first step towards aligning the vision of radio and television within the member organisations.

Culture and information in the age of television

Culture and television were often viewed as opposites. The introduction of television led to serious debates, including on audience “dumbing down” by television. The argument for higher licence fees progressively evolved over this period from the view of culture as an instrument of Spiritual Defence to that of a tool to resist the foreign threat to domestic culture from commercial players, presented from a socio-pedagogical perspective. Management made use of the cultural argument to justify increases in the licence fee during this period. SRG SSR was successful at using the fear of foreign cultural invasion to lobby for an expansion of its financing and mandate; even so, the debate around the share of foreign content broadcast on SRG SSR channels is a recurring issue in its history (Gysin, 2006), particularly in entertainment. In the 1950s-1970s, television was often viewed as a medium that might lower people’s intelligence; as a defence against this argument, a large part of the discourse in German-speaking Switzerland was built around education and high culture. This was reflected in the fact that a lot of early television staff came from theatre and art schools; yet they were considered failures by practitioners in those fields for going into television (Obermüller, 2003). The professional training of television staff was reflected in the programmes they created, close to the practices of theatre.

Overall, the period was not as much about culture and entertainment as it was about information, due to the social and political tensions of the time. Yet the constitutional article adopted in 1984 referred to culture and entertainment: “[r]adio and television contribute to the education and development of culture, to the free formation of opinion and to entertainment.”⁵⁴⁵ This definition thus includes the dual role of promoting and developing culture. The role of SRG SSR was triple in regard to culture: first, it had to reflect the existing cultural offering as a platform; second, it had to comment this offering and play the role of a cultural mediator; third, it had to operate as a creator of cultural products as an effective producer (Gysin, 2006). Until 1984, SRG SSR’s mandate came largely from vaguely formulated concessions, granting it a large scope of action and interpretation (Gysin, 2006).

In the 1960s and 1970s, SRG SSR, in effect, followed a mixed line in regard to culture: on the one hand, it attempted not to frighten the cultural sector; on the other, it referred to a cultural mandate when requesting increased financing. Yet, it did not provide a clear internal definition of culture and thus afforded its regional units large freedom in

⁵⁴⁵ Translated from the original French: “la radio et la télévision contribuent à la formation et au développement culturel, à la libre formation de l’opinion et au divertissement”.

this regard, as opposed to the field of information (Gysin, 2006); the latter was closely monitored given the social and political tensions at the time.

Financial constraints remained a major limitation: the creation of new programmes was largely related to periodic surges in revenue. In radio, this was related to the increase in the licence fee. In television, revenues grew fifty-fold between 1958 and 1983; the biggest increase followed the introduction of advertising on television in 1965 (Schade, 2006). However, the production of a new television programme was more costly than a new radio programme, on average. Unlike for radio though, the television licence fee did not outgrow inflation (Schade, 2006); advertising revenues thus allowed to expand the television offering without passing on the costs directly on licence fee payers; rather, they contributed their attention.

In the late 1970s, television broadcast between 7.5 and 8.5 hours per day, usually in the evening. The 1980s saw an expansion in the television broadcasting period. Based on audience research, this extension allowed for more entertainment, the content that would suit the largest audience (Schade, 2006). In radio, broadcasting time more than tripled between 1958 and 1983, growing from 15'500 hours annually to 53'700 (Schade, 2006). In television, this figure went from 2'000 to 11'000 over the same period (Mäusli & Steigmeier, 2006a). This increase was driven mainly by recordings, in particular of international music, at the relative expense of fiction and drama, news inquiries and educational content (Schade, 2006). The early 1980s saw the introduction of night programming (1981) and a third channel for the youth (1982/3). The growth in television in particular was conducted by rebroadcasts,⁵⁴⁶ notably from the exchange of shows through the Eurovision TV Programme Exchange, a television network setup within EBU to encourage the exchange of television programmes. This reflected a strategic or political intention to play a leading role in a technical multilateral organisation (Mäusli & Steigmeier, 2006a); it was also the pragmatic economic choice of an organisation that had comparatively limited financial resources given the service it was expected to deliver.

In both radio and television, entertainment programmes were audience drivers. In regard to drama, the 1970s were a golden period for radiophonic plays in the Swiss-German language radio. Television plays, inspired by theatre rather than film, were very costly and encountered a limited audience success. As funding was redirected to information, Swiss-German television DRS bought foreign content until 1965 when advertising allowed it to generate additional revenue (Gysin, 2006).

⁵⁴⁶ Approximately 40% between 1960 and 1968, down to 20% in 1983 (Schade, 2006).

Concerning music, there were fewer differences in channel profiles across the language regions. As of 1965, the strongly differentiated positioning of the two radio channels within the three main language regions was adapted. The first provided information, entertainment and sports. The second, focusing on a more cultured audience provided high culture programmes. A third channel broadcasting international entertainment music was launched in the regions in 1982/3 (Gysin, 2006), particularly aiming to reach young audiences.

Orchestras still represented an important cost: in 1977, they represented 23% of direct show costs, while only providing 2.3% of the broadcast time (Gysin, 2006). In 1986, the last public broadcaster orchestra, the DRS variety orchestra, was dissolved, after a 1983 report identified that SRG SSR ought to be a client of orchestras rather than their operator (Gysin, 2006); this was an early step in rethinking the relation of SRG SSR to the regional and local cultural scene.

SRG SSR also played a role on both a foreign diplomatic and domestic integration levels. Its short-wave radio service produced content in foreign languages, both for audiences abroad and foreign residents, including the numerous temporary immigrant workers in the 1960s (Aziz & Piattini, 2006). The show *Un' Ora Per Voi* (An Hour for You) was an example of a domestic integration effort (Mäusli & Steigmeier, 2006a); it was an Italian-language programme addressing guest workers from Italy.

Swiss-German television culture came from theatre and stuck to the broadcast of opera, concerts and plays (Obermüller, 2003). For instance, the television director Peter Schellenberg decided in 1993 to do away with the “Culture and Society” (*Kultur und Gesellschaft*) department and put it within the “Education” department because he did not support a “sheltered workshop”, meant in a derogatory manner (Obermüller, 2003). In other words: “[c]ulture, it would seem, was only conceivable in conjunction with a higher-level mission. It had to serve: first of all to convey education, then to find out about social relevance, and finally the all-dominant duty to provide information” (Obermüller, 2003, p.176).⁵⁴⁷ This view would come to evolve when faced with audience research. Abroad, the notion of audience research was linked in commercial television to the commercial break.

⁵⁴⁷ Translated from the original German: “Kultur, so will es scheinen, war nur denkbar im Verbund mit einem übergeordneten Auftrag. Sie hatte zu dienen: zunächst der Vermittlung von Bildung, dann der Ergründung gesellschaftlicher Relevanz und schliesslich der alles beherrschenden Pflicht zur Information”.

America's television: economics, and the invention of the commercial break

Once again, the American context is relevant to this research since the North American market pioneered technologies, practices and formats that spread around the world, including to Switzerland. The economics of a television show are different from those of radio, as the production of even a cheap television programme is more costly than that of a radio show. It must therefore draw in a larger minimum audience to continue, or else be cancelled. Thus, the 1950s saw the rise of a race for the attention of Americans, with the introduction of a whole range of formats that continue to this day: the early morning and late-night shows, to reach into previously unavailable time slots; the spectacular, one-time or annual event (and its most famous occurrence, the *Super Bowl*); the magazine format; the commercial breaks, allowing to sell the sponsorship of a show to several advertisers; and quiz show games. According to Wu (2016), “[o]nce that system existed, the logic of capitalism, though not decency, dictated it could be used for only one purpose: to make as much money as could be made. That the substrate for this process was the conscious hours of millions of Americans was hardly CBS’s or NBC’s problem. In a free society, you are free to do things that aren’t good for you, whether it be smoke, drink sugary drinks, or watch game shows. Thanks to the erosion of the public interest model, broadcasters were free to air what suited them” (p. 141). Critics of the turn American television was taking argued that it was isolating citizens from the realities of the world, unlike the radio’s role in confronting Americans with the horrors of World War II in Europe.

In the 1950s, as television surged while moving away from serving a public interest to focus on the notion of advertisement driving content, Eric Barnouw, a US historian of television broadcasting, formulated the dilemma in a way that many could relate to: “[t]he real question is whether we can afford to have our culture and artistic life become a by-product of advertising. My answer is that we can’t”.⁵⁴⁸ By the 1950s, television had entered most American households, in advance on European markets in terms of television penetration. Commercial television was driven to seek attention in a manner that was viewed as unfit by elites. The American model was used as a repellent to the vision of television in both its experimentation phase in Switzerland and in the introduction of a permanent service.

Given the refusal of a constitutional article on television and hence of federal subsidies to television, advertising was nevertheless introduced in Swiss public television in 1965

⁵⁴⁸ Quoted in Wu (2016, p. 150).

to generate revenue for programme production.⁵⁴⁹ This was the first step in a recurring issue in the relations between the PSM and the national media ecosystem. First, the issue was that advertising would compete with domestic print media, then with other domestic broadcasters. Later, as discussed in the following period, the PSM would go on to compete for advertisers with foreign broadcasters selling advertising slots for the Swiss market specifically. Advertising would progressively become an important source of revenue for SRG SSR, growing to a quarter of its budget nowadays. It also impacted programming choices: sporting events, which draw a large viewership, are accompanied by commentary shows before and after the event to offer attractive slots for advertisers. Thus, the fight for advertising revenue is constitutive of the Swiss media system.

Yet advertising is based on the premise of inciting an action in the viewer. For an advertiser to pay to have a product or service displayed, the firm would want at some stage proof of the reach of advertising. I now turn to the way broadcast media measured audiences.

Audience research and the ratings: understanding the people

The introduction of advertising on Swiss television fit in a broader shift, from a broadcasting perspective to a reception perspective. The discovery of audiences and their preferences in the face of competition for attention led to new forms of content. It also led to new devices and concepts, and in particular that of ratings. Again, the United States and their commercially-driven broadcasting markets led the way, first with the Nielsen ratings, later with demographic targeting and eventually with personalised targeting.

To be able to duly monetise attention through advertising, the broadcasters eventually had to demonstrate their impact. They thus had to measure human attention. This was first done in 1936 by Robert Elder, an MIT professor, when he presented the “audimeter” measuring when a radio was on and which station it was tuned in to. This early model was acquired by Arthur Charles Nielsen who then developed a prototype of his own box which, placed in a household, measured what people listened to. The first Nielsen ratings were published in 1947 and this innovation transformed broadcasting (Wu, 2016), beginning in the United States before taking over the world.

⁵⁴⁹ This followed a period during which newspaper publishers funded the television by providing CHF 2 million until 180'000 subscribers were to be reached; this figure was reached in 1961, much earlier than expected (Schneider, 2006).

In the 1970s, with both social movements and early computer power, the notion of demographic targeting emerged. Through this came the recognition that there was not one America, but several, as opposed to the notion of one great national community, imagined and created in the 19th century. In 1978, Jonathan Robbin created a system called the “Potential Ratings in ZIP Markets”, which clustered the US population in geographical sub-nations, based on postal codes. These could be targeted for advertising purposes more precisely than by sheer income or national origin, or in the Swiss context, language or canton. The development of new devices, notably the transistor, expanded the audience to include more demographics: while early radio listening practices were centred around the father’s intention to listen to the mid-day news over lunch, more family members became independent in their consumption as they accessed their own device.⁵⁵⁰ The transistor and miniaturisation allowed the radio to leave the home in the late 1950s, a development that television would see later. During the 1960s, radio became largely an accompanying media (Mäusli & Steigmeier, 2006a), reflecting an evolution in the consumption practices. This evolution made audience research all the more relevant.

It was essential for commercial broadcasters to be able to demonstrate what relative share of the population tuned in to their shows and whose attention they commanded to sell advertising slots; likewise it would become important, with competition in due time, for public service media to demonstrate what share, and later which share, of the viewing population they were reaching, both for advertising and, most importantly, for their legitimacy. Indeed, legitimacy, for a PSM, depends on its universal reach.

The move from culture to entertainment in broadcasting is linked to audience research. This move from the early 1970s meant a broadcaster was not only to schedule what it considered important and relevant but also what the public chose to view. This led to (high) cultural content being pushed from good slots to the middle of the night because of ratings.⁵⁵¹ This shift was not, however, as strong as in commercial television markets: “[t]he fact that culture on Swiss television did not fall victim to the mercantile, quota-oriented thinking, as was the case with the commercial sector, is due on the one hand to the legally enshrined cultural mandate of the public service, and, on the other, to the insight within the company that, in addition to programmes that generate ratings, there is also a need for those that provide prestige” (Obermüller, 2003, p. 183).⁵⁵²

⁵⁵⁰ One debate ought to be mentioned here in regard to PSM: namely, the role of multiple channels and audience fragmentation. Critics argue that the multiplication of channels fragmented the national audience, thus reducing the potential for social cohesion of radio and television broadcasting. Supporters argued that the offering simply revealed an existing fragmentation, and thus allowed the PSM to better respond to diverging needs.

⁵⁵¹ However, SRG SSR did not mainly give in to advertising, in line with its mandate.

⁵⁵² Translated from the original German: “Dass Kultur im Schweizer Fernsehen nicht wie bei den Kommerziellen dem nur noch merkantilen, nur noch quotenorientierten Denken zum Opfer fiel, verdankt sie einerseits dem

Indeed, it also reflects a notion of citizenship and quality in public service media content.

The mid-1960s saw a paradigmatic shift in programme development at SRG SSR. Until then, the development of programmes was based on an offer mode rather than a demand mode, the latter corresponding to audience needs. With the introduction of television advertising and the increased competition from abroad, programme directors realised the importance of better understanding their audiences and their needs. With this aim, between 1968 and 1973, the organisation developed instruments and methodologies to define a programme strategy that corresponds to the needs of the audience and of advertisers; the strategy of audience research implemented in 1975 has continued since (Schade, 2006). The team working on audience research is integrated in the general management of SRG SSR.

While the results of audience research were not always well received by programme developers, they were used for both quality control and arguments in public debates (Schade, 2006). A first public study was published in 1976, revealing that television was most appreciated as an entertainment medium in the German-speaking region, and for information in the French- and Italian-language regions (Schade, 2006). Therefore, the competitive need for audience research led to discovering that audiences enjoyed entertainment; this in turn led to scheduling and developing more entertainment programmes and more entertaining programmes. Audience research was used for making decisions around the launch of new services. For instance, it revealed in the late 1970s the importance of developing a 24/7 radio channel aimed at younger audiences, who were particularly attracted to foreign channels (Schade, 2006). In 1982/3, the launch of a third radio channel aimed to respond to the development of youth culture: the channels Couleur 3 in French-speaking Switzerland and DRS 3 in the German-speaking region (Müller, 2006). This is an example of radio formatting.⁵⁵³

Therefore, needing to measure audiences and demographics, SRG SSR introduced the practice of audience research to inform its programming decisions and strategic development choices. The audience research department thus progressively facilitated a transition from a socio-pedagogical approach to one fitting audience needs and expectations.

gesetzlich verankerten Kulturauftrag des Service public, zum andern aber auch der Einsicht innerhalb des Hauses, dass es neben Sendungen, die Quote bringen, auch solche braucht, die für Prestige sorgen”.

⁵⁵³ The practice of labelling the overall content of a channel for marketing purposes. The US had radio formatting as early as the 1950s; that approach only took hold in Switzerland in the 1980s following liberalisation and commercialisation of the broadcast media sector (Schade, 2006).

Sports: from created news to advertising-packed entertainment driving technological innovation

Sports are a category of entertainment that illustrates the interplay of conditions (regulatory, technological and economic) with the practices and texts. Sports in Swiss broadcasts went from being a form of news replacement in the early days of the radio to an independent, packaged entertainment provider in contemporary television. In public service media, sports may be the type of programme that is most influenced by the commercial logic, as its format and conditions are largely driven not by a national logic, but by international markets, of which the American one is the largest.⁵⁵⁴ It is also a sector in which there is strong competition for broadcasting rights between private and public broadcasters. I address the values and drama in sports broadcasts, the relation between sports and advertising, as well as the issue of broadcasting rights for major sporting events and the impact on PSM.

Major events were not the only sports broadcasts. As early as 1961, a common national programme, *Sport am Wochenende* (Sport on the Weekend), presented an excerpt of all major sporting events of the week, supported by a voice-over in German, French and Italian. Additional magazine formats were added over the years. In terms of content, the period displayed a progressive shift from factual reporting to emotional and entertaining storytelling in sports and the extension of accompanying analysis and programmes.

Television as a medium has come to shape sports events. As an example, commercial interests linked to television influence the time events take place and the rules of events. This arguably started with the *FIFA Football World Cup* in 1970 in Mexico, when the games took place during the burning lunch hours so that European viewers could watch the matches broadcast live on television before midnight. The programme of Olympic Games typically targets the US-American market, which is the most financially interesting from an advertising standpoint. The separation of winter and summer Olympic Games introduced in 1992 made it possible to offer more advertising space. Furthermore, by formatting the programmes' content to attract large audiences, they also reflect societal tensions, for instance around gender. For television, the dress code of female athletes is regulated in tennis and volleyball; the coverage and pay of male and female football players are unequal.

In earlier periods, sports were relatively cheap to produce, as they largely were long live broadcasts. The broadcaster provided a running commentary, the sports journalist

⁵⁵⁴ Although the specific set of sports varies; American football and baseball are more popular in the US than they are in Europe, which favours football.

often becoming a celebrity in his own right.⁵⁵⁵ The relationship between sports and advertising is also relevant. As we have seen, advertisement was forbidden in the early days of broadcasting in Switzerland. This constraint progressively disappeared, particularly in sports through sponsorships: sports broadcasts are advertising intensive.⁵⁵⁶

The invention of the live broadcast was largely driven by sports (Thurnheer, 2003). Through live broadcasting, the radio offered sports reporting a degree of timeliness that the newspapers could not provide.⁵⁵⁷ This may be part of the reason for which newspapers did not largely oppose the broadcast of sports in the early period of radiobroadcasting in Switzerland.

The evolution of technology means that the quality and reliability of broadcasts increased. As technological conditions improved, the conveyed emotions increased. The zoom, or close-up; the replay in slow-motion for a missed goal; animations; all were tested early with sports content, before being applied to other areas of broadcasting, including the news. These technologies also allowed broadcasters to increase the number of sports, taking previously “boring” sports that could not have been broadcast, and enhancing their dramaturgy through video cutting effects. Beyond the dramaturgy of broadcasts, sportsmen and sportswomen have arguably become main characters and supporting actors in a pluriannual serial, in sports ranging from skiing to Formula 1 through tennis, football and ice-hockey. In turn, they can monetise their visibility with advertising contracts.

Lastly, sports are an instrument of soft power. A sport can become relevant for a country through heroes, gold medals at Olympic Games. It is a marker of soft power; Olympic Games lead to a scoreboard of nations; tennis player Roger Federer is viewed as an ambassador for Switzerland.

Period conclusion

The period discussed in this section saw an extension in SRG SSR’s offering by multiplying its channels: in 1958, SRG SSR was the only concession-holder and it broadcast across seven radio channels and three television channels in the country. This expansion would continue in the 1980s, both from SRG SSR and from private providers: in 1983, fifty concession holders broadcast through fifty radio channels and

⁵⁵⁵ Overwhelmingly, sports journalists are male.

⁵⁵⁶ The names of stadiums and competitions are now branded; the broadcast session is proudly sponsored by firms often locked into pluriannual deals; the players are covered in logos, and cities in turn covered in posters of the players as ambassadors for brands.

⁵⁵⁷ The introduction of recording technology was more impactful for less time-bound areas of entertainment such as fiction.

ten television channels (Schneider, 2006). Between 1958 and 1983, SRG SSR progressively discovered its audience and explored audience research, in the face of strong internal resistance to change. First results showed the strong interest of the audience for entertainment programmes. This was reflected in a progressive shift in offering, from culture to entertainment. The swift deployment of television was a popular success, leaving audiences calling for more channels. The American invention of the commercial break as a means to finance programmes was introduced to Switzerland in 1965, allowing SRG SSR to fund the development of new programmes. Audience research was used for both legitimacy and the development of new services, such as the introduction of a third radio channel addressing the youth in the early 1980s. Yet, the public wanted even more choice.

4.4.5. Introducing competition (1983-2006)

By the early 1980s, the disconnect between the needs of certain audience segments and the SRG SSR radio offering was becoming evident; this opened up the path for creative entrepreneurs. Celebrating 25 years of authorised private radio broadcasters in Switzerland in 2008, communications minister Moritz Leuenberger recalled in a speech: “[i]n the beginning was the rebellion. A new style and new contents were sought. The programmes of Radio DRS were perceived as uniform and rigid. [...] The music programme was dominated by march and yodel and so that the radio journalists did not have a guilty conscience, when they broadcast a song by Elvis Presley, they used it as a pedagogically valuable language lesson: such a chanson or pop song could be broadcast only a slice at a time. Every single sentence was translated into Zurich, Bern or Basel dialect, depending on the studio. [...] When Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff came along, many didn't want to wait any longer until they were released for SRG SSR school radio and they pushed into the media competition. The first local radio stations were pirate stations controlled by perpetrators in the ether with anarchic features” (Leuenberger, 2008).⁵⁵⁸

Roger Schawinski is perhaps the most famous Swiss radio pirate, although he did not stem from the politically oriented groups some pirate radios hailed from. Rather, he

⁵⁵⁸ Translated from the original German: “Am Anfang war die Rebellion. Ein neuer Stil und neue Inhalte wurden gesucht. Die Programme von Radio DRS wurden als gleichförmig und starr empfunden. [...] Das Musikprogramm war von Marsch und Jodel beherrscht und damit die Radiojournalisten kein schlechtes Gewissen beschlich, wenn sie einen Song von Elvis Presley ausstrahlten, nutzten sie das zum pädagogisch wertvollen Sprachunterricht: Nur scheibchenweise durfte so ein Chanson oder Schlager ausgestrahlt werden. Jeder einzelne Satz wurde wie im Schulunterricht übersetzt, je nach Studio auf zürich-, bern- oder baseldeutsch. [...] Als dann Bob Marley und Jimmy Cliff kamen, mochten viele nicht mehr warten, bis diese für den SRG - Schulfunk freigegeben wurden und sie drängten in den Medienwettbewerb. Die ersten Lokalradios waren Piratensender gesteuert von Tätern im Äther mit anarchischen Zügen.“

represented the semi-commercial pirate radio that would become the basis for private commercial radio broadcasters. Using a loophole in Italy, he started broadcasting Radio 24 from the Italian Pizzo Groppe mountain. The radio, aiming for Zurich, broadcast the music that the young wanted and was financed through advertising (Künzler, 2012a). Press magnates also got in the game: the former editor of the daily newspaper *La Suisse* founded Radio Mont-Blanc in 1981, to serve French-speaking Switzerland. These radios increased the political pressure on the regulator to authorise competition by de facto creating it, as the population could already tune in to private offerings that better responded to their preferences in terms of music entertainment. This represents the dual challenge for PSM over the period: it faced the increasing tension between legitimacy through audience figures and legitimacy through the quality of its programmes. In order to maintain some control and credibility on its broadcasting scene, the federal government had to act. It did so by introducing a regulated, experimental competition. In television as well, the multitude of cable channels created new audience behaviours, amongst which zapping (Scherrer, 2012).

The twenty-year period addressed in this section saw four trends that impacted PSM throughout Europe. First, the emergence of a dual broadcasting system, combining public and private broadcasters. Second, new regulations framing the audiovisual sector. Third, the digital convergence, which impacted the production of content as well as its distribution and consumption. Fourth, the strong internationalisation of broadcasts and programmes (Vallotton, 2012). All of these trends impacted the understanding and practice of entertainment in PSM.

Fundamentally, this period represents the shift from a supply to a demand-driven market. The multiplication of channels, both private and public, strengthened the competition for the audience's attention, even as new devices made it possible to capture more attention time. The Internet was a key facilitator of this development, setting the ground for the rise of the Internet-era attention merchants. Yet even as this period saw a political wave challenging the overall public sector in favour of the market, SRG SSR's budget and offering significantly grew, adding between one and three radio and television channels in each language-region.

Experimenting with competition and reimagining the broadcast media system

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was growing pressure on SRG SSR's monopoly. It came largely from three groups. Pirate radios that broadcast pop and rock music that was largely not available on the public radio broadcasts were one of these groups. Pirate radios were mostly urban or broadcasting from abroad. Another

group took aim at the monopoly for political reasons: conservative voices in the German-language region considered SRG SSR to be left-leaning (Künzler, 2012a). A third group, made up of publishers and entrepreneurs, saw a business opportunity for advertising-funded broadcasts.

Following the 1976 refusal of a constitutional article on radio and television, the Federal Council appointed a commission of experts to develop a coherent strategy for broadcast media. In 1982, the commission proposed a model based on three levels: local, regional (language region), and international. The experts recommended that on the first and third levels, private broadcasters should be allowed to be active, financed mainly by advertising or a dedicated fee, while the regional level should be based on the public service SRG SSR and its licence fee financing model.

Knowing that passing a law would take time, the government selected an experimental approach to introduce private broadcasters. In 1982, it adopted an Ordinance on the trials in local broadcasting.⁵⁵⁹ This experimental approach allowed it to move forward in the absence of a constitutional ground. Of the 269 requested concessions, 52 were granted (Künzler, 2012a). Most of these radios broadcast recorded music, regular news bulletins and quiz shows.

The 1984 Constitutional article on radio and television provided the normative grounds for the established order. It was accepted by 69% of the voting population on December 2, 1984. The Constitution thus required radio and television to contribute, amongst objectives, to the cultural development and the entertainment of the user (new art 55bis, al. 2); it also guaranteed programme autonomy. Once the constitutional article was adopted, the federal state had the legitimacy to develop a Federal Act on Radio and Television, over fifty years after the creation of the first SRG SSR. Its development was a political process based on experience from abroad and domestic results from the ongoing experiment with private broadcasting.

At the same time, the liberal, pro-market values that were sweeping through the Anglo-Saxon world also impacted Swiss public sector organisations, including SRG SSR and PTT. In the case of SRG SSR, this meant a shift from an *institution* (“Anstalt”) to a *company* (“Unternehmen”); this came with a rediscovery of audiences. While remaining largely funded by the licence fee, SRG SSR underwent the reform programme *SRG SSR on its way to the 90ies* conducted by director-general Leo Schürmann as of 1985. The organisation was to be managed according to principles of the private sector, in an implementation of new public management (Valsangiacomo,

⁵⁵⁹ Ordinance of 7 June 1982 on Local Broadcasting Trials (OER).

2012). This eventually impacted the split between the content, curation, connection layers and the infrastructure layers between SRG SSR and PTT.⁵⁶⁰

The Act on Radio and Television of 1991 was based on two key ideas. First, the three levels (local, regional, international) proposed by the commission; second, all radio players must fulfil the constitutional mandate of 1984. These ideas were broadly supported, as demonstrated by the lack of a referendum against this new Act. The intention was to foster competition yet maintain a powerful public service broadcaster. At the end of the experimental phase, it had become clear that the advertising was not a sufficient source of revenue for the development of private local radio throughout the country, particularly in mountainous and remote regions. To foster their development, the Act introduced the principle of share of the licence fee for private local radios; however, this amounted to less than 1% of the total licence fee revenue. In line with other European countries, the Act also led to the creation of a new administrative supervisor, OFCOM, in 1992 (Künzler, 2012a).⁵⁶¹ This government entity supervises the broadcast market, including both public and private broadcasters.

The Act authorised advertising on private television, which was not allowed in the experimental period. Private television could take one of three forms: launch an own channel; use a slot on a foreign channel for the domestic market; or use a slot on an SRG SSR channel. Thus, in 1994, the commercial local broadcaster TeleZüri was launched by Roger Schawinski and aimed to serve the Zurich agglomeration, the biggest metropolitan area in the country.⁵⁶²

In response to the Act of 1991, SRG SSR decided to create a fourth national channel to complement the three regional television channels; the PSM launched two unsuccessful concepts of a national channel in a row.⁵⁶³ In 1996 the new director-general, Armin Walpen, modified the concept in favour of a second television channel for each linguistic region (SF zwei, TSR 2, TSI 2), which began their broadcasts in 1997. This strategy was eventually successful, as it provided a choice to the audiences that allowed SRG SSR to remain the first player on its domestic television market,

⁵⁶⁰ Indeed, in 1988, PTT disengaged from SRG SSR infrastructure (the broadcast of the signal from the studio to the receptor), which thus became master of its infrastructure choice and of the licence fee distribution that came with it, namely the 30% of the licence fee that were previously distributed to PTT for infrastructure (Scherrer, 2012).

⁵⁶¹ OFCOM is not independent of the state; rather, it is an administrative unit of the federal state.

⁵⁶² It survives to this day without relying on a share of the licence fee and has since been acquired and resold by several publishing houses.

⁵⁶³ S Plus was launched in September 1993. Conceptualised as an internal competition to existing channels within the PSM, it eventually sourced its content from SF DRS in German. This led to a new concept, under the brand Schweiz 4 / Suisse 4 / Svizzera 4, launched in March 1995 and aiming to complement the existing channels rather than compete with them. This second concept of a national channel failed again in terms of audiences; it was SRG SSR's last attempt at a national broadcaster.

when considering cumulatively its two channels in the language regions (Ruppen Coutaz, 2012).

While liberalisation led to the introduction of a handful of private television broadcasters and a range of local radio broadcasters, SRG SSR's main competitors remained foreign television, which had a 60-70% market share in all language regions (Künzler, 2012a). As a competitive response to this situation and to reinforce the connection with the domestic audience, the PSM rebranded in 1999 under the name *SRG SSR idée suisse*. This shift in corporate communication aimed to strengthen the PSM in the context of a struggling Swiss identity and of increasing Americanisation and Europeanisation of television (Ruppen Coutaz, 2012). These evolving conditions would impact all SRG SSR; yet the PSM's international radio was the first to be fundamentally impacted by these changes.

Reinventing Swiss Radio International: the tension between political objectives and financial constraints

Swiss Radio International is a good illustration of the relation of SRG SSR to the political and regulatory authorities in the 1990s and in the period leading up to the revised Federal Act, adopted in 2006.⁵⁶⁴ It showcases the evolution of a member of SRG SSR in the face of a new technological environment that would later impact the other members. Since the beginning of the operations of the shortwave emitter in Schwarzenburg in 1939, Swiss Radio International fulfilled the mission of maintaining ties with the Fifth Switzerland and of contributing to the outreach of Swiss culture abroad. At the end of the Cold War, Swiss Radio International and other international radios faced an existential challenge as economic, technological and regulatory conditions changed. At the same time, SRG SSR underwent cost-saving programmes and considered Swiss Radio International to be at the margin of its mandate.

Swiss Radio International considered moving beyond radio broadcasting. It experimented with several technologies, including television as of 1987, satellite in 1994, and Internet starting in 1995. Although a project of a Swiss international service emerged in 1997, it was abandoned for both financial reasons and because of SRG SSR's participation in satellite channels TV5 and 3sat. The technology of short-wave radio was on its last legs: the destruction of the symbolic emitter of Schwarzenburg in 1998 was its swan song. Divesting from this costly and relatively less effective technology was not unique to Switzerland: the Netherlands, Sweden and Canada made similar choices during the 1990s (Ruppen Coutaz, 2012). The Internet then

⁵⁶⁴ This entity was discussed in the 1938-1958 period.

became Swiss Radio International's main distribution channel,⁵⁶⁵ leading to the launch in March 1999 of the website swissinfo.ch. Originally in French, German, English and Portuguese, other languages were later added: Japanese, Italian, Spanish (2000) and Arabic and Chinese (2001). In organisational terms, swissinfo.ch was intended to become the central interface for the websites of language-region broadcasters; a proposal that was eventually abandoned, as business units opposed this centralisation leading to one common Internet strategy (Ruppen Coutaz, 2012).⁵⁶⁶

Regulatory conditions were also evolving. Strategic decisions around where to allocate limited funds ahead of the new Act on radio and television led management to propose a reduction in funding for Swiss Radio International and a limitation of its activities to the English language. Strong opposition in the Federal Parliament shelved this proposal. At the same time, as of 1985, half of Swiss Radio International's budget was funded directly by the federal state, the other half by the licence fee (Ruppen Coutaz, 2012).⁵⁶⁷ While the decision to develop an online offering for Swiss Radio International appeared largely driven by funding constraints, it became the pioneer of Swiss public media online. It also revealed the tensions between this new channel and production processes conceived for radio broadcasting. Lastly, it revealed the limits of the existing legal framework to justify online activities. This episode displays the tension between popular demand for entertainment and the funding that it required, and the political intention to maintain an international news service.

As in many European countries, this was not a period of "deregulation" in the sense of reducing the rules and regulations, but rather of "reregulation", or the adoption of a new conception of the broadcast systems, specifically in regard to the role of private media, a point made most clearly by Bourdon (2011). This new conception was in part due to new audience dynamics, which I turn to after briefly addressing the SRG SSR's control of its infrastructure.

Gaining control of its infrastructure: SRG SSR's independence from PTT

The development of digital recording and transmitting technology challenged the historical distribution of tasks between PTT and SRG SSR, whereby PTT was responsible for broadcasting the signal from the recording location to the audience member (Müller, 2006). In 1988, the imminent end of the Cold War and the related

⁵⁶⁵ The last short-wave emitter, Sottens, was closed in 2004, marking the end of Swiss Radio International's broadcasting.

⁵⁶⁶ When considering the challenge for the development of a common public service portal, this prior experience is a relevant reference point.

⁵⁶⁷ As such, it is the only business unit of SRG SSR to be directly funded by the federal state. In this, it is somewhat similar to *Pro Helvetia*, *Suisse Tourisme* and *Présence Suisse*, which all address audiences abroad.

decrease of the military justification for this organisation led SRG SSR to obtain responsibility for its studios and broadcasting technology, as well as the licence fees that PTT had been receiving (Müller, 2006); it was also the product of a broader shift in thinking in public management. Thus, SRG SSR became responsible for its technology choices. This development reflected the view of technological orientations at the interplay of economics and culture. It allowed the PSM management to make integrated, coherent technology choices in interaction with programme decisions without depending on a third-party firm. This was important at a time when SRG SSR had to react faster to evolving audience practices and preferences. In turn, it afforded the PSM more liberty in producing programmes by controlling the technical constraints, independently of other public organisations that may not share the goal of responding to audience needs and increasing demand for entertainment.

This long-lasting collaboration between SRG SSR, PTT and the Swiss army initially made it possible to unlock substantial investments in broadcasting technology. However, this collaboration led to inertia that prevented a swift reaction to technological and cultural developments in the 1960s and 1970s (Müller, 2006). Furthermore, production and broadcasting processes were increasingly moving to integrated systems rather than single devices, making progressive, incremental decisions across several organisations impractical. This made it all the more important for SRG SSR to gain control of its infrastructure.

Cable distribution and channel multiplication: an increased offering and more entertainment

While audience research was implemented at SRG SSR in the 1970s, this took time to impact scheduling. Since the launch of television, the only major developments were colour television in 1968 and stereophony in radio in 1978, yet these were hardly fundamental changes. What supported a shift from an offer to a demand perspective were new technological developments in distribution (satellite and cable) and audience measurement systems.

Two broadcasting technologies transformed the availability of channels: satellite, mostly on an international level,⁵⁶⁸ and cable, on a local level, which I now turn to. The construction of a cable network began in the mid-1960s in Switzerland. Although there

⁵⁶⁸ Beyond an international offering, satellite television saw two commercial offering attempts in Switzerland: Teleclub in the German-language region, piloted in 1982 and officially launched in 1984, and Télécinéromandie in 1985; in both cases, publishers participated in the companies (Künzler, 2012a). They offered access to numerous film premieres at fixed hours in the evening for a monthly subscription fee. Télécinéromandie closed in 1993, Teleclub has been a subsidiary of Swisscom since 2005.

were cable networks for radio programmes in large cities as early as 1931, they could not carry a television signal (Scherrer, 2012). The key incentive for cable adoption was an increased offering in channels, more than the higher reception quality.⁵⁶⁹ These cable networks led to two developments: first, increased competition for SRG SSR channels and new viewer behaviours, such as zapping; second, space for new content. By the end of the 1980s, 80% of households were connected to a cable network and thereby had access to 30-40 television channels, amongst which entertainment programmes were an important selling point. Private cable companies were the driving forces behind projects of local private television channels.⁵⁷⁰ To finance these programmes, cable companies experimented with subscriptions, for instance with a first Pay-TV service on the Zurich network in 1982. As a consequence of the market liberalisation following the 1991 Telecommunications Act, cable companies were allowed to offer Internet and telephone services, in addition to radio and television.⁵⁷¹ In this context of technological evolution, changed competitive environment and evolving practices of looking, SRG SSR was under pressure to better respond to audience needs. Following the adoption of the 1991 Radio and Television Act, SRG SSR was awarded a concession to introduce a fourth television channel and foster programme competition within public service broadcasting.

S Plus was launched in 1993 with a focus on sports. A national channel, it broadcast in German with subtitles in the other national languages; it was expected to provide competition within the PSM.⁵⁷² Rebranded as Suisse 4 in 1995, the channel pivoted to broadcasting mainly *Euronews* in the morning and a range of cultural and sports programmes in the afternoon.⁵⁷³ Both S Plus and Suisse 4 aimed to foster pluriculturalism in Switzerland, across language regions, to little success. Facing disappointing viewer figures, it was discontinued in the summer of 1997 and replaced by a second television channel in each language region (SF 2; TSR 2; TSI 2). Later, SRG SSR broadcast its content nationally, making the channels from all language-regions available nationally. The S Plus and Suisse 4 experiments show both the management's technocratic intention to broadcast one shared, standardised content

⁵⁶⁹ Prior to cable, one was required to have an expensive antenna on the roof, whose reception quality may have been variable. On a local level, cable networks were built to relay an antenna signal. These first local cable networks were built by private organisations, municipalities or cooperatives.

⁵⁷⁰ A first pilot took place in 1973 in Fribourg (Scherrer, 2012).

⁵⁷¹ The important investment requirements led to a consolidation in the sector and the emergence of Cablecom, which in the mid-1990s accounted for half of the cable connected households (Scherrer, 2012).

⁵⁷² Reflecting the intention of the federal government to offer newspaper publishers the opportunity to broadcast television content, the channel also included programmes produced by publishers such as *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Basler Zeitung* and Ringier. The latter produced *Cash-TV* as of 1993. The decision to grant Swiss publishers access to a programme slot on domestic public television was based on competitive considerations: indeed, foreign broadcasters such as RTL were proposing slots on their broadcasts to the Swiss market (Künzler, 2012a).

⁵⁷³ To communicate this rebranding, SRG SSR flew a hot air balloon shaped like a 4 around the country.

across Switzerland, and the failure of this endeavour to find a sufficient audience. This remains a recurring challenge, as SRG SSR repeatedly attempted to foster interregional exchange and the production of national programmes.

These developments in television came after the launch in the early 1980s of a third radio channel with a focus on entertainment music (Beck & Jecker, 2012), the first of which was Couleur 3 in the French-language region in 1982. Its focus on contemporary music, alternative cultures and new trends was reflected in a slightly offbeat jockeying. Launched in 1983 in German, DRS 3 included more news than Couleur 3, leading it to be described as an officially authorised disruptive channel; in the 1990s, it shifted to mainstream programmes targeting 25-45-year-old listeners. Italian-language Rete Tre started in 1988 and focused largely on music programmes (Beck & Jecker, 2012). The launch of these third channels was linked to the wider availability of lighter transistor radio devices.

It also responded to a better measuring of audiences. While surveys were the main means to measure audiences in the late 1970s to early 1980s, the introduction of the *Telecontrol* system in 1985 allowed to precisely measure relative audience shares for television.⁵⁷⁴ This revealed that audiences watched SRG SSR channels less than the telephone surveys suggested (Schade, 2012). The development of a similar system for radio led to the introduction in 2001 of a *Radiocontrol-Watch* which measured surrounding noises for four seconds every minute for seven days; this resulted in the insight that users listened to radio more than telephone surveys suggested, and in particular to SRG SSR channels (Schade, 2012). From surveys to the measurement of viewing and listening behaviour of a representative sample of households or individuals, this initial shift to more precise data was only the first step towards better understanding what programmes the audience effectively consumed.

Digitalisation fundamentally changed production processes and workflows in both radio and television. Until the 1980s, technical production conditions were largely unchanged, using audiotapes and film. Beginning in the late 1980s, developments such as automatic music programming (as of 1992) and file-based production (around 2000) transformed the work of radio moderators. Through semi-automatisation, jobs evolved, allowing moderators to prepare shows directly on a computer rather than on paper. DJs could search for music in a database rather than sort through thousands of discs (Scherrer, 2012). Automatic broadcasting procedures using computers allowed SRG SSR to introduce 24 hours of television broadcasting in all language

⁵⁷⁴ This system was originally based on 1'000 representative households, which were equipped with a measuring device.

regions as of 2001 (Scherrer, 2012), thus enabling longer broadcasting periods and more choice in programmes and music.

While the logic of programmers focused on the schedule, the availability of recording technology for consumers was an early signal of a later shift in consumption patterns. The VHS video recorder allowed viewers to record shows and watch them when they wanted as a means to be free from the broadcasting schedule. Piracy would grow to another scale on the Internet, as the marginal cost of digital recording and distribution became minimal (Smith & Telang, 2016).

A combination of technological developments, regulatory changes, competitive environment and evolving consumer habits progressively changed SRG SSR's approach to programming as it expanded its offering. This fit within an international context, which I now turn to.

Internationalisation: at the interplay of regulation, technology and economics

Throughout Europe, this period was comprised of numerous changes for audiovisual markets and PSM. Satellite technology made new channels and joint projects possible. The liberalisation of broadcasting markets called for multilateral regulations. Two are particularly relevant for entertainment in television: the *European Convention on Transfrontier Television* and the Uruguay Round of negotiations on international trade within the GATT framework.

Satellite television had a fundamental impact on the media market: this technology reduced the importance of national borders. In particular, it allowed foreign-language residents to watch television in their own language. The two major use-cases for satellite television were granting private broadcasters a global audience and facilitating joint programmes by PSM alliances across their markets. In Switzerland, individual private direct reception of satellite broadcasts was not authorised until 1990; the change led to a multiplication of satellite dishes on Swiss balconies.⁵⁷⁵

As of 1981, SRG SSR director-general Leo Schürmann identified the importance of the upcoming competition through satellite and actively sought out partnerships (Scherrer, 2012). He accepted a 1982 French proposal to launch a French-language satellite service: TV5 started broadcasting on January 2, 1984. TSR contributed about 14% of shows (200 hours of programme per year) and contributed CHF 1.3-1.6 million annually. SRG SSR also participated in a project led by Germany's ZDF jointly with the Austrian PSM ORF, in a new channel, 3sat, which launched on December 1, 1984

⁵⁷⁵ This development followed a decision of the European court of justice for human rights in May 1990. Up until then, PTT controlled which satellite broadcasts were on offer.

(Scherrer, 2012). Again, SRF contributed about 10-13 % of shows (200 hours of programme per year) for a contribution of CHF 1 million. According to Scherrer (2012), senior management's reasoning for these two partnerships was different: with TV5, the intention was mainly to represent Switzerland abroad, notably throughout the "Francophonie" in North America and Africa; with 3sat, the goal was to counter the competition of entertainment-focused satellite channels with an own offering.

This technology revealed a need for regulation, in particular in regard to shared norms for content and technical standards. Satellite television further cemented the role of international organisations such as the European Broadcasting Union for setting standards, as opposed to national organisations such as PTT or, later, OFCOM.

The broadcasting liberalisation that was taking place around Europe caused European fears of an Americanisation of their television markets. These fears centred around entertainment and culture. This led to a Convention to support the production and broadcasting of European content so as to foster cultural diversity (Ruppen Coutaz, 2012): in the late 1980s, the Council of Europe thus developed the *European Convention on Transfrontier Television*. It covered issues such as the protection of youth, limitation of advertising, regulations on violence, as well as the possibility for advertising slots. It did not specify quotas for broadcasts of European content, leaving each nation party to the treaty the freedom to decide. Switzerland ratified the convention in 1989. As a consequence, it allowed foreign broadcasters to sell advertising slots to domestic firms addressing a Swiss audience. RTL started selling advertising slots to Swiss advertisers in 1993, M6 in 2002. This created a substantial competition for advertising revenue for Swiss broadcasters, given the important market share of foreign broadcasters in the country (Künzler, 2012a).⁵⁷⁶ It further reinforced the pressure on SRG SSR to attract viewers, facing the competition of foreign channels that drew an audience with light entertainment.

With the aim of further liberalising international trade, the member parties of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) initiated the Uruguay Round, a multilateral trade negotiation, which ran from 1986 to 1993. This negotiation led to the creation of the World Trade Organisation WTO. Within this lengthy negotiation, the concept of cultural exception (*exception culturelle*) was pushed by France and Canada in particular, successfully aiming to exclude cultural goods and services from the agreement. The argument was that cultural goods have specific properties that the WTO framework could not account for. The cultural exception was denounced by its opponents as sheer protectionism of the national audiovisual sector. Over time, the

⁵⁷⁶ In 2015, the Swiss Advertising Statistics Foundation estimated these advertising slots to have generated CHF 300 million over one year, representing 40% of total television advertising spending (Conseil fédéral, 2016).

notion of cultural exception was replaced in the multilateral setting by the notion of cultural diversity, anchored in the 2005 *UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Exceptions*. This European fear of largely US-American content reflects on a broader scale the fear that Swiss cultural policy had of an invasion of content from neighbouring nations, or French and Italian-language regions' fear of domination by German-language content and values. Switzerland participated in the coalition of nations supporting a cultural exception and is a party to the UNESCO Convention.

This international regulatory work thus took two angles: cultural policy and trade policy, thus demonstrating the relevance of this sector to governments. This broader international and economic policy context is relevant when considering domestic cultural policy, which I now turn to.

Legitimising cultural policy: the Pacte de l'audiovisuel

As a PSM, SRG SSR was involved in culture on three levels: as a broadcaster of existing culture, a commenting mediator, and a producer of culture (Gysin, 2006). This triple role in regard to culture can be uncomfortable. These roles evidently raise the question of the type of culture being conveyed. SRG SSR's role in the Swiss cultural scene must be understood within the historical context of both the Spiritual Defence policy and of the lasting hesitations of the federal government on its overall cultural policy. While the 1984 Constitutional article gave SRG SSR a role in contributing to the development of culture and cultural education in the country, only in 1999 was an article dedicated to culture and cultural policy added to the Constitution.⁵⁷⁷ Two previous cultural policy Constitutional articles had been rejected in 1986 and 1994.

The federal government understood the PSM constitutional mandate of 1984 as broadly defining culture to include all that gives meaning to the existence a society wants (Boesch & Hungerbühler, 2012). In the early 1980s, SRG SSR fulfilled its role in cultural policy largely by transforming the second radio channel (Espace 2, DRS2 and Rete Due) into cultural channels focusing on classical music and elitist art programmes. Language regions evidently have differences in the cultural content they programme and broadcast.

Over this period, German-speaking Switzerland saw a redirection of high culture programming and audiences to both Arte and 3sat, which were branded around culture (Boesch & Hungerbühler, 2012). At the same time, the definition of culture broadened during this period: as an example, the show *Viva*, broadcast as of 1987 on the Swiss-

⁵⁷⁷ In the process of a total revision of the Federal Constitution.

French television, offered a journalistic approach to the many contemporary and classical cultures in fashion, music and painting, and as such, expanded the breadth of fields covered in cultural programmes.

Beyond this role as a broadcaster and a mediator, SRG SSR played an increasingly important role in the cultural industries. This makes sense: Picard (2012) argues that in the context of growing private competition, PSM organisations increasingly had to make the case for their continued legitimacy. In analysing the BBC's discourse in the context of the last three Charter renewals, D'Arma (2018) finds that the BBC successfully introduced the notion of its contribution to the UK's creative economy, beyond its role in citizenship and cultural education. As on other issues, SRG SSR followed the BBC's approach in this regard.

SRG SSR is a supporter of artistic and cultural creation. In the 1980s, the relations between television and the Swiss film industry were tense, as both mistrusted each other in regard to quality (Boesch & Hungerbühler, 2012). In rebranding SRG SSR as *SRG SSR idée Suisse*, the PSM opened the question of its active role in fostering Swiss features. In this context, a change in thinking was led by members of management Tiziana Mona and Raymond Vouillamoz in approaching audiovisual productions (rather than cinema or television), which ought to be supported in three categories: drama, documentary and animation. The duo obtained a mandate to develop an agreement called *Pacte de l'audiovisuel* with the domestic film industry: SRG SSR agreed to invest CHF 9.3 million in domestic independent films as a co-producer, while the federal government invested at least CHF 2 million through its Federal Office of Culture. This agreement has since been renewed several times and the budgets progressively increased. It combines selective and automatic funding aides.⁵⁷⁸ In order to foster domestic cultural exchanges, it has also funded the subtitling of movies in other national languages. As of late 2019, SRG SSR had invested over CHF 400 million in the Swiss film industry, contributing to 2'800 movies and 20 series.⁵⁷⁹ Beyond audiovisual productions, SRG SSR also shifted its approach to music.

Music and creation: bye-bye orchestras, hello festivals

Orchestras represent the historical approach of SRG SSR to the creation of cultural content. In the early 1990s, SRG SSR radios regularly broadcast classical concerts.

⁵⁷⁸ Including the *Succès passage d'antenne*, a dedicated funding linked to the broadcasting of the film productions once completed.

⁵⁷⁹ Information on the productions that were supported is accessible on a website by SRG SSR: <https://datapacte.srgssr.ch/>.

As an example, at the time, French-language Espace 2 annually broadcast 50 concerts of the *Orchestre de la Suisse Romande* and of the *Orchestre de chambre de Lausanne* (Gysin, 2006). The Swiss-German television experimented with innovative formats, such as broadcasting a Swan Lake show on its two channels in 1986: one channel for the show, the second for a view behind the scenes. This experiment showed the potential of television to both make high culture more broadly accessible and to mediate it. Facing budgetary cuts, SRG SSR dissolved its variety orchestras between 1983 and 1986 (Boesch & Hungerbühler, 2012). Some complained that public radio did not broadcast enough Swiss music and musicians. To respond to this criticism, SRG SSR worked with professional organisations of the Swiss music sector to develop a *Charta of Swiss music*, a document that laid out a joint strategy to enhance the presence of Swiss music and musicians on SRG SSR channels, as well as clarifying its role in supporting the sector. The Charta was renewed in 2016.

The PSM also explored connecting and interacting with emerging artists who shared their music on platforms: in 2006, the third regional radio channels of SRG SSR jointly launched an Internet platform, *mx3*. It allowed musicians to present their music. The radio channels then broadcast the most promising bands and musicians (Beck & Jecker, 2012), thus strengthening both their creation and connection layers.⁵⁸⁰

At the same time, SRG SSR moved to increasingly partner with large cultural events, including popular music festivals, as a media partner. While it organises the biennial festivals *Label Suisse* and *Schubertiade*, SRG SSR is a partner of over fifty music festivals, including *Swiss Music Award*, *Cully Jazz*, *Festa da chant districtuala* and *Montreux Jazz Festival* (Conseil fédéral, 2016). This denotes a shift from creation to connection and curation in the music field. This shift is symptomatic of a move to support events and content that satisfies the broadest audience or specific groups. A similar approach was applied to other areas of culture, such as literature: SRG SSR is the media partner of the annual *Solothurner Literaturtage*.⁵⁸¹

DAB: digitalising the radio

Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB), a distribution technology, illustrates some relevant issues in discussing the digitalisation of PSM, namely: the importance of international standards, the links between health protection and technology deployment, the importance of exclusive content as an incentive for users and the transition from one broadcasting technology to another.

⁵⁸⁰ The portal is still active in 2020: <https://mx3.ch/>.

⁵⁸¹ This festival is the main annual literary festival for professionals in Switzerland.

The limited airwaves available were a technical challenge for the multiplication of radio channels.⁵⁸² With this in mind, the European Commission funded a project developing a standard for the digital audio broadcasting during the 1980s, leading to the first channels launched in 1995 by Norway's NRK, Britain's BBC and Sweden's SR. From the broadcaster and regulator's perspective, DAB's main advantage was that it used up less spectrum for the same number of channels by multiplexing and compression. From the user's perspective, DAB devices were arguably easier to use than AM or FM.⁵⁸³ While SRG SSR in the mid-1990s had reservations as to the potential of DAB, PTT saw it differently.⁵⁸⁴ First experiments took place in Bern in 1996, under the responsibility of PTT. After the new positioning of DRS 3 for audiences aged 25-45, there was an insufficient offering for younger audiences. SRG SSR saw the opportunity offered by digital radio to add a channel, which it did with the launch of DRS Virus on November 20, 1999. This required a modification of the concession, which detailed the broadcasting technology for each channel. However, the channel was also available via cable and satellite, so DAB radio did not offer any additional, exclusive content, which again limited the interest (Scherrer, 2012).

The development of the DAB network in Switzerland was fostered by the adoption of the Federal Ordinance on protection against non-ionising radiation, which forced the Beromünster and Monte Ceneri transmitters to close by 2008. Sottens closed in 2010. The closing of these transmitters forced some listeners to shift to DAB (Scherrer, 2012). Fifteen years after the development of DAB, EBU facilitated the development of the DAB+ standard, which was more efficient. This new standard, approved by OFCOM, led to a change in the standard for Swiss digital terrestrial radio in 2015. In the tradition of Swiss broadcasting policy, the deployment of DAB technology was conducted jointly by SRG SSR and private radio broadcasters (Scherrer, 2012). As of 2020, the plan is to phase out FM transmitters by 2024 at the latest, further advancing DAB.

The example of DAB shows that, for a broadcasting or distribution technology to be successful, two conditions should be met: first, the solution must be based on international standards,⁵⁸⁵ Switzerland cannot be considered in isolation; second, an exclusive and varied programme is required to attract audiences to this new technology

⁵⁸² When modernising its telephone network in the late 1980s, PTT looked into an alternative for its distribution of radio via telephone lines, active since the 1930s. It launched an offering under the brand Digit-Superradio in August 1990. Given the existing broad offering of radio channels, there was limited interest in this digital radio and the service was discontinued in 1997 (Scherrer, 2012).

⁵⁸³ The technology allowed to transfer texts and services, such as the name of the song currently playing or the name of the channel which could be displayed on the radio device.

⁵⁸⁴ The latter was, at the time, responsible for the spectrum, which was later attributed to OFCOM.

⁵⁸⁵ EBU plays an important role in this regard.

and its devices (Scherrer, 2012); there must be an important added value for the audience member for him or her to switch technology and device.

Entertainment empires: MTV, music and reality television

The demand for pirate radio stations of the early 1980s demonstrated the demand for the latest hit from American music stars, beyond Swiss music. This illustrates the tension between audience needs and a strict reading of a national public service mandate. Globally, the period saw the further emergence of youth culture, the music video, which accompanied the rise of MTV, and in turn the format of reality television. Originally targeting audiences aged 12 to 34, the cable channel MTV launched on August 1, 1981. Attracting a group of viewers that is increasingly relevant for advertisers, “over the 1980s MTV was in the enviable position of selling advertisements off the attention captured from what were, essentially, advertisements in another form” (Wu, 2016, p. 238), namely the music video clip produced to sell the album. MTV went on to transform the music industry by driving the visual turn of music and making the single music video a key driver of album sales; it also reflected a growing segmentation of musical tastes by demographics. MTV would also revolutionise television, pushing for ever stronger visual effects and speed, which some in Europe would denounce as the Americanisation of television. The American influence has always played a role in European television, but it is only in the 1980s that this influence was acknowledged. This fit within a broader context in which the neoliberal ideology became dominant: “[t]elevision has been a key vector of this triumphant Americanisation. Against a backdrop of deregulation and competition, borrowings have been systematic and numerous” (Bourdon, 2011, p. 223).⁵⁸⁶

In the late 1980s, MTV, which was set up around music video, showed how television and video could reinvent music, perhaps epitomised by Michael Jackson’s *Thriller*. Yet such a focus came with a risk, namely that of being tied to one fleeting cultural moment, to one format while being limited by a business model that meant its content cost nothing.⁵⁸⁷ To find another model that was low cost and would drive the attention of its audience, MTV developed a format of “documentary soap”. This later became known as reality TV, the first of which arguably was *The Real World*, broadcast in 1992.⁵⁸⁸ To maintain interest, however, they needed some friction. To do this, a new format was developed, the “documentary game show”, which first was produced by

⁵⁸⁶ Translated from the original French: “La télévision a été un vecteur-clé de cette américanisation triomphante. Les emprunts ont été, sur fond de déréglementation et de concurrence, systématiques et nombreux”.

⁵⁸⁷ Producers provided them with the videos as a form of advertising for the discs.

⁵⁸⁸ The show filmed a group of strangers that lived together for several months in a house.

Swedish public television SVT under the name *Expedition Robinson*, a now famous format in which contestants are set up in tribes on a remote island and progressively voted away by other contestants; the show was a hit. This was an early format of reality TV. This type of programme offers many opportunities for cross-overs with boulevard press, audience voting systems and discussions on online forums.

In Switzerland, reality TV was imported by a private broadcaster, TV3, in 1999 with the broadcast of *Expedition Robinson*. One year later, in 2000, the Swiss *Big Brother* reached 350'000 young people on average, making it an important success (Schade, 2012).⁵⁸⁹

Debates around reality TV in Europe typically focus on two key topics, as described by Bourdon (2011): first, the issue of authenticity, second, the accusation of voyeurism. Yet, given the massive success of early reality TV shows, producers defending reality TV argued it democratised television by attracting broad audiences (Bourdon, 2011). This posed a problem for PSM around Europe, or in the words of Bourdon: “[r]eality TV radicalises a pre-existing situation and a classic public service dilemma in times of competition: to lose the audience or to lose one's soul?” (2011, p. 198).⁵⁹⁰ The responses took two forms: that of social solidarity, and that of education (Bourdon, 2011): PSM reality TV shows are characterised by edited shows rather than live broadcasts, a varied casting, an open narrative and allowing the participants to control their image to a certain extent.⁵⁹¹ Contrary to much commercial reality TV, it does not, however, build on the premise of celebrity as solving any issues.

While originally highly critical, SRG SSR did eventually join the reality TV bandwagon. It did so with a spin: the first show, *Génération 01* on French-language TSR, was in fact played by actors. This was supposed to be revealed in the last broadcast to critically assess reality TV and its potential for manipulation; it was, however, leaked to the press during the season and this led to debates around the trustworthiness of TSR and its relation to press journalists (Beck & Jecker, 2012). The next reality TV format fit in the tradition of historical pieces: *Le Mayen 1903* brought a family to live the life of mountain farmers in the early 20th century Alps. Reaching an impressive 48% market share, it was considered a success. Further such shows were produced, to strong audiences figures and mixed critical reviews from the audience council (Beck & Jecker, 2012).

⁵⁸⁹ *Big Brother* was broadcast in Holland in 1999, in Germany in 2000 and in France under the name *Loft Story* in 2001 (Beck & Jecker, 2012).

⁵⁹⁰ Translated from French: « la télévision-réalité radicalise une situation préexistante et un dilemme classique du service public en temps de concurrence : perdre l'audience ou perdre son âme ? ».

⁵⁹¹ Close to the social documentary, public service reality TV distinguishes itself in the role that the camera plays; it is the reason for the action rather than a sheer observer.

Before the rise of reality TV as a concept in Europe, SRG SSR produced early variants of such shows.⁵⁹² The inspiration for a format developed by RTL in Germany as of 2005, *Bauer sucht Frau* (Farmer Seeks Wife), may have come from DRS: in 1983, the Swiss-German show *Karussell*⁵⁹³ (Carousel) broadcast a dating show to help farmers find a wife over several months (Beck & Jecker, 2012).

At the intersection of reality TV and music, one finds the casting show. In this format, a group of musicians or singers compete in successive rounds for a prize, typically recording an album. In commercial television, they usually live together in a mansion for the duration of the show and are filmed throughout. The New-Zealand format *Popstars* was first broadcast in 1999 and imported by TV3 to Switzerland in 2001. While adapting it for SRG SSR, management looked to Austria's *Starmania*, developed by ORF, leading to the launch of *MusicStar* in 2003 (Beck & Jecker, 2012). Not only are these formats audience successes, but they also become profitable through the sale of CDs (250'000 sold in the first year); the televoting system was criticised by the government price watchdog and the consumer protection organisation as too expensive, as viewers arguably already paid for the service through the licence fee (Beck & Jecker, 2012). In 2013, the broadcast of the international format *The Voice* adapted to Switzerland brought together contestants from the three main language regions. In terms of content, the Swiss PSM casting show focused less on the private life of contestants than commercial media did.

Another area of entertainment that was increasingly standardised and internationalised was sports.

The rise of sports rights as a big-bucks business

In the continuation of trends identified in the previous period, sports rights for major events increased during this period.⁵⁹⁴ As sports became a desirable staple in television offering, the relative power progressively shifted to favour the rights holders, in parallel to the emergence of commercial television. Organisations such as UEFA, FIFA and the Olympic Committee hold competitive negotiations for broadcasting rights in each market.⁵⁹⁵ These negotiations around rights include mixing diverse sports or showing the training sessions,⁵⁹⁶ thus limiting the broadcaster's editorial freedom. In

⁵⁹² In 1989, DRS broadcast *Steinzeit Survival* (Stone Age Survival), in which groups of six people lived in nature outside of civilisation. The show was completed by information provided by survival experts (Beck & Jecker, 2012).

⁵⁹³ A feuilleton-style early evening show.

⁵⁹⁴ As an example, the broadcasting rights for the 1988 *UEFA Football Cup* amounted to CHF 7 million for all broadcasters through EBU, as opposed to CHF 800 million in 2004 (Beck & Jecker, 2012).

⁵⁹⁵ Incidentally, a large number of international sports federations are based in Switzerland, as are the three mentioned here.

⁵⁹⁶ Conversely, a sporting event needs a broadcaster in order to ensure advertising revenue.

the Swiss context, SRG SSR can be outbid by competitors, including Swisscom and UPC,⁵⁹⁷ a trend that is observable by other PSM around Europe as the rights increase sharply: PSM cannot keep up with telecom firms when bidding on sports broadcasting rights.⁵⁹⁸ Given their fixed budget, SRG SSR had to choose which competitions to broadcast, and so decided not to broadcast the 2002 *FIFA Football World Cup*. The rising costs, in turn, impacted the programmes; indeed, SRG SSR produced extended programmes before and after the live broadcast to retain audiences' attention and monetise sponsorships (Beck & Jecker, 2012). This leads some to argue that the market can supply popular sports, such as major international football competitions, while the PSM can offer niche sports. The argument of popular sports on private TV and unpopular sports on public television is not satisfying: SRG SSR must address the whole country, and can therefore not exclude popular content from its programming. Indeed, they respond to audience's expectations to fulfil the universal mandate and may play a role in favouring the imagined community that is Switzerland. This is recognised by the federal government, which maintains a list of traditional and popular sporting events that must be freely available to view, including the *Olympic Games*, the *Ski World Cup* and alpine festivals as well as games with the Swiss national football team.

Sports helped HD TV technology when it was brought to market. The 2008 *Euro Football Cup*, which took place between Austria and Switzerland, was considered as an opportunity to demonstrate the national prowess with this technology. This allowed SRG SSR to test the technology at scale, given that, to be adopted, a technology requires two key elements: international norms, to entice device producers to create devices, and attractive content. A major sports event enables the supply of attractive content for new technology.

According to the federal government, the SRG SSR's strategy regarding sports has three pillars: Swiss athletes, Swiss teams, and major sporting events in Switzerland as well as major international events, with a focus on Switzerland (Conseil fédéral, 2016).⁵⁹⁹ Although the concession does not address them, sports are considered to fit into both the information and entertainment mandates. The federal government, in a 2016 report, argued that "[i]t is primarily in the field of entertainment that SRG SSR's

⁵⁹⁷ This is the case for the Football Super League and ice-hockey national league, for instance.

⁵⁹⁸ Over the period 2016-2019, SRG SSR spent annually on average CHF 48 million for sports rights. It competes for the rights for the Swiss market with Swisscom, the annual profit of which is greater than SRG SSR's total annual budget (Germann, 2019).

⁵⁹⁹ In 2015, SRG SSR covered over 60 different sports (Conseil fédéral, 2016).

sports services serve as a basis for a common identity and integration, overcoming language and generational barriers” (Conseil fédéral, 2016, p. 119).⁶⁰⁰

Even if a major sporting event was not broadcast by SRG SSR, the Swiss could look online for another provider, whether authorised or pirated. The Internet was a game-changer, not only for sports programmes, but also for other types of programmes.

The Internet: a brave new world

The Internet represented a real challenge for SRG SSR. The development of Swiss Radio International has shown how difficult it was to join forces across language-regions for online projects. Beyond internal organisational issues, SRG SSR faced regulatory hurdles: until 2006, it had to use all its licence fee revenue for radio and television. Anything put on the website had to be linked to a radio or television broadcast.⁶⁰¹ In this sub-section as well as in the next period of convergence,⁶⁰² I must consider the past and ongoing development of the technology sector as relevant context; indeed, their developments impact the consumption habits of Swiss audiences. What would later become known as big tech was then in its early days; Amazon was an online bookstore before becoming the “Everything Store” (Stone, 2013) and a major Internet infrastructure provider through AWS.

More broadly, Henry Jenkins (2008) introduces the notion of convergence culture. He argues that media convergence, more than a technological trend, must be understood as a cultural process, with increasingly fragmented audiences who can participate and create in collaboration. In 2001, in his book *The future of ideas*, Lessig (2001) argues that the Internet would foster the transformation from a passive viewer to an active creator, a contributor to commons in forms such as Wikipedia, the participatory encyclopaedia launched that same year. This would have implications for PSM in the role they could play in the commons (Schweizer, 2016). The Internet transformed other fields of PSM such as news and journalism.⁶⁰³

The commercial beginnings of the early Internet in the US were subscription-based, with access to proprietary networks including such services as information, forums and online games. AOL (America On Line) was one of these services. Early chat services

⁶⁰⁰ Translated from the original French: “C’est principalement dans le domaine du divertissement que les offres sportives de la SSR remplissent une fonction de fondement d’une identité commune et d’intégration, levant les barrières linguistiques et générationnelles”.

⁶⁰¹ With this in mind, the discussion on the Internet is mostly addressed in the next period.

⁶⁰² With convergence and liberalisation, SRG SSR ends up competing as a large business with many smaller businesses, including audiovisual production companies and newspaper publishers, which then all have a shared interest in doing away with this large competitor.

⁶⁰³ One example: BuzzFeed, which showed how the “Chinese wall” between editorial and advertising may progressively have disappeared.

were a strong attraction, with the anonymity and limited moderation allowing for very open discussions. This reflected the liberal Californian culture of the 1960s and 1970s that defined the original digital culture (Cardon, 2019).

Internet may have acted as a transformation accelerator. Naturally, values are contextual and cultural. As Eric Schmidt, former chairman of Google reportedly said in 2010: “[t]here is what I call the creepy line. The Google policy on a lot of things is to get right up to the creepy line and not cross it.” This “creepy line”, or what is socially accepted, evolves over time.⁶⁰⁴ Society evolves with technology and the use of what is possible and acceptable develop together. Beyond the media markets, this would transform our societies.

By 2006, the revised Federal Act on Radio and Television was adopted without explicitly defining the Internet as the third channel of PSM. That same year, two Stanford PhD students founded Google in Menlo Park, California. Google, famously initiated by Brin and Page, scholars with a distrust for advertising as a funding model,⁶⁰⁵ eventually had to provide a business model for their investors. Based on the premise of a simple to use interface and an honest search tool, their user base grew exponentially. Wu (2016) describes the four options the founders had to fund or monetise the search tool Google had become: 1) a fee-based model, i.e. licencing access to the search; 2) advertising based, i.e. the “attention merchant” model; 3) patronage, i.e. based on donations; 4) transforming it into a public project, just like the Internet itself. They chose the attention merchant model, despite their personal preference; this highlights the fact that the intentions of technology moguls may be less reliable than a public interest mandate and accountability to the public. By 2006, the firm had successfully led its IPO and was competing directly with the incumbent Microsoft in search, mail, and a range of other applications. In late 2006, the firm acquired YouTube. Video entertainment was becoming a competition field between tech giants.

Before this, Microsoft’s founder, Bill Gates, famously wrote in a 1996 blog post that “Content is King”, while announcing a joint venture of Microsoft with NBC to put the television on the Internet, creating MSNBC, an “interactive news service”. His argument went as follows: “[c]ontent is where I expect much of the real money will be made on the Internet, just as it was in broadcasting. The television revolution that began half a century ago spawned a number of industries, including the manufacturing

⁶⁰⁴ Carrying around a display that effectively monitors your health in real-time and sends this information regularly to the device producer’s or software editor’s servers is something that many would not have considered acceptable just a few years ago. Yet that is the whole premise of smartwatches.

⁶⁰⁵ From the appendix A to their paper: “we expect that advertising funded search engines will be inherently biased towards the advertisers and away from the needs of the consumers.” (Brin & Page, 1998)

of TV sets, but the long-term winners were those who used the medium to deliver information and entertainment.”

In 2006, Netflix was a DVD mail-delivery service. Yet, seeing the success of YouTube, it was working on the launch of the platform that would introduce the world to the concept of binge-watching. This technology firm chose the subscriber model, rather than that of advertising-driven.

Period conclusion

Over this period, SRG SSR shifted from its previous schedule to an audience-based approach with a multitude of channels to consume, in a context of stronger competition for audiences and advertisers, both local and international. Radio Swiss International evolved over this period from a pure broadcast international player to a web-based news organisation, following the dismantling of its historic emitter in 1998. Digitalisation impacted internal processes and practices as well as broadcasting technology and user behaviours, leading to an internationalisation of media markets and related fears of cultural loss. The federal government defined its cultural policy, including film policy. SRG SSR clarified its relation to the domestic film and music industries through formalised pluriannual funding and distribution agreements, anchoring its role as a co-producer of culture. MTV disrupted music and television, eventually scaling reality TV. This format was, in turn, adapted to a public service context. The Internet was on the rise and would become a game changer for media markets.

After successfully dealing with foreign and private broadcast competition and redefining its legitimacy on a constitutional, legal and organisational level, SRG SSR would face increasing unbundling and individualised consumption. How was SRG SSR going to face the new competition from free, advertising-based video-on-demand such as YouTube and from perceived high-quality, subscription-based services such as Netflix?

4.4.6. Facing the challenges of digitalisation and *No Billag* (2006-2020)

After three decades of a relative focus on managerial and organisational issues, this period saw a shift in the discussion around SRG SSR that returned to the fundamentals: what is public service in media in a digital age? For member organisations that defined themselves based on their broadcast medium (radio, television), the 2009-2011 mergers were a major step in rethinking their processes and self-understanding. This period saw intense regulatory work on telecommunications

and media, cultural policy and infrastructure. Responding to a shift in users' behaviours, to the growing importance of data and machine-based curation, and to the imperative to form partnerships with the growing media ecosystem, both domestic and foreign; these were the major fields of strategic work for the PSM. The federal government recognised that this revealed political questions, as it argued in its 2016 report on public service in media: "[t]echnical developments, economic pressure on publishing houses, new media offerings and new usage patterns have led to a transformation of the media that raises political questions" (Conseil fédéral, 2016, p. 6).⁶⁰⁶ The public debate on PSM culminated with the 2018 vote on the *No Billag* initiative proposing to abolish the licence fee, which 71.6% of the voting population rejected. This followed a campaign during which the government announced a lower licence fee and SRG SSR publicised a major cost-cutting and synergies programme. In the field of entertainment, the promotion of Swiss film heritage and the competition from portals will lead SRG SSR to launch its own portal, *Play Suisse*, in late 2020.

Regulatory work: celebrating diversity through the 2006 Act on Radio and Television & its 2015 revision

Leading up to the 2018 vote on *No Billag*, the period saw intense regulatory work. Three steps are particularly relevant here: the revision of the Federal Act on Radio and Television, passed in 2006; the ensuing 2007 concession for SRG SSR; and the 2015 vote on a revision of this Act.

The 1991 Act was revised due to technological evolutions and the end of two national private television stations in 2001;⁶⁰⁷ this revised Act was passed in 2006 (Künzler, 2012b). The Act did not define programme requirements for SRG SSR. This competence is delegated to the federal government which determined programme requirements in the concessions it granted to the PSM. This period reflected a shift in the understanding of diversity: a turn away from sharing one same identity through common programmes, to understanding and celebrating the differences, as introduced by the federal government in the 2007 concession. (Boesch & Hungerbühler, 2012). The Act also confirmed the attribution of the major share of the licence fee to SRG SSR to ensure a full-service PSM, an organisation capable of competing (relatively) with major broadcasters from neighbouring countries. 4-6% of the licence fee was distributed to local private television and radio broadcasters that had been granted a

⁶⁰⁶ Translated from the original French: "L'évolution technique, la pression économique sur les maisons d'édition, les nouvelles offres de médias et les nouvelles habitudes d'utilisation ont abouti à une transformation des médias qui soulève des questions d'ordre politique".

⁶⁰⁷ Tele 24, launched in 1998, and TV3, launched in 1999.

mandate. Regarding commercial television, the Act authorised private operators to choose between broadcasting with a mandate or without;⁶⁰⁸ it thus introduced simpler market access. At the same time, the federal government was acting on a strategic level: in 2006 it published its strategy for digital radio broadcasting, effectively increasing the radio offering by reducing barriers to entry.

SRG SSR was a stakeholder in this legislative work. One point of interest is the discussion around the quality of public service media, which while regularly used in discourses, was not defined until 2006 when general management published an updated version of its 1982 *Programme Directives* and a *Programme Charta SRG SSR idée Suisse*.⁶⁰⁹ This reflected its commitment to operationalise the political intention for quality programmes while defending its programme autonomy.

Less than a decade later, however, shifts in user behaviour called for a change in the licence fee system. In a move aiming to respond to the evolution of consumption practices, the Act was revised to apply the licence fee to all households and firms.⁶¹⁰ Making the licence fee independent of the ownership of a radio or television device is linked to the use of the Internet to access programmes. While it increased the number of licence fee payers, the revision led to a reduction of the household fee, from CHF 462.- to CHF 400.- per year. A referendum against this modification was launched by the Swiss Union of Arts and Crafts: it opposed SMEs paying this fee.⁶¹¹ The government argued that the production of quality programmes in the four national languages comes at a cost, even though viewers are used to free content online. It also stressed that a share of the licence fee revenue was used to finance private regional media. The campaign debated more than just the licence fee, covering the fundamental purpose of public service media. As the then director-general of RTS, Gilles Marchand, said in a television interview: “[b]ehind this vote were all sorts of questions, thoughts [...] I think there are three types of questions that I believe are important and that arise: the first is the political question of public benefits, the relationship with the institutions that embody public benefits [...]. The second, important question is a little more ideological and concerns the relationship between private and public players: should the market take precedence over the public? [...] And then, the last element [...], which is a little more sociological, is the development of this more

⁶⁰⁸ Their sole obligation was to announce the broadcast beforehand and obtain a concession with a mandate from OFCOM. A mandate allowed to access funding but was linked to obligations concerning advertising and programmes. Without a mandate, the operator was free in its broadcasts, within the limits of the law (Künzler, 2012a).

⁶⁰⁹ The purpose of this Charta was to communicate within SRG SSR on the organisation’s commitment and externally on the promise to hold this commitment and to be held accountable (Schade, 2012).

⁶¹⁰ Firms pay a fee based on their total revenue.

⁶¹¹ The Swiss Union of Arts and Crafts is an organisation representing the country’s small and medium-sized enterprises.

individualistic society where, basically, everyone wants to pay for what they consume and only for what they consume. This raises some very fundamental questions about the basic models for financing public activities” (Marchand, 2015).⁶¹² On June 14, 2015, the revision was adopted with a margin of fewer than 4’000 votes. This short victory was viewed as a strong warning to SRG SSR on its mandate and its perimeter. It also compelled the federal government to formalise its vision of the future of public service media; its 2016 report on this issue is discussed below. This vote came within a broader debate around public service and the issue of the (in-)efficiency of public sector organisations. This period saw SRG SSR undergo another reform aiming to improve the organisation’s efficiency.

Recognising the impact of convergence: merging the radio and television organisations

To respond to the challenge of convergence and with the purpose of enhanced operational efficiency, SRG SSR conducted a reform process under the name “Convergence and Efficiency”. This followed the creation of two internal units providing competitive services, Media Services and Business Unit Sport.⁶¹³ RTSI (now RSI) was the pilot organisation for the convergence project, merging its radio and television units in 2009 amidst fears by staff concerning quality and diversity (Puppis & Künzler, 2011). RTR had one convergent chief-editor for radio, television and Internet as early as 2006 (Puppis & Künzler, 2011). French-language radio and television merged into the new *Radio-télévision Suisse (RTS)* in 2010; while the organisations merged, the two news teams remained largely physically separate in the Geneva and Lausanne studios, an illustration of the lengthy process of merging the editorial teams. In 2011, the German-region merger created *Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (SRF)* in a staged process beginning with a joint editorial team in culture, entertainment and sports before addressing the news (Puppis & Künzler, 2011). The process, initiated in 2009, aimed to cut 100 positions in support functions, and to reinject the budgets into programmes (Valsangiacomo, 2012). These mergers faced the challenge of cultural differences that were historically linked to the two distinct broadcast media: radio and television. Polyvalence and flexibility became more important, to the extent that these criteria

⁶¹² Translated from the original French: “Derrière cette votation se sont cachées toutes sortes de questions, de réflexions [...] Je pense qu'on peut distinguer trois types de questions qui me paraissent importantes et qui se posent: la première touche à la question politique des prestations publiques, de la relation avec les institutions qui incarnent les prestations publiques [...] La deuxième question, importante, est un peu plus idéologique. Elle touche à la relation entre les acteurs privés et les acteurs publics: est-ce que le marché doit prendre le pas sur le public ? [...] Et puis, dernier élément [...] un peu plus sociologique, c'est le développement de cette société plus individualiste où, au fond, chacun souhaite payer ce qu'il consomme et que ce qu'il consomme. Ce qui pose des questions très fondamentales sur les modèles au fond de financement des activités publiques”.

⁶¹³ This was in line with New Public Management practices.

were introduced in the collective labour agreement. The cultural transformation of the organisation was even more profound. Amanda Lotz describes cultural challenge and the shift required for television, moving from broadcasting to a distribution system, by addressing its measure of success: “[m]etrics designed to evaluate the linear schedule, assessments of success based on live viewing, and strategies built upon the constant flow from one programme to the next were so entrenched in the lived experience of television that they came to seem inherent to the medium rather than as protocols of broadcasting as a distribution system” (2017, p. 12). However, much of the scholarly and press attention on this merger focused on news, labour and the location of studios.⁶¹⁴

Convergence also meant SRG SSR was increasingly competing and collaborating with the former PTT and its own competitors.⁶¹⁵ For citizens, the convergence became tangible when the licence fees of radio and television were merged into one single licence fee.⁶¹⁶

Setting shared priorities in the national cultural policy: the Dispatch on Culture

Following the integration of a constitutional mandate concerning cultural policy in 1999 (article 69), the Federal Act on the Promotion of Culture was passed by parliament in December 2009. This Act introduced the concept of a quadrennial Dispatch on Culture, in which the federal government addresses its cultural policy priorities, related budget plans and legal modifications to parliament. The first Dispatch was published in February 2011 and specified objectives for the national library, *Pro Helvetia* and the national museums. The Dispatches on culture are coordinated by the Federal Office of Culture, within the Federal Department of Home Affairs. However, SRG SSR is overseen by the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications’ OFCOM. Because of this distribution of responsibilities, the Dispatches on Culture are focused on cultural policy and not media policy; they only address SRG SSR as a partner in the film policy of the Federal Office of Culture. The five objectives of the first Dispatch on Culture were: supporting cultural diversity;

⁶¹⁴ Other issues included: the reorganisation and its negative impact on the representation of women in senior management positions; Puppis and Künzler (2011) find that it also partially undermined citizen representation within the governance of SRG SSR.

⁶¹⁵ In 1997, PTT was divided into two independent organisations: The Swiss Post and Swisscom. The latter was listed on the Swiss stock exchange before a public share offering in 1998; the Swiss state remained the largest shareholder in the company. The same year, it faced its first competitor, DiAx (since renamed Sunrise), and a second competitor entered the market in 2000 (France Telecom owned Orange, a firm since rebranded as Salt). Each of these organisations, increasingly offering their own digital television service, have a network of stores and thus a direct physical contact to their customers, which SRG SSR largely does not have.

⁶¹⁶ Specifically, the licence fee went from CHF 286 for television and CHF 165 for radio to one single licence fee, which in 2019 was reduced to CHF 365 per annum for a household.

improving the access to culture; promoting cultural exchanges; strengthening collaboration between federal actors and the private sector; ensuring good general conditions for the creative and cultural industries. These objectives also fit with what was expected of SRG SSR.

To date, three Dispatches have been produced by the federal government, covering the following periods and with substantial budgets:⁶¹⁷ 2012-2015 (CHF 637.9 million); 2016-2020 (CHF 1'121.6 million); 2021-2024 (CHF 934.5 million). The second and third Dispatches represent a shift by proactively defining a national cultural policy beyond the main responsibility of cantons, described in the Federal Constitution in article 69. Following an analysis of megatrends,⁶¹⁸ they build on three priorities: cultural participation; social cohesion; creation and innovation.

In the second Dispatch, SRG SSR was discussed as a semi-public organisation⁶¹⁹ with a clear mandate to support culture; lotteries are also mentioned as an important source of domestic funding for culture.⁶²⁰ The PSM is involved in the support to cinematographic creation and in preserving an important share of national audiovisual archives as the repository of major broadcasting archives. Published in 2020, the third Dispatch mentions the SRG SSR more than the two previous editions, as the federal government turns to the issue of the audiovisual market facing disruption through the lens of cultural policy. The SRG SSR expressed an opinion on the draft Dispatch, calling for foreign broadcasters selling advertising space to Swiss firms to be compelled to invest in the Swiss film industry. To facilitate access to the national film heritage, the government calls on SRG SSR to work with the national cinémathèque to make Swiss movies available through an existing or a new portal. It also introduces the government's intention to force online portals to have 30% of European films in their catalogue;⁶²¹ this obligation would also apply to firms based abroad. Furthermore, the government wants to expand the obligation to reinvest in the Swiss film industry to include VOD platforms.

While taking a culture policy approach and reminding the PSM of its culture mandate, the Dispatches on Culture impact the regulations, the competitive environment and the obligations of the SRG SSR's cultural partners. They also provide a broader picture of the national cultural policy and ensure broad political support for the cultural

⁶¹⁷ As a point of comparison, SRG SSR's 2018 revenues totaled CHF 1'569.1 million, of which CHF 1'206.4 million from the licence fees (SRG SSR, 2019).

⁶¹⁸ The second Dispatch addresses the issues of globalisation, digitalisation, demographics, individualisation and urbanisation.

⁶¹⁹ As opposed to the national library and national museums that are more directly linked to the federal state.

⁶²⁰ The Act on Lotteries specifies that the benefits of chance games must be used in the public interest; culture is one of the sectors funded by lotteries. This is an example of a form of (addictive) entertainment in which the state intervenes to redistribute to culture.

⁶²¹ This policy is in line with the European Union's Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD).

contribution it delivers. This is particularly true of its activities related to supporting the local film industry. The latest Dispatch shows that, while technology, practices of viewing and industrial organisations have advanced fast, government regulation is in the process of catching up.

Rediscovering the catalogue: the importance of audiovisual archives

Digitalisation and new distribution channels opened opportunities for PSM archives. Around Europe, the valorisation of audiovisual PSM archives is increasingly viewed as important to the organisation's contribution to an inclusive and democratic society (Kolokytha et al., 2019). In particular, their role in making historical material available for reflection and learning, as well as in providing access to cultural heritage are put forth.⁶²² As long-time monopolists, PSM archives often represent the bulk of national audiovisual history.⁶²³ The cultural value of these archives was not always fully understood: in 1957, shellac recordings were reportedly used as targets for an internal shooting competition of the Swiss-German radio (Boesch & Hungerbühler, 2012). Yet archival work goes beyond not physically destroying recordings: it requires proactively maintaining the material over time, as well as ensuring its organisation and availability.⁶²⁴

Vallotton (2012) stresses the importance of audiovisual archives for the research project on the history of SRG SSR, and particularly the creation in 1995 of *Memoriav*, the association for the preservation of the Swiss audiovisual memory.⁶²⁵ This association created a network of national public institutions, including the national library, the national archives, the national phonotheque, the Swiss cinématheque, OFCOM and SRG SSR. It was financially supported by the federal state. This decentralised, network approach built on a failed precedent. Indeed, the importance of SRG SSR's archives was recognised in the 1991 Act on Radio and Television; however, a concept for a national audiovisual archives institute was not successful due to fears around costs and centralisation (Boesch & Hungerbühler, 2012). To celebrate SRG SSR's 75th anniversary in 2006, *Memoriav* made numerous archival materials freely available online. Beyond *Memoriav*, SRG SSR business units make some archival material freely available through their websites.

⁶²² Kolokytha et al. (2019) argue that the universalism principle for PSM archives implies four characteristics: availability; open and cross-border accessibility; public use and exploitation; archives awareness.

⁶²³ The issue of keeping a collective national memory in a digital era is a challenge. Some argue that it is not guaranteed anymore, as there is an increase in the data produced, which is carried by supports, devices whose life is reducing (USB sticks, etc). Hence the importance of public service archival work.

⁶²⁴ To illustrate the importance of recordings for critical analysis on an individual level Gray and Lotz (2019) point out how difficult early television research was prior to the wide availability of VCRs.

⁶²⁵ See its website: <https://memoriav.ch/>.

Archives play a role in remix culture and are a resource for the “producer”;⁶²⁶ they are also an essential resource for PSM editorial teams, including youth teams. In the flow of media, archives are a form of catalogue, for which the search functionality is an essential feature. From a viewer’s perspective, the catalogue is a key competitive advantage of SVOD offerings or portals, which I now discuss.

The rise of the portal and the PSM response

The Internet, and in particular portals, impacted the entertainment offering and shaped demand as well as audience behaviours. SVOD service Netflix entered the Swiss market in 2014. While research on portals was discussed in chapter two, I now consider the topic in the case of Switzerland and its significance for SRG SSR, its mandate, strategy and activities. According to the interest group representing electronic media in Switzerland IGEM, an estimated 1.8 million Swiss watched Netflix in 2019; 60% of the people aged 15-24 did (IGEM, 2019). While it has a strong brand and catalogue, Netflix is not the only SVOD service in Switzerland. Alternatives include Apple TV, Amazon Prime, Disney+, and Teleclub NOW.⁶²⁷ I address the curatorial logic of portals and their impact on PSM as a new form of competition for citizens’ attention. Then, I discuss the development of PSM portals and touch upon the launch of SRG SSR’s *Play Suisse* in November 2020.

Entertainment portals can be considered through their business model or mandate; subscriber; advertising; public service.⁶²⁸ The subscriber model underlying the Netflix case is increasingly relevant in the digital age. Drawing on Amanda Lotz’ (2017) work on the subscriber-only business model, I propose a comparison of three prototypes of media portals. When conceptualising the subscriber-based business model,⁶²⁹ Lotz excludes any advertising from this model, since “[r]eliance on advertising in any amount strongly affects strategy and leads such dual-revenue media to conform mostly to logics of advertiser-supported media” (Lotz, 2017, p. 34). I thus separate these three business models based on their main source of revenue.

⁶²⁶ See chapters two and three.

⁶²⁷ A key perception that one may have online is that of plentiful competition. Yet, if anything, one can observe a reduction of competition on a global scale, although it is not perceived as such on a local level. Furthermore, the rise of the amateur content producer, journalist, etc. may lead to a perception of more offering, without consideration for quality. The platform and social networks dynamics lead to a sense of “winner takes all” dynamics.

⁶²⁸ A public service platform may be subject to more restrictions than advertising or subscriber-based business models, be it on content, advertising, or other features.

⁶²⁹ She relates it to magazine subscriptions; magazines rely on advertising as their main source of funding.

Table 20: Three models for entertainment portals

Business model	Advertising	Subscriber	Public service
Main revenue	Advertising / data	Subscription	Licence fee ⁶³⁰
Driving principle	Advertising to relevant viewers (data gaze)	Increasing the subscriber base	Serving the public interest
Value	Efficiency	Quality (subjective)	Quality (intersubjective)
View of the audience	Consumer	Enjoyer	Citizen
Metrics	Ratings	Subscribers & awards	Ratings & awards
Necessary support	Investors & advertisers	Investors & subscribers	Politicians & citizens
Target audience	Any audience valuable to desired advertisers	Anyone capable of paying the subscription	Anyone living in the territory
Catalogue	User-generated, pirated & other	Acquired & produced	Acquired & produced
Example	YouTube	Netflix	BBC

Hence, the business model determines the curation strategy. According to Lotz (2017), subscriber and advertiser-funded models have a different aim: even partial funding through advertising directs content programming specifically to target audiences that advertisers want to reach.⁶³¹ This de facto leads to an advertising-funded media logic. This can be opposed to a purely subscriber funded portal model, the aim of which is to increase the subscriber base and reduce the churn (non-renewal of subscription). Business research saw two broad strategies for entertainment industries, considering that the virtually unlimited online shelf-space led, over time, to a tremendous increase in programmes. On the one hand, Anderson (2006) argues that the Internet facilitated the emergence of niches to be served, which he calls the long-tail. On the other hand, Elberse (2008) argues that the key drivers of revenue are still blockbusters or the top 1% of products. For Smith and Telang (2016), what matters most is not the share of views per content, for instance, but rather the subjective value the user sees in it; this is particularly relevant for subscription-based business models. Consider Netflix: having a blockbuster on the platform may not be the essential element that will convince a user to subscribe, as it may hardly be a differentiator. Rather, the differentiator is likely to be a long-tail content, very specific and niche content that is

⁶³⁰ This is a simplification; in fact, some PSM have a larger share of revenues from advertising than from the licence fee.

⁶³¹ In a US American context, mainly white, young urban viewers.

directly relevant to that individual person, and will convince him or her to subscribe to Netflix, or to watch the local PSM.⁶³²

These two views (the blockbuster versus the long-tail) reflect different processes for capturing value (Smith & Telang, 2016). To capture value from blockbusters, commissioning editors decide what should be produced and broadcast or integrated to the catalogue.⁶³³ The key elements are curation (selection of content) and control (over the resources required for promotion and distribution of content, hence connection). To capture value from the long-tail, the key is to depend on the selection (a platform providing a wide range of content) and satisfaction (through algorithmic recommendations and use of data), which together add up to the curation layer. Thus, in the latter case, the human scheduler of linear television is largely replaced by data analytics and algorithms. In this view, the competition is clearly for the viewers' attention and for the understanding of their preferences. These are challenges for public service media portals as well.

To a certain extent, one may describe public service media portals as a subscriber-based model, to the extent that it provides access to a large, wholly-owned back-catalogue, and every taxpayer is a (forced) subscriber. Access is not based on a login, but on geographical presence. Public service portals may also learn from the long-tail strategy in aiming to serve a wide range of interests within the country, rather than the blockbuster approach of the broadcast era: one programme that everyone will be talking about.

The driving principle of the three models has feature implications as well. While an advertising-based portal aims to collect data on its users to better serve advertisers, a public service portal addressing citizens should not aim to hoard data. There may be an opportunity for PSM to show the coherence between their mission and their practice pertaining for instance to privacy and to adequate protection of user data and privacy. Commercial behaviours, such as data hoarding, do not appear compatible with a public service remit. In this sense, Karen Donders (2019) calls for a citizenship-centric approach to PSM, rather than digital-centric.

The commonalities of the subscriber and public service models in specific dimensions explicit the challenge Netflix and other portals represent for PSM. In particular, just as the ease of use of portals undercut piracy, it also raised the standard for what users expect from PSM.

⁶³² Although there is not an optional subscription for the PSM, its logic is thus different. However, in the sense of universalism, it may make sense to serve the need of its domestic long tail.

⁶³³ The revenue from blockbusters then subsidises the production of other content, sharing the risk in the same way a venture capitalist spreads his risk on a range of investments, for which one should allow to recoup the investments and generate a profit for the fund.

The discussion around Netflix and European or national regulations must also be viewed within the context of debates around the Americanisation of television; it may be a chance to move beyond the fear of Americanisation in relation to PSM, which Jérôme Bourdon (2011) identifies as often closely related. This is particularly true since, while the perception may be that Netflix is one unique, global offering, it is not: “Netflix is a different service and a different value proposition in each market” (Lobato, 2019, p. 184), as similar pricing globally implies reaching different audiences in different markets, from affluent, urban Indians to the mainstream markets in the United States and Australia. In Switzerland, the basic subscription is cheaper than the compulsory household licence fee. Thus, while Netflix may be a luxury good in certain regions of the world, it is broadly accessible to anyone, and in particular the youth, in Switzerland, both due to pricing and to infrastructure. In analysing the internationalisation of Netflix, Ramon Lobato (2019) finds that the Swiss market has the highest average speed in his sample (4.11 Mbps); it is also the market where Netflix’ basic plan is the most expensive (USD 12.17 in 2017). Overall, this raises the question of the challenge this represents to the connection SRG SSR aims to build with the citizens and its future licence fee payers.⁶³⁴

When considering the marketplace of attention and competitors for users’ attention in entertainment, continuously developing platforms to cater to the needs of users accustomed to the very best of user experience is difficult. Furthermore, as potential domestic subscriber figures grow, it is increasingly profitable for the likes of Netflix to cater to national audiences, thus potentially removing the national media’s key advantage: language and local content. This phenomenon was observed in quality television with HBO in Europe, for instance in Czechia (Barclay, 2014). It may also lead to more competition for the best Swiss productions.⁶³⁵

In regard to the non-time-bound catalogue content, the subscriber and the public service model may be close, albeit with different mandates.⁶³⁶ Portals like Netflix do not, currently, provide news. Yet they provide quality content, which means PSM cannot claim this as their distinguishing factor. Compared to PSM, however, portals

⁶³⁴ There is a particular challenge around measuring audiences in a platform era. If decisions on programmes are based solely on viewership data, then that may not reflect the full range of audience preferences, particularly younger audiences that do not directly consume flow television, as compared to their elders. Angela Bromstad, president of NBC’s television studio, Universal, argued that the data collected by providing *The Office* via iTunes influenced the decision to continue broadcasting the show (Smith & Telang, 2016).

⁶³⁵ While cultural producers become strongly dependent on platforms, it must be indicated here that they previously were dependent on other masters; in the case of television production, of a locally nearly monopolistic public service media organisation. It is a new master, as newspaper and magazine editors become dependent on Facebook’s algorithms to reach their own audiences.

⁶³⁶ The subscriber-model aims to reach the largest number of subscribers; the PSM aims to reach all individuals as citizens.

need not justify their quality. It is sufficient for the programmes to appeal to the subscriber (subjective quality), while PSM must provide programmes that are intersubjectively deemed to be quality content.

The PSM principle of citizenship also includes the notion of diversity, often understood as diversity in content. Operating on the curation layer, Burri (2015) argues for a “new type of editorial intelligence that links users with content in a way that advances conventional media objectives and in particular that of exposure diversity” (p. 2); this exposure diversity thus aims to prevent the “bubble” phenomenon, whereby a user ends up in an echo chamber of his or her previously held beliefs and preferences. It must be noted that exposure diversity must not be understood as detrimental to either source or content diversity. This clarifies a major difference to the subscriber model as a consequence of the public service mandate, namely the diversity objective.

While the BBC pioneered the field with the introduction of its iPlayer in 2007, most public service media have introduced their own player. In Switzerland, the four regional business units jointly developed a player that they each integrated into their own website, offering a video catch-up service. Building a PSM portal is costly; it requires a clear strategic decision from senior management to pursue this path. However, limited resources make motivated teams creative. Some PSM have banded together through EBU technology groups to partner in developing specific tools they then share.⁶³⁷ As a complement to the development of a player, PSM also consider the use of social media platforms as distribution channels. Making programmes available online also raises questions around contracts and rights.

The domestic response to the rise of portals cannot be limited to a PSM. National media players have taken note of the success of Netflix on their home turfs. Coordinated responses are emerging in both the UK and France. In the UK, BBC and ITV launched BritBox in November 2019; in France, France Télévisions, TF1 and M6⁶³⁸ launched Salto in late 2020.⁶³⁹

On June 5, 2020, SRG SSR announced it would launch its own national streaming portal under the name *Play Suisse*. The release took place in November 2020. Conceived as a complement to the portals of its business units (Play RSI, Play RTR, Play RTS, Play SRF and Play SWI), the new national portal provides curation and personalisation services to access its own content and co-productions including films,

⁶³⁷ It is possible to imagine that these organisations, which share certain policy objectives, could implement these objectives into their portal with shared developments. One such project, under the lead of RTS, included developing a serendipity algorithm for the curation layer.

⁶³⁸ TF1 and M6 are private French television organisations.

⁶³⁹ Both services required a paying subscription.

documentaries, series, reportage and archival material from all language regions with subtitles (SRG SSR, 2020). It may open to programmes from domestic televisions. The relation between a portal such as Netflix and a PSM is complex. Given its international reach, Netflix can be an interesting distribution channel abroad. Two Swiss series co-produced by SRG SSR were integrated into Netflix's catalogue: *Der Bestatter*,⁶⁴⁰ and *Station Horizon*.⁶⁴¹ Netflix can also be a co-producer for a PSM. Its first original show, before *House of Cards*, was a co-production with Norwegian PSM NRK: *Lilyhammer*, broadcast between 2012 and 2014 (Barclay, 2014). The American firm brought additional capital, American digital distribution and international attention to the series. It may thus play a more effective role at spreading Swiss culture globally than the former international radio centred on news.

I now discuss the rise of the series and the success of some small nations in this field.

Splendours and miseries of public service series: the new golden age of television

The rise of the portal followed the rise of the “hyperserial”, as coined by Vince Gilligan of *Breaking Bad*. These serials are essentially about adult themes, requiring sustained attention to watch in order to follow the long, dense plot. In the words of Tim Wu : “[i]n a hyperserial, the plot, like that of a long film or novel, has more of the flow of life.” (2016, p. 334). He contrasts this to soap operas which, essentially, do not have a long storyline, but rather the same recurring story on a different theme. The hyperserial describes the quintessential shows of the new golden age of television; in the context of public service media, the Danish model was analysed by Eva Novrup Redvall (2013, 2016), referring to them as “public service series” (Redvall, 2013, p. 79). The success of a television series can be measured along three dimensions: market share in broadcast; critical success and awards; international sales of the series or format (Bondebjerg & Redvall, 2011), perhaps reflecting the public service tension between quality and audience drive: yet *Borgen* and *The Killing* reached both domestic and international audience success and awards. Philipsen (2018) shows how PSM in Northern Europe played a major role in the success of their national television series, which foster strong local voices and identities successfully in the global media market. Hyperserials fit within the category of fiction. The notion of fiction became the standard in television in the 1980s to describe a show building on a script, played by actors; it includes telefilms, miniseries, series. Up until then, the terms used to describe these programmes were references to the theatre (“drama”), radio or media (“feuilletons”)

⁶⁴⁰ This series is discussed in the following sub-section.

⁶⁴¹ This French-language series is a Western-styled series filmed in Valais around a highway café.

(Bourdon, 2011). In PSM, fiction producers sometimes made their intention to realise their mandate too obvious in the programme, which was in some cases detrimental to the story and hence citizen engagement. This is most visible in the dream of trans-European fiction and the syndrome of the “Euro-Pudding”. In Switzerland, the German-language soap opera serial *Lüthi und Blanc* is representative of the intention and failure of a vision of SRG SSR as a national integrator. The series centred around the lives of a chocolate-factory owning family in French-speaking Switzerland and its struggles with bankers. The show was based in Zurich. This epically Swiss story led some media to describe the show as “Shoggi Soap” (chocolate soap [opera]).⁶⁴² The show launched in October 1999 and was continued until May 2007. Over this extended period, it addressed numerous societal topics, including reproductive technologies and domestic violence (Boesch & Hungerbühler, 2012). The show was originally broadcast on SRF, RSI and TSR in German with subtitles in French and Italian. This vision of an *idée suisse* soap opera did not satisfy French and Italian-language audiences, as it was considered too Swiss-German and not localised enough (Boesch & Hungerbühler, 2012). After *Lüthi und Blanc* and observing the success of foreign medical series such as *House*, SRF launched *Tag und Nacht*, a medical drama series in 2008. Low ratings led to the non-renewal of the series and a move away from the production of series for several years. TSR went on to create its own soap operas and participate in French-language co-productions for telefilms. Low-cost soap operas were also produced in Italian-language television until savings programmes cut their funding.

Following a period of co-productions and observing a rising audience interest for prime-time series, RTS moved away from telefilms to produce television series using *Pacte de l’audiovisuel* funding (Barclay, 2014). Likewise, SRF commissioned a new series, *Der Bestatter*, in 2011.⁶⁴³ A drama series, it is based on the double arch of a season-long storyline as well as episode plots. Both RTS and SRF’s thinking in regard to their television series was influenced by the success of Danish series produced by DR, including *The Killing* and *Borgen*, as illustrated by a corporate trip by SRG SSR executives to Copenhagen in 2013 (Teuwsen, 2013). DR’s production culture was itself transformed to adapt methods from the US television industry to a public service production culture (Redvall, 2013).

PSM local television series production pursues a double objective: first, create great local content for the PSM audience; second, support the local audiovisual industry and

⁶⁴² Swiss fiction is the object of regular scorn, including from humourists of the public service media: the crew of the show *SRF Deville* created an ironic Swiss film plot generator (www.schweizer.film), with the aim of having it shared on social media.

⁶⁴³ *Der Bestatter* is a German-language crime series set in Aarau. The main character takes over his parents’ undertaker business, after working as a police officer.

talent (Barclay, 2014). These local series fit in a programme and scheduling strategy of offering both local content and major (mostly) American television series, dubbed or subtitled (Boesch & Hungerbühler, 2012).⁶⁴⁴

The production of television series is closely linked to the support for the film industry. In the late 1990s, French-language scriptwriters expressed frustration at their scripts being doctored by Paris-based professionals, a step considered necessary for quality purposes by then TSR director Raymond Vouillamoz (Boesch & Hungerbühler, 2012) and an apt illustration of the tension between the support for the local cultural industries and products that can respond to audience expectations both in terms of local content and production and story quality.⁶⁴⁵

Indeed, since the introduction of the *Pacte de l'audiovisuel*, SRG SSR has formalised its involvement with the domestic film industry for television and film productions. Yet financing is not the only key resource of a successful audiovisual production, even though one can be tempted to consider that budgets are central. Even Jeffrey Katzenberg, head of Disney's film studios, in 1991 deplored the trend towards producing blockbusters with increasingly large budgets. He argued that the story, idea and talent were essential.⁶⁴⁶ This idea is visible in Danish PSM DR's strategy around drama fiction, and can be identified in Netflix' talent sourcing strategy. In Katzenberg's words: "[t]he real meaning of high concept is that ingenuity is more important than production values. This is why we should constantly be looking for creative solutions, not financial ones." (1991, p. 10). While this reflects the point of view of a manager who owes it to his shareholders to turn a profit, the reasoning may still be applied to the context of a PSM; budgets, while necessary, are not sufficient for success.

Following the expansion of SRG SSR's mandate, its business units started co-producing web series in 2013 (Barclay, 2014). These web series aimed to identify and foster emerging talent and new writing with local production firms. In the context of a new golden age of television and the rise of hyperserials as a marketing tool for portals, SRG SSR units followed different approaches to develop local quality series inspired by best practices from abroad.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁴ To broadcast a foreign series, SRG SSR typically needs it to have been acquired by another broadcaster who will fund or co-fund the dubbing or subtitling (Barclay, 2014).

⁶⁴⁵ It also highlights the importance of working with film schools to help train future professionals.

⁶⁴⁶ The message for a PSM here is that budgets are key for making television, but not sufficient.

⁶⁴⁷ When discussing SRG SSR's audience success, the federal government stresses that it is particularly strong in news programmes, self-produced content with a link to Switzerland, sporting events, as well as films and series (Conseil fédéral, 2016).

The expansion to original content for the Internet leads us to the question of the perimeter of SRG SSR's activities.⁶⁴⁸ Academia and think tanks played an important role in debating the mandate, practices and programmes of SRG SSR.

Academia, think tanks and PSM

While SRG SSR plays an important role in shaping the debate around PSM in Switzerland, it has worked with academia to defend specific positions about its mandate and practices.⁶⁴⁹ Likewise, policymakers and PSM competitors have mandated academics for grounded research on the organisation's role and impact. This is recurring in the history of SRG SSR. As an example, the experimental introduction of private radio concessions starting in 1983 was evaluated by scholars led by Professor Ulrich Saxer of the University of Zurich. The group conducted several studies on the experiment to establish scientific findings for the development of a sensible, lasting legal framework (Künzler, 2012a).

More recently, the debate around public service in media has been framed within a broader political battlefield over public service in general. This was particularly visible in the run-up to the vote on the *No Billag* initiative. Organisations such as the economic think tank Avenir Suisse argued that public service ought to focus on content rather than a platform: Meister and Mandl (2014) argued that the PSM should use the funding it receives to produce public service content and provide it for free to private platforms, in a so-called public content provider model. In their view, public funding cannot be used to develop an online offering because the economic rationale for public intervention in the free market is not warranted.

The media industry federation VSM⁶⁵⁰ mandated Peter Hettich and Mark Schelker (2016) to develop a new definition of the public service remit taking digitalisation into consideration. These scholars argue that the current media system in Switzerland is the product of historical development and requires a general rethinking for the information age. Their study takes the point of view of market regulation and, as such, represents a classical view on the public service mission. Hettich and Schelker (2016) argue for the importance of the economic argument, beyond the political and legal arguments, as a state's intervention in markets means the redistribution of

⁶⁴⁸ In a first step, SRG SSR was only authorised to put content online that was directly linked to a radio or television broadcast.

⁶⁴⁹ While this research is not funded by SRG SSR or private media, it defends a certain normative position.

⁶⁵⁰ The Verband Schweizer Medien (VSM) is an industry interest group with over one hundred member companies that published approximately 300 newspapers and magazines as well as platforms and other forms of electronic media in the run up to the vote on the *No Billag* initiative. The mandator did not modify the study.

resources.⁶⁵¹ The intervention in the market has an impact not only on the distribution of resources but also on their efficient use. Hettich and Schelker (2016) also argue that SRG SSR is effectively responsible for defining its mission statement and thus under limited control; they stress the lack of accountability.

This specific study is not the only one published on a mandate from VSM: Stefanie Grubenmann and Stephan Ruß-Mohl (2016) explore the cooperation potential between SRG SSR and private publishers. In another study, Christian Hoffmann and Stefanie Grubenmann (2015) review the private offering of programmes of public service type; this study is in line with the argument of subsidiarity, namely that public service media can provide content for niche markets that would be underserved by commercial broadcasters, as they are not sufficiently attractive to advertisers.

While the media industry and think tanks mandate scholars to develop proposals, the federal government also involves scholarly expertise to imagine the future PSM.

The “Service Public” report and negotiating the 2018 concession: moving forward

In 2016 the Federal Council published a report on public service media relative to the positioning and function of private electronic media, in which it stressed that since its foundation, SRG SSR had continuously evolved. This report was produced upon request from parliament. It was the government’s roadmap for its vision of a PSM in a digital world. It also served to justify its arguments calling for a rejection of the *No Billag* initiative.

The report fit within a broader ongoing discussion in parliament about public service in infrastructure, including in telecommunications and transport. It was published at a time when the Swiss newly spent the most, and a growing share, of their media consumption time on the Internet.⁶⁵² This called for evolution from a political standpoint, particularly since the group that was most concerned by this development was the youth.

The Federal Council argued that, as required by the Federal Constitution, the quality of such programmes should be ensured by the PSM in all language regions: “it is a

⁶⁵¹ It exemplifies the economic analysis I addressed in chapter two with the following arguments: an economic justification for an intervention by the state is necessary in a liberal economy, as taxation means redistributing resources and hence raises the issue of the efficiency of the use of resources. In the case of Switzerland, the PSM receives approximately CHF 1.2 billion annually, which requires an important market failure to be justified (Hettich & Schelker).

⁶⁵² The media that the population spent the most time on daily was the Internet, followed by radio, television and newspapers. The report also showed that it was difficult for regional televisions to survive on advertising, even if they received a share of licence fees. Radio channels, on the other hand, could function with advertising and, in some cases, a share of licence fee. Radio listeners consumed nearly entirely Swiss channels, while foreign television channels dominate the market (65% vs 35 % domestic).

genuine service to society and not just a subsidiary offer in the case of market failure” (Conseil fédéral, 2016, p. ii).⁶⁵³ In defining the notion of public service in media, the government wrote: “public service in the media sector comprises a basic service with media offerings, defined according to political criteria and provided by delivery mandates. These public service media offerings must be accessible to all categories of the population and in all regions of the country at affordable prices, in good quality and according to the same principles.” (Conseil fédéral, 2016, p. 6).⁶⁵⁴

In negotiating new concessions for both SRG SSR as well as private local or regional radios and televisions, it aimed to focus on information, exchanges between language regions and accessibility for youth groups.⁶⁵⁵ In regard to sports and entertainment, the government called for more collaborations, while stressing that this type of programmes was essential to the PSM’s offering.

While digitalisation had increased the offering and the diversity of media, most private radios and televisions operating without a mandate and licence fee revenue were focused on entertainment rather than on general political information or cultural or educational programmes. Citing a study of schedules and programmes, the government argued that purely commercial televisions focus their programmes on entertainment and emotional communication to draw a sufficient audience to sell advertising.⁶⁵⁶ However, the government also argued that entertainment is key to public service media: “as a vector of socialisation, the television entertainment medium relays norms, values, role models, world views and life projects, reflecting the main societal problems and issues [...] in view of these important societal functions, it is not feasible to provide a public service without entertainment.” (Conseil fédéral, 2016, p. 102).⁶⁵⁷

Moving forward “[e]specially in the fields of television and the Internet, public service broadcasting must assert itself in the face of foreign offers and remain competitive,

⁶⁵³ Translated from the original French: “Il s’agit d’un véritable service à la société et non d’une simple offre subsidiaire en cas de défaillance du marché”.

⁶⁵⁴ Translated from the original French: “le service public dans le domaine des médias comprend un service de base avec des offres de médias, défini selon des critères politiques et assuré par des mandats de prestations. Ces offres de médias de service public doivent être accessibles à toutes les catégories de la population et dans toutes les régions du pays à des prix abordables, en bonne qualité et selon les mêmes principes”.

⁶⁵⁵ Regarding integration, the Federal Council saw SRG SSR mandated on three dimensions: the culture exchanges for national cohesion; the need of all generations for communication; and the needs for integration from immigration.

⁶⁵⁶ In the report, the government referenced an analysis conducted for OFCOM of the type of content of local television broadcaster with a programmes mandate and a share of the licence fee and of fully independent and autonomous televisions. The content of information was different: a fully private channel, TeleZürich had 40% of programmes on boulevard type information including crime, accidents, celebrities and sensational stories, against 15% for licence fee co-financed local televisions.

⁶⁵⁷ Translated from the original French: “en tant que vecteur de socialisation, le média de divertissement télévision relaie des normes, des valeurs, des modèles de rôles, des visions du monde et des projets de vie, se faisant le miroir des principaux problèmes et questions sociétales [...] compte tenu de ces importantes fonctions sociétales, il n’est pas envisageable de proposer un service public sans divertissement”.

which is only possible with attractive content that is not only in the field of education, information and culture, but also in the field of entertainment.” (Conseil fédéral, 2016, p. iii).⁶⁵⁸ In this case, both the government and SRG SSR made a clear distinction between entertainment and culture both on an organisational and content level; culture is considered to fulfil an educational purpose. However, they also pointed out that many programmes cannot be attributed fully to one or the other. When discussing the categories of entertainment, information and education, the government argued that “[t]hese concepts are not clearly delineated from each other ” (Conseil fédéral, 2016, p. 58).⁶⁵⁹

The government made two arguments on entertainment programmes: if SRG SSR did not provide costly entertainment, no other domestic player would have the financial ability to do so; at the same time, it had to provide entertainment that was distinct from market offerings. When addressing the programme *The Voice* as an example, it points out that, should SRG SSR forego developing this format, no private player would be able to support the large financial investments in both the format rights and the production costs. It further stressed that SRG SSR must provide singular content. The government did, however, challenge SRG SSR on the broadcasting of series and films that, while they attract large audiences, did not differentiate it enough from commercial providers; “[i]n this respect, the criterion according to which the broadcasting rights are advantageous and can be largely refinanced should not be a determining factor” (Conseil fédéral, 2016, p. 105).⁶⁶⁰

The report discussed possible options for public service in media in a networked age, notably: a public content provider without its own distribution system;⁶⁶¹ a dual public service; and increasing competition, within linguistic regions, by introducing competing public service organisations. The government argued for continuity, corresponding to the second option. However, it stressed that for the sustained legitimacy of the PSM, “the acceptance of public service by young people requires a stronger shift from the current linear offer of radio and television programmes to a non-linear offer” (Conseil fédéral, 2016, p. 107).⁶⁶² While the constitutional article refers to television and radio,

⁶⁵⁸ Translated from the original French: “En particulier dans les domaines de la télévision et de l’internet, le service public doit s’affirmer face aux offres étrangères et rester concurrentiel, ce qui n’est possible qu’avec des contenus attractifs, qui relèvent non seulement de la formation, de l’information et de la culture, mais aussi du divertissement”.

⁶⁵⁹ Translated from the original French: “Ces notions ne sont pas clairement délimitées les unes par rapport aux autres”.

⁶⁶⁰ Translated from the original French: “A cet égard, le critère selon lequel les droits de diffusion concernés sont avantageux et peuvent être en grande partie refinancés ne doit pas être déterminant”.

⁶⁶¹ The economic think tank Avenir Suisse, for instance, argued for the public content provider approach.

⁶⁶² Translated from the original French: “l’acceptation du service public par les jeunes nécessite de renforcer le passage de l’actuelle offre linéaire de programmes de radio et de télévision vers une offre non linéaire”.

but not the Internet, the federal government believed the constitutional mandate covered activities in the digital realm.⁶⁶³

The mandate is important, as are the challenges ahead. Yet, the citizens paid for a first-class service: the report specified that Switzerland was one of the most expensive nations for the licence fee, along with Norway, Denmark, Austria and Germany, when considering purchasing power parity. The upcoming battle around the licence fee in the *No Billag* campaign led to a broader discussion around the mission and role of a PSM; this campaign was closely followed by PSM managers around Europe.

The No Billag debate and entertainment

The campaign on the popular initiative “Say yes to abolishing radio and television fees (Abolition of Billag fees)” built on the report discussed in the previous sub-section and on input by academia. It was also nourished by the campaigns led by political parties and interest groups. While both the mandate and funding of public service media are regularly questioned and debated, is it rarely done as broadly and publicly as during the Swiss vote on *No Billag*: since the bulk of the licence fee is allocated to SRG SSR, abolishing the fee implicitly challenges the PSM’s survival. Although the debate around the concession addressed the role of SRG SSR, this initiative, while formally addressing the complete media system, effectively aimed to even the competition between public and private media, according to the initiative committee.

The federal government and parliament called to reject the initiative, arguing that it threatened the varied and high-quality media offering in a small plurilingual country, as provided by SRG SSR and local and regional radios and televisions. They also made the case that a commercial model meant only profitable programmes would be produced, leading to an under-supply of social issues and media diversity. Regarding entertainment, the government argued that the support for Swiss culture would diminish in both the film and music industries and that the offering of sports broadcasts would be reduced from the 60 sports that SRG SSR made available at the time (Conseil fédéral, 2017).

The initiative committee, mainly from the ranks of the young liberal party and building on a libertarian worldview, had substantial access to public media during the campaign due to the constitutional mandate for balanced reporting, even as they argued that abolishing the licence fee would render SRG SSR more politically independent. They

⁶⁶³ The government referenced the constitutional commentary by legal scholars Dumermuth and Zeller (2015).

referred to Netflix as an example of a quality, affordable provider of entertainment.⁶⁶⁴ Of the large national parties, only the Swiss People's Party called to support the initiative. The cultural and film communities actively campaigned to oppose the initiative,⁶⁶⁵ as did many local governments, churches and media personalities (from both public and private media).⁶⁶⁶ The debates, addressing the fundamental values of the *idée suisse*, were emotional.

The vote, which took place on March 4, 2018, resulted in a 71.6% refusal of the initiative; it was also rejected by all cantons. Even though the Netflix argument was presented by proponents of the initiative and framed as an appeal to young voters, a study found that 80 per cent of voters aged 18-29 voted against the *No Billag* initiative (Tresch et al., 2018); overall, the main reasons for rejecting the initiative were: to maintain a strong public service media in all regions of the country (43%), and to express a positive view of the SRG SSR and its programmes (26%).

The vote did not mark the end of challenges for SRG SSR and media policy. The PSM is undergoing another cost-cutting programme. Regarding media policy, a draft Act on Electronic Media was submitted to popular consultation. Given the negative feedback from both left and right, and in the absence of measures to support the press by lack of constitutional basis, the new Media minister Simonetta Sommaruga cancelled the project in August 2019.

Exploring the digital: the Labo Numérique de la RTS

To respond to digitalisation, new technologies and formats, as well as to provide the organisation with strategic monitoring, many PSM set up internal digital innovation labs. Two SRG SSR units did so: SRF with its *SRF beta Lab* and RTS with its *Labo Numérique*. Both of these teams jointly worked on organising the *SRG SSR Hackdays*, an annual hackathon bringing together employees from across the organisation with external coders and developers to build prototypes and initiate a cultural change.

Launched in 2013, the *Labo Numérique de la RTS* digital lab was dissolved in 2018⁶⁶⁷ as the team moved on to other projects and the organisation adapted its digital innovation strategy.

⁶⁶⁴ On January 25, 2018, the committee presented three scenarios for SRG SSR in the case of an adopted initiative, all building on a subscription model, reinforced advertising and, in some scenarios, direct subsidies from the federal or local states.

⁶⁶⁵ This included a campaign page that collected over 11'000 signatures, notably of well-established Swiss artists, under the motto "No Billag, no culture".

⁶⁶⁶ See for instance Roger Schawinski (2018), former SRG SSR employee, private radio and television pioneer. While often critical of the PSM and in particular of its past monopoly, he argued against abolishing the licence fee and defended the importance of a PSM in a small plurilingual nation.

⁶⁶⁷ For a further discussion of this lab and other PSM digital innovation labs, see chapter five.

Projects centred around entertainment and gamification. This included exploring smart speakers and podcasts, chatbots, a web series, a musical quiz app for a radio channel and gamification concepts accompanying the 2014 *Football World Cup*. The creation of formats for virtual reality was a typical lab project, which then would go on to be presented at film festivals that increasingly hosted fringe sections for AR/VR projects.⁶⁶⁸ Illustrating the public service mission and exploring technology, the digital lab facilitated the production of 360-degree videos animating recognisable paintings by Swiss painters including Ferdinand Hodler, Arnold Böcklin and Félix Vallotton.⁶⁶⁹ One of the lab's earlier projects, *Tabula rasa*,⁶⁷⁰ caught the attention of domestic and foreign media as well as politicians. A serious game made available online before the federal elections of 2015, *Tabula rasa* was a political strategy game. The user could allocate budgets, set political priorities, and measure their success with a set of indicators. At the same time, a large-scale survey was conducted to identify the preferences of Swiss citizens, and real-life statistics were collected by the lead journalist on the project. According to the annual report (SRG SSR, 2016), the game was tested by over 34'000 players. Its development was funded via the innovation fund *innov@RTS*. This fund allowed any employee to propose ideas for a radio, television or web programme, on an intranet platform; fellow employees could interact and add questions or ideas to the original pitch. In 2015, the available budget for developing prototypes based on these ideas amounted to CHF 1 million. Yet this approach to the lab building on pilot projects came to an end in 2018, as two lab team members moved on to other missions: one to a joint media-academia initiative; another to a media for the youth, Tataki.

A partnership approach to the ecosystem: imagining the future with academia

Beyond internal projects and strategic monitoring, SRG SSR can build on domestic technical and scholarly expertise to co-create its vision for the future. A partnership logic is an extension of the approach to the audiovisual and music sectors, but also builds on the extensive history of collaboration between SRG SSR and the technical universities. In January 2018, research institutes, SRG SSR and a private media⁶⁷¹ jointly created the Initiative for Media Innovation (IMI). The declared purpose of this

⁶⁶⁸ PSM are not necessarily the main drivers of innovation in the use of new technologies and devices for entertainment. Quibi, an emerging short-form mobile mainly video platform launched in 2020, raised one billion dollars in 2018 from the major Hollywood players to help reinvent their business for their future audiences.

⁶⁶⁹ These videos can be viewed at <https://rts.ch/unframed>.

⁶⁷⁰ The game can be accessed at <https://tabularasa.ch>.

⁶⁷¹ Technical university EPFL, PSM SRG SSR, publisher Ringier, and the Universities of Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel.

public-private partnership is to foster cooperation between practitioners and researchers in media innovation. The regulator, OFCOM, can also participate in supporting projects. The initiative has an annual funding of CHF 700'000 to support projects and is not focused on one specific medium. Funding is awarded to research projects that fit the priorities of IMI and involve at least one media and one research institution; results are shared with all participants in the initiative (Krichane, 2019). The six initial projects addressed the topics of “misinformation & public trust” and “user experience & accessibility”.⁶⁷²

The initiative, publicised in July 2018, positioned SRG SSR as fostering a partnership relationship with private media. SRG SSR placed itself within the knowledge industry by joining forces with universities; both research and public service media serve the public interest as a part of their mandate. The initiative is physically situated on the campus of the technical university EPFL, specifically in its startup campus.⁶⁷³ This offers the potential for applied research and spinoff collaboration going forward. As an applied research initiative, it supports media needs while exploring the practical potential of technologies.⁶⁷⁴

Reaching the young and the audiovisual turn of social media: Tataki, the digital infotainment

Reaching young audiences is a fundamental challenge for PSM's continued legitimacy. In the context of this challenge, one must rethink the measure of audiences and success; time spent on the media may not be the best measure for a public service mandate.⁶⁷⁵

In September 2017, RTS launched Tataki, a channel for the 15-24-year-old.⁶⁷⁶ The programmes are distributed on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat, in

⁶⁷² See a list of projects on the website: <https://www.media-initiative.ch/imi-projects/>.

⁶⁷³ The IMI cannot be viewed independently from an RTS project to build a new media centre building on the campus of the technical university EPFL. This move, announced in 2014, led to resistance by other cantons. The building was supposed to host most radio and some television activities. The project was suspended in early 2018 following the announcement by the Federal Council of a reduction in the licence fee.

⁶⁷⁴ First projects applied machine learning and data science to journalistic approaches.

⁶⁷⁵ The federal government does so by considering time spent using different pages, finding the PSM competing for attention with WhatsApp and Google (Conseil fédéral, 2016).

⁶⁷⁶ In public service media, the reference for youth fiction television distributed across social media channels is NRK's *Skam*, produced between 2015 and 2017. It was one of the first web series distributed through social media that adapted to the culture and practices of these channels. This included a daily distribution schedule of varied length. It portrays a group of high-school students in Oslo. The programme has been the object of several papers in media studies. Rustad (2018) argues that the daily distribution schedule of *Skam* impacted viewers in their reception regarding media use, mediated experiences and the formal qualities of the programme. Lindtner and Dahl (2019) analyse the discussions between teenage viewers on social media; they argued that the programme and the discussions it generates may contribute to educating the audience as citizens.

formats that are adapted for each platform.⁶⁷⁷ Other business units also launched their service for young audiences, such as SRF's SRF Digital (Udris, 2018).⁶⁷⁸

Under the tagline "Ton média Suisse, street & pop" (Your Swiss media, street & pop), it distributes content and is open to contributions. Through its website,⁶⁷⁹ it invites viewers to propose concepts for programmes, to be distributed via Instagram, YouTube or its other channels. Other than that, the website directly links to the social channel accounts of Tataki (on Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram). The media collaborated with two established media brands on specific content: Arte, in 2017 for the illustrated web series *Dawaland*, and Vice Media in 2018 for the web documentary series *Hidden Helvetia*. These two media brands represent the intersection that a PSM youth brand can serve: culture and interculturality, on the one hand, urban culture and lifestyle on the other.

The programmes evolve regularly and are produced by young people, individuals with or without a pre-existing following on social media. They focus on shows and documentary more than fiction. While largely centred on French-speaking Switzerland, the format and the issues they address enable Tataki to reach audiences in the *Francophonie* more broadly.

I conclude this review by looking back on a pre-broadcasting form of entertainment that Switzerland shared and that is now in a crisis: the travelling national circus.

The end of the local spectacle and the death of the family circus

The circus long represented the epitome of entertainment. Composed of a series of performances in a tent, including clowns, acrobats, dancers, animals, musicians and comedians, the circus is a modern tradition spanning several centuries. The arrival of a touring circus in town, the construction of the tent, the march of the elephants and the installation of the camp have long been highlights for families. While, as in broadcasting, the formats and content have evolved with society and culture (human and animal rights, as well as viewer safety, are two examples), until recently the circus represented the annual entertainment event during which the city gathered. Before broadcasting technology, the circus re-enacted current and past events and stood out through technological innovation, such as the use of electricity.

The development of circuses in the 2010s tell us a story about entertainment: the shift from the artisanal to the professional, the rise of the extreme spectacle, the

⁶⁷⁷ It also distributes programmes through the RTS Player.

⁶⁷⁸ I discuss Tataki, as it has a larger share of followers and has expanded to a range of formats.

⁶⁷⁹ See the website: <https://www.tataki.ch/>.

consolidation of entertainment conglomerates and the circus as a driver of economic development rather than as a cultural mobile visit. In 2019, 159 years after its founding, the Swiss *Cirque Nock* closed down due to financial difficulties, as municipalities were less willing to accommodate a circus and audiences were less numerous.⁶⁸⁰

This is not only a local development. In 2017, the US-American *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus*, billed as the “Greatest Show on Earth”, closed as it faced operating costs that it could not balance with audience revenue. It may have been overtaken by the spectacularism of Canadian-based *Cirque du Soleil*, a global circus producer founded in 1984 which boasted revenues of over one billion dollars in the mid-2010s. The *Cirque du Soleil* acquired entertainment franchises and partnered with firms such as hotels and cruise ship companies to provide entertainment as an add-on, as it became a core component of numerous industries. While the traditional circus came to one’s town, one now goes to see the circus where it is. The circus becomes the highlight of a visit: one goes someplace to be amazed by entertainment. The circus whose core mission, according to Hemingway, was to bring enjoyment, as he wrote in an essay for the 1953 *Ringling Bros.* programme: “[t]he circus is the only ageless delight that you can buy for money. Everything else is supposed to be bad for you. But the circus is good for you. It is the only spectacle I know that, while you watch it, gives the quality of a truly happy dream”. The end of the local circus signals the ending of an era of entertainment, the local, pre-broadcast.

Period conclusion

During the decade and a half of this period, policymakers took stock of the impact of digitalisation on public service media, repeatedly adapting the Act with large consultations. Tensions around the scope of the PSM’s activities led to a vote on the *No Billag* initiative, effectively forcing the government to publish its vision for public service media, in which it recognised the importance entertainment plays in this regard. The initiative was rejected by the population, and particularly by the young. These evolving regulatory conditions, responding to changes in technology and audience habits, highlighted the importance of maintaining legitimacy and support. Convergence was made visible by merging both the television and radio organisations within each language region, and the previously separate licence fees into one compulsory licence fee; this reflected the rising importance of Internet consumption of programmes. The rise of entertainment portals showed the importance of a catalogue and of archives, as well as that of the user experience. To respond to these

⁶⁸⁰ That same year, the *Cirque Knie*, known as the national circus, celebrated its centennial.

challenges, the PSM increasingly worked with its ecosystem, including universities and creative industries.

On February 26, 2020, the Federal Council published its Dispatch concerning the promotion of culture 2021-2024. Under the political objective of fostering social cohesion and cultural diversity, it continues the three strategic axes of cultural participation, social cohesion, and creation and innovation, with a proposed budget of CHF 934.5 million. The Dispatch contains proposals to adapt the regulatory environment to the changed industrial organisation and technological possibilities regarding audiovisual contents. Specifically, the federal government proposes to be authorised to compel VOD platforms to invest in independent Swiss film production, an obligation that national television broadcasters currently face, as well as to require portals to carry at least 30% of European films. Is this the beginning of a new era for the Swiss film industry and an alternative source of financing beyond SRG SSR? How can the government implement and monitor a 30% quota on portals? What impact would this development have on SRG SSR's argument for its continued legitimacy drawn from its unique role in supporting of the local audiovisual industry?

At the same time, the PSM competes with portals since November 2020 with the launch of its own streaming platform, *Play Suisse*. Will its catalogue, its curation and its interface successfully convince citizens and politicians? How will it integrate private domestic players? Lastly, how will SRG SSR explain the public service values that the portal conveys?

These are topical questions for media and cultural policymakers. SRG SSR finishes the period with a reinforced popular legitimacy yet increasing tasks and diminishing financial resources. In entertainment, it competes with Netflix; in news, it competes with the press and social media; in sports, it competes with telecom firms and cable; and perhaps, in a near future, it will compete with Netflix to produce the most promising Swiss fiction.

Section conclusion

This overview of SRG SSR's history demonstrates that it has continuously evolved and repeatedly had to reaffirm its legitimacy. Every decade may have felt like a turning point, as does the current one. Aziz and Piattini (2006) argue that the definition of Swiss public service includes three key ideas: programmes reflecting national identity; interregional and intercultural solidarity; independence from the state and political forces. This is reflected in the principles of universalism, pluralism and independence. This chapter has shown how each of these principles has been challenged repeatedly as the shared understanding of these core values changed over time.

SRG SSR faces new competitors, yet it also has new technological means to best respond to evolving audience needs, with the possibility of addressing citizens in their diversity to a previously unimaginable degree. The regulatory framework, while often evolving after the fact, is advancing and moving from a technology focus to a mission focus; politicians and policymakers are increasingly understanding the depth of the digital transformation. Overall “SRG SSR is probably the only institution formally independent of the state in this country that is so closely and consistently observed and monitored in all regions and by all sections of the population” (Mäusli & Steigmeier, 2006a, p. 379).⁶⁸¹ As such, SRG SSR faces specific and shared challenges, some of which are recurring throughout the history this chapter has drawn. I now draw eleven lessons from this history.

4.5. Key lessons

Having presented a history of entertainment in the context of Swiss public media, at the interplay of technology, regulation and society, it is now time to take notice of recurring themes and consider what lessons can be drawn from them because, as Mark Twain is believed to have said, “history does not repeat itself, but it rhymes”.

Discussing the history of the development of public broadcasting in Switzerland is key to our understanding of its role today. Ongoing policy debates can find their origins in the past, such as the physical location of its studios,⁶⁸² or the evolving relations between PSM and private media regarding the rapid transformation of the media sphere.⁶⁸³

I draw eleven lessons from this history. They reflect long-lasting trends that limit and impact public service media and the policy-making that frames it throughout the nearly one hundred years of history addressed in this chapter. Some of these lessons can be applied to fields other than entertainment or public service media, and may be characteristic of policymaking in Switzerland.⁶⁸⁴ These eleven lessons are presented in four thematic clusters: entertainment; the introduction of new technology; market dynamics, or the relationship between the public service media and its competitors;

⁶⁸¹ Translated from the original French: “La SSR est sans doute dans ce pays la seule institution formellement indépendante de l'Etat qui soit observée et contrôlée d'aussi près et avec une telle constance, dans toutes les régions et par toutes les couches de la population”.

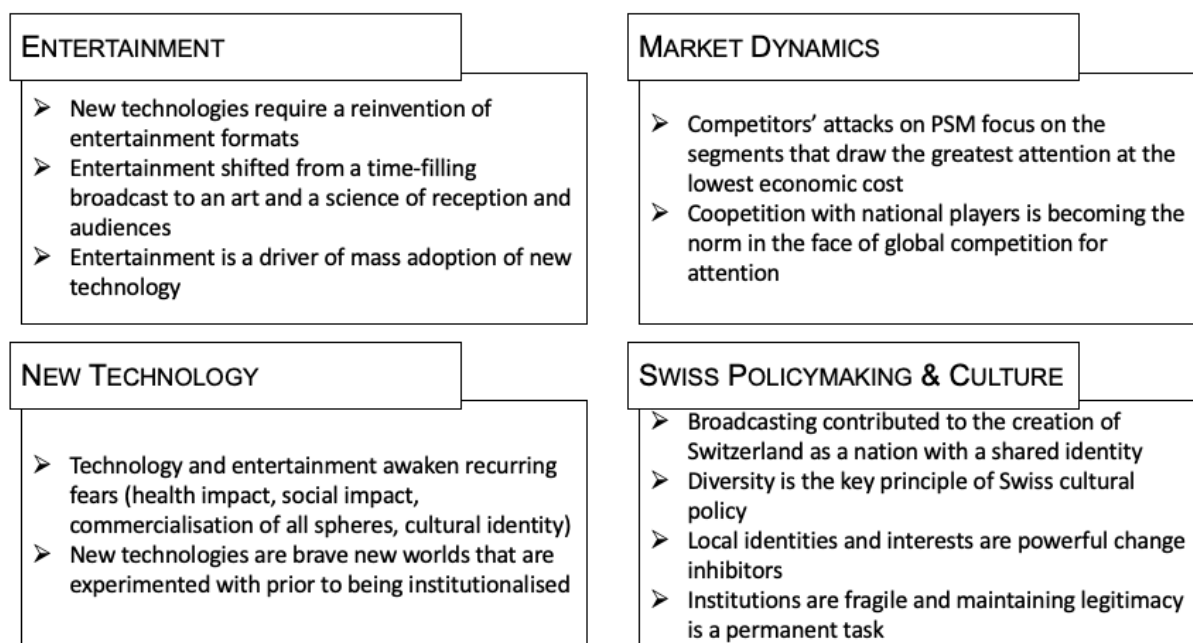
⁶⁸² The physical location of studios, radio and television, is difficult to change. While it arguably makes sense for economic reasons to join the physical location of studios, it is politically difficult to close down locations in different cantons and regions. An ongoing debate with staff and studio moves from Bern to Zurich and Geneva to Lausanne is an apt illustration.

⁶⁸³ Ringier launched in February 2020 Blick TV, the televised equivalent to its print medium Blick Zeitung. The chief editor of this platform is a former star presenter of SRF, Jonas Projer. For an example of a story of the transformation of a media group such as Ringier, see the recent book by former Blick chief editor René Lüchinger (2019).

⁶⁸⁴ Some ongoing political discussions around key digital infrastructure are reminiscent of the previous debates, for instance around 5G.

and Swiss policymaking and culture. The following figure introduces the eleven lessons.

Figure 12: Eleven lessons from entertainment, PSM and technology in Switzerland



These four clusters can be placed on the industrialisation of culture framework proposed by Havens and Lotz (2016). First, entertainment covers the levels of conditions, practices and texts. Second, new technology involves the layers of conditions (technological) as well as social trends, trends & traditions. Third, market dynamics relate to conditions (economic, regulatory and technological). Fourth, Swiss policymaking & culture relates to the layers of culture, social trends, trends & traditions, mandates, conditions, and practices. This final category, by covering so many layers, contains lessons that may be applied to other fields of policymaking. I will now briefly discuss each lesson in turn.

Entertainment

1. New technologies require a reinvention of entertainment formats.

An additional distribution channel requires reinventing formats. Broadcasting a filmed theatre play as entertainment was not sufficient to keep audiences hooked when a diversified, competing offering was available. Each new medium offers technical opportunities to reinvent storytelling or formats, using the advantages only it offers. In fact, by its very nature, entertainment is permanent reinvention, a continuous adaptation of ideas and storylines to the technical means of the time. This chapter has shown that small broadcasters with limited means and a strong will to create content

and captivate their local audiences were particularly apt to demonstrate creativity, for instance in the use of television for capturing sporting events.

Beyond that, there is a need, given the universal mandate of the public service media, to accompany the audiences in the use of the new technology. This was done with *Pro Radio* in the early days of radio technology, to teach the audience how to use the machine, how to tune in and what radio had to offer. This reminds us of a recurring challenge with new technologies: the chicken and egg problem. It typically requires investment on the part of the content creator, the broadcaster and the audience, as was the case with radio and television. To make a platform or a channel attractive for creators, it must have an audience; and to attract an audience, it must offer enough great content from creators.⁶⁸⁵ Yet it is unclear what the contemporary equivalent to *Pro Radio* is or should be; this, amidst fears of a digital divide reflecting social divides and undermining the universal mandate of the PSM.

The emergence of new technology offers additional tools for storytelling by creators and viewer or player engagement, allowing them to reinvent entertainment formats fitted to and benefitting from the properties of said technology. At the same time, audiences need time to understand and integrate the new grammar of storytelling brought about by technology. Furthermore, a new format may be controversial in a public service setting, as illustrated with reality TV; the practices and texts of one PSM may serve to legitimise similar practices and texts at another PSM as new technology enables novel forms of entertainment.

2. Entertainment shifted from a time-filling broadcast to an art and a science of reception and audiences.

While entertainment was a type of product in and of itself, its understanding has progressively shifted to being one of reception. Originally considered less politically sensitive to produce than news content, entertainment segments were used, packaged and re-packaged as a catalogue, to fill in broadcasting time and draw in audiences for the ensuing educational or informational programmes. At the same time, the early radio orchestras showed how broadcasting wanted to ensure its legitimacy in cultural and elite circles by investing a large share of its budgets in the culturally valued field of symphonic orchestras. The massive surge in offering led to a strong competition for attention; the providers have learnt how to implement persuasive design to keep users hooked. Thus, many fields increasingly use game and entertainment tactics, including politics and education. This means a shift from a broadcast approach (“this is

⁶⁸⁵ The digital era field for this issue is the previously discussed platformisation of culture.

entertainment because we broadcast it as such”) to a reception, audience-based approach (“it is entertainment because the viewer finds it entertaining”). This should not, however, lead to relativism: considering that everything is entertainment. Rather, I argue for a parallel with a market-based approach to art: all is art which can be sold as such; all is entertainment which can attract an audience as such. Furthermore, this shift reinforces the importance of two layers of public service media, namely connection and curation, the latter enabling the promotion of the large existing catalogue of public service media. This development must be linked to the increased measurability and quantification of audiences. Furthermore, this calls for increased trust and transparency in addressing the viewer primarily as a citizen.⁶⁸⁶ Also, the perceived tension between quality and market share is a constant in the history reviewed.

3. Entertainment is a driver of mass adoption of new technology.

After an initial phase of exploration of a technology, its broad adoption by the population is required to justify the investment in creating content for this technology. Both international standards and exclusive content facilitate its adoption, as shown with major sporting events used to showcase a technology, or the norms development around DAB. The adoption of technology is increasingly fast, from radio through television to personal computers, the Internet and smartphones. For each of these technologies, beyond their initial military or professional use, it is truly entertainment content that was the “killer app” that allowed widespread adoption by the general public.⁶⁸⁷

New technology

4. Technologies and entertainment awaken recurring fears.

Every new (mass media) technology appears to face a set of common fears, which I summarise around four blocks: health, social cohesion, commercialisation and cultural identity.⁶⁸⁸

First, the fear of negative health impacts, particularly but not exclusively for the young, through consumption of said mass media; new technology is often argued to hinder the cognitive development. Second, the impact on social cohesion and the family unit.

⁶⁸⁶ The issue of trust is essential in a digital era, for instance regarding user data collection. Discussions around decentralised ledger technologies typically address the lack of trust between players by distributing power and knowledge.

⁶⁸⁷ Factors identified by scholars for adoption include, beyond entertainment, social status and practical needs. Non-adopters consider factors such as rapid technological development and obsolescence (see for example Brown et al., 2006).

⁶⁸⁸ This list is not organised by order of importance or chronology.

Third, the commercialisation of all spheres, notably through advertising. Fourth, the threat to the cultural identity, from abroad, from within (for instance from another linguistic region) or from the next canton. This chapter has shown numerous examples of each of these fears, particularly during the introduction of television in the 1950s. This lesson may be equally applied to current technological developments, such as the deployment of 5G technology.

Conversely, new technology also inspires optimism, as radio, television and the Internet were also argued to bear the promise of solving societal problems, such as granting universal access to knowledge or distributing power. Yet, a technology's impact on society is not inherent to it; rather, its effect develops at the interplay or regulation, economics and practices.

5. New technologies are brave new worlds that are experimented with prior to being institutionalised.

Radio, television, Internet: each offered great promises and posed threats to social cohesion and sovereignty amongst other factors. For each technology, a lengthy process led to the definition of a legal framework, regularly revised, and based on a broadly shared view of fundamental principles relevant to society and the audience's life as citizens in the case of PSM. The adoption of the first constitutional article on broadcasting in 1984, after two rejections, shows how long this negotiation process can be. It also showcases the tension between considering technology from a technical, or infrastructure, standpoint or a cultural, societal standpoint,⁶⁸⁹ with both risks and opportunities.

In the Swiss case, the same can be argued for the institutions that embody these technologies. Indeed, radio was first introduced as an amateur project, before progressively being institutionalised. Thus, this statement about technologies can also be applied to institutions. Appendix 1 presents the date of creation of national public radio broadcasters of the founding members of EBU. Switzerland, with the foundation of SRG SSR in 1931, is not amongst the pioneers for the creation of the institutional symbol of national radio. Though this image does not reflect the true nature of the introduction of the radio, and later of television, in Switzerland: it was introduced early, on an experimental basis, to observe the audience's reactions and study foreign experiences, before later creating the organisation and deploying the technology with broad support. While this may appear attractive in an era that calls for agility and frugality, the deployment of technologies also requires clear political decision-making

⁶⁸⁹ As I have shown, the media policy is conducted by OFCOM while the cultural policy is managed by OFC and *Pro Helvetia*. In the end, PSM policy is about both.

and consequential investments. This debate is ongoing around issues pertinent to contemporary infrastructures related to IoT, AI, 5G, in direct continuity with the telegraph, railway, Internet, and drones. The context, however, is one of accelerating adoption of technologies and global competition.

Furthermore, this history shows that SRG SSR often introduced reforms earliest in its smaller business units, as illustrated by the digitalisation of Radio Swiss International. This, in turn, illustrates the tension between the political intentions of a unified, strong public service media, and the limited financial resources in the face of increasing tasks and channels.

Market dynamics

6. Competitors' attacks on PSM evolve to focus on the segments that draw the greatest attention at the lowest economic cost.

SRG SSR is a big fish in a small pond. As such, it competes with companies in a range of sectors, for which it is the largest competitor, or cooperator.⁶⁹⁰ In this small pond, small fish from a range of industries want to weaken their biggest competitor, the PSM. Their attacks tend to focus on the segment (time slot, demographics, content) that is considered to attract audiences at low production costs. Originally, this was news, but progressively shifted to entertainment, the main driver of attention since television. At the same time, PSM expanded its distribution channels, thereby increasing its exposure area to criticism.

Hettich and Schelker (2016) provide an example of a critical standpoint in regard to entertainment content in PSM: "of course, there are economic reasons on the part of SRG SSR for broadcasting such formats [entertainment content], but it remains difficult to justify them from an economic and regulatory perspective" (p. 97).⁶⁹¹ This contemporary view from critics of PSM is an evolution from a prior period in which criticism focused on the provision of news, then the driving force and main offering for media houses; at the time, producing and broadcasting live music, including maintaining a band or orchestra, was costly. Therefore, the argument of what the market can provide focuses on what the market can provide while generating profits. This is the content which enables a media to capture the most attention at the lowest cost and to resell it. As this argument goes, the PSM should only provide that which the market does not provide, in a position of subsidiarity. I have argued that this view

⁶⁹⁰ Competitor and co-operator (see Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1996).

⁶⁹¹ Translated from the original German: "selbstverständlich gibt es betriebswirtschaftliche Gründe seitens der SRG, auch solche Formate auszustrahlen, jedoch bleibt es schwierig, diese aus ökonomischer und ordnungspolitischer Optik zu begründen".

weakens the PSM in its universality principle.⁶⁹² However, the increasingly global competition for attention and shared external threats leads to an evolution that is the next lesson.

7. Coopetition with national players is becoming the norm in the face of global competition for attention.

While SRG SSR is the largest player in the country, it remains a small player on a global scale. Competition increasingly comes from abroad from firms with funding that outweighs that of Swiss media; these competitors can attract advertisers with the sheer convenience of their multiplatform advertising services.⁶⁹³ The creation of Admeira, a joint venture by SRG SSR, Ringier and Swisscom, in 2015 to jointly sell digital, print and radio advertising space, including cross-media is an example of the mix of competition for attention and cooperation on infrastructure that is increasingly characteristic of the Swiss media market.⁶⁹⁴ The declared aim of this joint venture was to face the increased competition from tech firms for advertising money.⁶⁹⁵ Illustrating the difficulty of implementing such cooperation, SRG SSR pulled out of this joint venture in 2018.

In other words, competition remains strong on the levels of curation and connection, which are drivers of attention and revenue, and somewhat milder on the level of creation; there may be a potential for cooperation on infrastructure, both software and hardware, for which investments are important, foreign competitive threats apparent and the potential for local cooperation strong. Projects such as the Initiative for Media Innovation show the potential for collaboration with academia in research and innovation. Cooperation can, however, face functional difficulties due to diverging interests and mandates.

⁶⁹² See chapters one and three.

⁶⁹³ Social media and platforms can offer campaigns across platforms, with targeted audiences and extensive, customisable analytics.

⁶⁹⁴ Commercial non-parties to the joint venture opposed it, with the argument that publicly owned Swisscom and SRG SSR thus did not treat all private actors in the same manner. The legal action was finally rejected by the Federal Supreme Court on February 23, 2018. Yet on June 28, 2018, SRG SSR announced it was selling its shares in Admeira to Swisscom and Ringier, now sole co-owners of the joint venture. Swisscom exited the joint venture in early 2020, selling its shares to Ringier.

⁶⁹⁵ To compete with Google and Facebook's extensive analytics tools, Admeira has invested in studies and tools to demonstrate the reach of its campaigns.

Swiss policymaking and culture

8. Broadcasting contributed to the creation of Switzerland as a nation with a shared identity.

This history has shown how fundamental questions around the organisation and governance of public service media, and notably around the programmes in the context of foreign propaganda, led to the choice of creating one organisation per linguistic region and to the creation of a common, national cultural policy. One could argue, as does Dominique Boullier (2016, p. 252) addressing mass media in general, that “[t]he mass media brought this [national public] opinion into existence by unifying states of mind through their ability to broadcast over a whole territory, thus constituting an advertising market, but also a political, unified market”.⁶⁹⁶ However, I argue that in the Swiss case it was not the advertising market and hence the economic argument that drove this process, with the late introduction of advertising on television, which remains forbidden online and on the radio for SRG SSR channels other than for patronage of a programme. Rather, the federal policymakers were forced to act in the face of a foreign threat, namely fascist propaganda, even though there were strong local resistances to centralising broadcasting. Therefore, first radio, and then television, contributed to the creation of Switzerland as a nation with a shared identity, while also fostering local or regional identities by building (linguistic) regional broadcasters. Repeated technocratic attempts to create a national channel or national programmes faced similar challenges to those of European broadcasting projects and programmes conducted by the vision of those Bourdon describes as the “unfortunate engineers of the European soul” (2011, p. 77). In other words, the public service media contributed to the creation of Switzerland as a nation, as it accompanied the evolution from an identity centred around a canton to a linguistic region, building on the regional broadcasters. At the same time, SRG SSR successfully used the fear of Americanisation to make its case while also including American programmes in its schedule to attract audiences. This lesson naturally leads on to the next one, the driving principle of Swiss cultural policy: diversity.

9. Diversity is the key principle of Swiss cultural policy

In an approach opposed to that of neighbouring countries in the context of the rise of totalitarianism, Switzerland arguably attempted to define itself through its diversity and the promotion of a range of local traditions. This driving principle of respect of

⁶⁹⁶ Translated from the original French: “Les médias de diffusion de masse ont fait exister cette opinion en unifiant des états d'esprit par leurs capacités de diffusion étendue à tout un territoire qui constituait ainsi un marché publicitaire, mais aussi politique, unifié”.

traditional diversity and local identity remains a strong force in the discourse around contemporary Swiss politics, as can be observed regarding the relationship of the country to the European Union. It also builds on the country's strong federalist tradition. This lesson is exemplified in the 1938 vote on recognising Romansh as the fourth national language on a constitutional level. While originally centred around mass media, this cultural policy progressively expanded to other fields of culture. The promotion of diversity and defence of local identities, in turn, are arguably linked to some conservative identities, the subject of the next lesson.

10. Local identities and interests are strong change inhibitors

While the described period shows the trend towards increased centralisation of competencies and structures, it also presents repeated resistance to centralisation. Likewise, this history shows how different PSM business units, rooted in different cultures, interpreted and acted upon their mandate in varied manners. This fits within the tradition of Swiss federalism, whereby issues are solved at the level closest to the citizen.

The long absence of a constitutional basis for federal intervention in radio and television can be viewed through the lens of this resistance by local identities and groups. This point must be counter-balanced with the strong resilience of the Swiss system and its, generally, slow adaptation to change through long, shared decision-making processes. This process, however, tends to lead to lasting, legitimate and stable outcomes.

Unity in diversity and through strong local identities may be a strength of the country, yet it is also a challenge. This can be seen within SRG SSR in the complex collaboration between regional business units on technology projects, as in the case of the original swissinfo.ch website. There is, in fact, a fundamental tension in Swiss public service media policy between ensuring a PSM that is legitimate because it provides what citizens want and managing the strong resistance from local conservative forces in many areas. The recurrent challenge around the redistribution of funding across regions while maintaining the autonomy of language-regional specificities is an illustration of the principle of diversity.

Furthermore, this history shows a shift from a fear of standardisation, through entertainment in particular related to fears of Americanisation or domination by the Swiss-German language-region on the Italian and French-language regions, to a fear of individualisation through personal curation and catering to a broader diversity of audiences.

11. Institutions are fragile and maintaining legitimacy is a permanent task.

The *No Billag* vote in 2018 showed that public service media must continuously demonstrate its value to citizens, politicians and society, or risk being disbanded or defunded. Indeed, as a political construction, such an organisation can be voted away, if it is not deemed to make a valuable contribution, even though inertia and path dependence may be strong. This power of direct democracy ought to reduce the fear of a Weberian, ever-expanding public sector. It also means that a popular decision can slash the PSM budget or dismantle the organisation altogether, and the discussion is ongoing. This is an opportunity for the organisation, lest it should rest on its laurels. The work of managing the legitimising environment, including politicians and the population, is a central role of a senior public manager.⁶⁹⁷

These eleven lessons cover policymaking in Switzerland and trends regarding entertainment in public service media. They may be helpful when thinking about current and future developments around PSM and entertainment in Switzerland, or even be considered, for some of them, in broader discussions around infrastructure for the digital age. Beyond that, this points to major challenges for PSM and societies going forward. I turn to address three major challenges.

4.6. Three fundamental challenges for the future

For PSM, a set of fundamental challenges remain to be tackled in the years to come. I now briefly present three crucial challenges for public service media and entertainment.

1. The *raison d'être* of public service media and public service entertainment: an industrial policy, a regulatory policy, an infrastructural policy, a cultural policy?

The justification for public service media is a political project and, as such, a construct, like the organisation that executes this mission, the PSM. Yet, PSM remain challenged to define clearly their value proposition, and particularly in entertainment.⁶⁹⁸ One approach to this question is the policy-making focus that drives the PSM's mission. Is it an industrial policy, as in supporting the local film industry? Is it a regulatory policy, as in providing specific contents that the market would not, or overseeing the manner in which the market provides entertainment, for instance through oversight of algorithms? Is it an infrastructural policy, ensuring that contents are made available to

⁶⁹⁷ As in Moore's strategic triangle for public value, which I discuss in chapter five in the case of innovation.

⁶⁹⁸ Chapter three addresses this in more depth.

all geographical locations throughout the country and segments of audiences throughout society? Is it a cultural policy, as in promoting certain values and ensuring a diversity in production or in reception? Or is it a mix of all these fields? The justification for PSM has evolved over time and its mandate has increasingly been viewed through an economic lens. The political reasoning may have to return to the forefront, in an era of personalised public sphere. In a globalised world, politics still remain largely local and national.

2. Staying relevant for audiences and the ecosystem

Relevance is essential. How do you ensure that the organisation, its content and its staff stay up-to-date and relevant in a fast-changing world?⁶⁹⁹ While this is a recurring topic for all organisations in the media today, it has arguably been central since the beginning for public service media, as this chapter has shown. The notion of institutional crisis is part of what constitutes a public service media, and this is perhaps a strength. At the same time, PSM face the daunting question: what defines television in a networked age? Another dimension of relevance is that of the national scale of public service media in the context of strong or resurging local identities and the development of geography-independent constituencies around issues. A fundamental reframing of the mission considering the digital era may be helpful. How will the national public service media contribute to a mediated, individualised public sphere? Furthermore, as a mediator and producer of culture, the PSM must demonstrate its value to cultural industries, including the film and music industries, but also the gaming industries and the knowledge sector. This value should allow, in turn, to realise the mission of public service for citizens.

3. Demonstrating the impact: how to keep people engaged & measure audiences

This chapter has shown the evolution of audience habits, rising expectations towards PSM from policymakers, stakeholders and audiences alike in the context of increasing national, international and global competition for attention. In an increasingly individualised world, which is undergoing structural changes, how can a PSM most effectively have an impact and demonstrate it? How can it rethink its measure of success, after having been measured and driven by broadcast ratings and the schedule for so many decades? What does a successful audience engagement mean in a digital world for a public service media? This implies specifically exploring how

⁶⁹⁹ Chapter five discusses the efforts being conducted by public service media organisations throughout Europe to stay relevant, notably through the creation of digital innovation labs.

the measure of audience engagement may be different for news and entertainment, as the latter is pursued as an end in itself.

Conclusion

There are many forms of radio, television and the Internet. This chapter has shown the co-evolution of technology, regulation, practices in the case of SRG SSR. They co-habit over time and influence each other. They fit within cultures that may differ, even within one country, due to language or regional specificities. This chapter is also a story of an expansion, the expansion of media content, and particularly entertainment content, in our lives.

SRG SSR, as the Swiss public service media, underwent progressive centralisation and the expansion of both its mandate and offering. While first forbidden from creating news programmes, it served to build an initial federal cultural policy in the face of propaganda from abroad in the lead-up to World War II. Originally a decentralised federation of local radios, it developed television around regional units. The tension between financial constraints and audience expectations led to numerous reorganisations. An expansion of the overall programme offering in Switzerland, provided by SRG SSR, other media from abroad through satellite and cable, and pirate radios, led to a progressive liberalisation and the dual public service system that exists to this day: a strong, national PSM and private local radio and television providers with a public service concession, in particular in news. SRG SSR formalised its collaboration with the film and music industries, thus anchoring its role as a promoter, producer and mediator of culture, the understanding of which evolved over time; a shift towards entertainment reflected audience preferences. The regulatory framing on a constitutional level was the process of a long development. Until 1984, the relevant constitutional basis was centred on infrastructure, rather than on a public sphere or a cultural policy approach. Since then, regulatory activity around mass media, including electronic media, has been regular, thus ensuring that the public participates in the discussion.

To stay relevant, SRG SSR needs to evolve as fast as the society it serves. The challenge is also cultural, within an organisation that faces budgetary limitations and must fight to create new openings. Power relations within the organisation mean that reallocating budgets to fit user behaviour, shifting from linear broadcast to the Internet and on-demand, and retraining staffers, are lengthy processes that require tactical directors, managers and innovative staff committed to public service. This is a challenge all PSM face: to tackle it, they develop and implement innovation strategies; in some cases, they use digital innovation labs, the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Future-proofing public service media: innovation labs and entertainment

Technique is only important insofar as you must master it in order to communicate what you see. Henri Cartier-Bresson

Technology doesn't follow culture so much as culture follows technology. New forms of expression naturally arise from new media, but so do new sensibilities and new behaviors. Tim Wu⁷⁰⁰

Why not premiere movies on Netflix the same day they're opening in theaters? Listen to the consumer; give the consumer what they want. Ted Sarandos

You can't change human nature, but you can change tools, you can change techniques. And that way, you can change civilization. Stewart Brand, referencing Buckminster Fuller

Introduction

In 1994, Jeff Bezos launched an online bookstore called Amazon.com. Selling books through the Web was considered a risky new business. Fast forward to 2020 and Amazon supplies a public cloud, the infrastructure backbone for a large share of the Internet, through its subsidiary Amazon Web Services (AWS).⁷⁰¹ What started as an online book retailer became the “everything store” (Stone, 2013), and is now one of the most valuable listed corporations in the world. It is a large provider of cultural goods and entertainment, a giant in infrastructure and logistics, and a source of arguments for revamping competition policy (Khan, 2017). How did Bezos, now one of the world’s wealthiest individuals, achieve this? His thinking can be traced in his annual letter to shareholders. In his 1997 letter, Bezos (1998) argues that there was a real sense of urgency calling for constant innovation, for Amazon to keep up with competitors and customers;⁷⁰² he refers to this letter in every subsequent annual letter to shareholders. In his 2017 letter to shareholders, Bezos makes the case that embracing external trends in technology is key for an organisation to stay relevant. He calls to act as if it still is “Day 1”⁷⁰³ even though the firm was by then a well-established

⁷⁰⁰ From Wu (2016, p. 315).

⁷⁰¹ Analysts estimate the AWS market share in the global public cloud market to be between 30-50%. As with most infrastructure, it only becomes visible when it fails. AWS outages may give the perception that the Internet collapses.

⁷⁰² Although Amazon is fundamentally different to PSM, they share one surprising commonality: a focus on the long term, although Amazon’s focus is on long term shareholder value rather than citizen or public value.

⁷⁰³ Jeff Bezos called upon his staff to work as if it was “day 1”, the beginning of the Amazon adventure, and not to get comfortable.

player in its original market. When asked what Day 2 would look like, he responds: “Day 2 is stasis. Followed by irrelevance. Followed by excruciating, painful decline. Followed by death. And that is why it is always Day 1.” About external trends in particular, he argues: “[t]he outside world can push you into Day 2 if you won’t or can’t embrace powerful trends quickly. If you fight them, you’re probably fighting the future. Embrace them and you have a tailwind” (Bezos, 2017, p. 1).

Some might consider that PSM are halfway through Day 2. Yet many within PSM are alarmed at this vision of their organisation’s decline and are hard at work to prevent it – or to make it future-proof.

The links between technology and culture are a recurring theme in this thesis. The previous chapter has shown how entertainment evolved with emerging technology, society’s use of these technologies and regulation. From the beginning and throughout their history, PSM have had to adapt to changing conditions (technological, economic, regulatory) and face the entry of new competitors. I therefore now discuss how public service media organisations keep up with the development of technologies and the practices and processes they imply. In recent years, many PSM have established internal innovation teams, in some cases called “labs”. These labs are only one of several approaches to innovation at a PSM; yet their creation signals a clear management intention to address the need for embracing external trends and an implicit shift towards entertainment from a reception perspective centred on enjoyment. This chapter thus explores innovation labs at PSM, their mission and activities.⁷⁰⁴

The emergence of digital labs at PSM fits in a broader trend of the development of public sector innovation labs, as governments face raising citizen expectations and increasing complexity. Some argued that labs were “on the path to becoming a pervasive part of the social infrastructure of modern public organisations” (Carstensen & Bason, 2012, p. 5); yet as an internal change agent, these units also face the challenge of established power relations.

Innovation is also an imperative for the legitimisation of PSM, as the neoliberal, pro-market argument against PSM is strengthened by technological disruption and an apparent disconnect between audiences and PSM (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2014). Contextual evolutions in conditions and practices may lead to a disconnect between the ideal and the practice of public service media. Karen Donders (2019) describes this disconnect in six areas of the organisation’s relation to: audiences; other public institutions; competitors; government; digital; the organisation itself. To a certain extent, these disconnects reflect a normal tension, as an ideal is something one strives

⁷⁰⁴ Such labs can be referred to as “innovation labs” or “digital labs”. This may represent a different focus; it may also reflect an organisational logic and internal legitimacy.

for. Yet, they are points PSM managers ought to pay attention to. The disconnect with the audience relates to connection, particularly with younger audiences and minorities within society. The disconnect with other public institutions relates to the challenges of collaborations with PSM on issues such as culture and education; the different sizes and budgets between a PSM, a local library, a museum and a university may make the collaboration difficult. The disconnect with competitors refers to the challenges of working with commercial media for PSM aiming at generating economic value for partners that may lobby against the PSM when its mandate is up for renewal. The disconnect with digital refers to the financial and organisational challenges of the transformation needed to be adapted to the digital era. The disconnect with the organisation itself refers to how PSM can harm their own case by acting in a manner that is not coherent with their discourse or their mandate. These disconnects are strategic or operational threats that the organisation must face; an innovation lab may contribute to this task.

Public service media face the catch 22 situation of their audiences moving online and to social networks, and their public service remit only partially covering digital activities. It is a fundamental shift from a radio system to a network system, in the categories of Flüsser (2006). In the process, public service broadcasters reinvented themselves as public service media (Cunningham, 2015). The pressure on PSM is reinforced by competition for attention from providers that focus entirely on the digital experience, without a public service remit and fewer restrictions imposed by media policy objectives (data protection, diversity, serendipity or other). The rise of digital pure players raises audience expectations, notably in regard to simplicity and enjoyment. If the PSM does not proactively adapt and meet user expectations, its justification for a licence fee funding may be undermined.

The previous chapter proposed the notion that public service media and innovation historically went hand in hand; both in the exploration of technologies and in studying how best practices abroad lead to better technologies, standards and the development of media-adapted formats, and notably the trend to entertainment. Innovation, as described in this chapter, is thus not new in itself, but how it is implemented and supported in a structured manner may be: from a separate research and development department in the past to the current labs supporting an innovation process throughout the organisation. While the R&D department may not disappear, the creation of labs building on a network within the organisation may be an intermediate state towards the whole PSM adopting an innovation function within its regular operations. As discussed in the previous chapter when considering the development of radio, television and the Internet in Switzerland, PSM managers were attentive to developments of leading

public service media abroad and the BBC in particular (Ganz-Blättler & Mäusli, 2016; Schade, 2015, 2018). The exploration of new technology took part largely in cooperation with other public actors, including the Federal Polytechnic School and the Swiss Post, Telephone and Telegraph organisation (Ganz-Blättler & Mäusli, 2016). Thus, innovation in public service media is not new: rather, it is constitutive of its history and development. The novelty is a unit tasked with favouring innovation throughout the organisation, beyond a focus on technology, and the processes it facilitates.

This chapter explores the roles labs play within public service media to ensure that the organisation can fulfil its mission now and in the future, on both a strategic and an operational level. Labs have emerged as a common strategy for PSM to drive innovation over the past decade, making them a relevant object for the study of innovation at PSM; yet, it is not the only approach to innovation, and some PSM have moved beyond labs, as this chapter shows. This research proposes a set of roles for PSM innovation labs, stressing their diversity in regard to their scope and mission, in how they collaborate with partners within and outside of the PSM and the labs' value proposition. In particular, I discuss innovation lab missions, results and governance. Furthermore, I show how labs may represent an implicit recognition of the importance of a shift towards PSM entertainment, including in providing information.

This chapter is structured in five parts. First, I introduce the concepts of innovation and labs in the public sector and in media; I draw a parallel between the paradigm shift from government-centric to user-centric with the media shift from broadcasting to reception. Next, I present the conceptual model used to research innovation labs in public service media organisations, building on the public service entertainment model. Following a discussion of the methodological approach, I review and analyse the key empirical findings. Lastly, in analysing the findings, I present a typology of roles of PSM innovation labs, before concluding by describing the practical implications of this research.

5.1. Framing the issue

In the discourse around public media, there is a sense of urgency due to the digital challenge. However, the discourse arguing that digital disruption is an unheard-of level of crisis within PSM may be exaggerated. It can be argued that PSM are in a state of permanent, ongoing crisis and urgency; discussing the case of Australia's ABC, Craig (2000) argues for embracing the crisis that essentially reflects a social crisis, as PSM should "generally provide spaces for, and in turn articulate, the ongoing 'crisis' which always constitutes the public life of a society" (p. 113).

This is not to say that there is no challenge at hand. In fact, the digital transformation is largely seen as an additional complexity for a large organisation; in particular for media organisations, which saw the third channel, the Internet, emerge after radio and television. This shift represents a different logic, that of networks as opposed to broadcasting. To put it in the words of the founding team of the United Kingdom's government transformation team GDS,⁷⁰⁵ “[f]aced with the digital revolution, many people working in large organisations instinctively see its consequences as another layer of complexity. To some of them, digital promises a better fax machine, a quicker horse, a brighter candle. In fact, digital is about applying the culture, practices, business models and technologies of the internet era to respond to people’s raised expectations. It is not a new function. It is not even a new way of running the existing functions of an organisation, whether those are IT or communications. It is a new way of running organisations.” (Greenway, Terrett, Bracken, & Loosemore, 2018, p. X). In the UK government, this new way of running public organisations was introduced through the revamping of the government’s website. This led, in turn, to rethinking processes and the delivery of public services. This chapter therefore considers other forms of public sector innovation labs, beyond public service media labs; both because they share some common challenges, and because there is existing research on government digital labs and on media innovation.

In the context of media, the increasing importance of technology across the board can be framed as follows: “although the media industry reflexively defines itself by its content-creation activities, it is as much a technology industry as a content-creating one” (Küng, 2013, p. 9). In media as in other sectors, innovation may require asking uncomfortable questions. A candid internal assessment of a major legacy media organisation is rarely a document that is published, if it even exists. The internal innovation report of *The New York Times*, which was leaked to *Mashable* in 2014 (Abbruzzese, 2014), is interesting because it presents the internal reflections of a major legacy media outlet in the face of the digital transition. The authors of the report observed: “[o]ur core mission remains producing the world’s best journalism. But with the endless upheaval in technology, reader habits and the entire business model, The Times needs to pursue smart new strategies for growing our audience. The urgency is only growing because digital media is getting more crowded, better funded and far more innovative” (p. 3). The internal team formulated recommendations on two levels: audience development as a means to ensure that *The New York Times’* journalism reaches more people; and strengthening the newsroom for a digital era, including the

⁷⁰⁵ The Government Digital Service was originally founded to rebuild the UK government’s website, gov.uk.

integration of a strategy team to support the newsroom leadership. Both *The New York Times* and PSM are strong media brands with a long history. This is both a strength and a weakness: “[t]he habits and traditions built over a century and a half of putting out the paper are a powerful, conservative force as we transition to digital – none more so than the gravitational pull of Page One” (p. 7). The equivalent to *The Times*’ Page One at a PSM may be the schedule and the prime-time slot: the questions asked within a large, legacy media organisation apply to PSM, a legacy media, or in varying forms to any large incumbent organisation.

The public and regulated sectors specifically may face shared challenges in adapting to technological changes. Four main reasons can be highlighted. First, the sector is regulated and therefore cannot necessarily and swiftly take full advantage of the opportunities technology offers. Second, while regulation may protect existing actors and industries from competition, the comfort regulatory protection offers may prevent them from adapting early for fear of change and cannibalisation.⁷⁰⁶ Third, there is an argument to be made that the public sector should not necessarily be the early adopter of each technology, but rather learn from first experiences in the private sector before defining a clear use case. Fourth, technological innovation implies rethinking processes, cultures and practices, a challenge for any large organisation, and perhaps more so in the public sector.

In the next section, I define innovation, review existing research on labs in the public sector, discuss media innovation and address the notion of public value, and in particular the relevance of Moore’s strategic triangle for this chapter. I use the term “innovation lab”, rather than another term such as “digital lab”, as the former is more generic.⁷⁰⁷

5.1.1. Defining innovation

Innovation is a much-used term with numerous definitions. I address the concept and briefly discuss relevant literature from innovation management and innovation policy. Beyond the literature, both policymakers and practitioners have developed

⁷⁰⁶ Beyond the public sector, and on the point of regulated industries or industries that are protected by regulations such as intellectual property and with lobbying power, one occasionally cited example of this is the adult entertainment industry versus the traditional motion pictures industry. In the context of entertainment and piracy, the former is not protected by regulations and policymakers to the same extent the latter is. Thus, it has been argued that the adult entertainment industry was an early adopter of online payment and other technological developments, perhaps due to a lack of lobbying power in Congress. Notably, alternative strategies were developed, such as providing experience goods (Darling, 2013).

⁷⁰⁷ I made this choice even though the EBU group refers to the labs as “digital labs”. The term “digital” is sometimes preferred because it then fits more clearly into an organisational chart, as opposed to “innovation”. This point is illustrated in the analysis.

conceptualisations of innovation. I also discuss research on media innovation specifically.

Innovation research

In scholarly research, there are three approaches to innovation: sociocultural, economic, and constructivist (Storsul & Krumsvik, 2013). Schumpeter's creative destruction concept, whereby creative innovation leads to competition that destroys companies and an existing order, laid the ground for sociocultural models. These models address the interrelation of innovation and their historical context. Economic innovation models focus on the competitive approach to innovation in markets. Constructivist models of innovation centre on the innovation process and the role technology plays in the process.

Open innovation is a research and development practice that can be defined as "a paradigm that assumes that firms can and should use external ideas as well as internal ideas, and internal and external paths to market, as the firms look to advance their technology" (Chesbrough, 2003, p. XXIV). It opposes a concept of closed innovation conducted by internal research and development laboratories to a networked, open process working with internal and external stakeholders, illustrating the permeability of the frontiers of a firm. This is particularly relevant for public organisations delivering public value, as they involve citizens in co-defining the public value or co-creating services.⁷⁰⁸ They may also consider involving private players or the academic sector.

Innovation defined by policymakers

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005) developed a definition of innovation that is often used by policymakers. The organisation identified four types of innovation: product; process; marketing; organisational. A product innovation improves a service or product in its technical specifications, in its software or other functionalities. A process innovation is an improved production or delivery process. A marketing innovation relates to an improvement in packaging, placement, promotion or pricing, or in the product design. An organisational innovation relates to an improved method, practice, workplace organisation or relations to external parties. While not specific to media, this definition

⁷⁰⁸ This co-creation may not necessarily focus on the exact contents, as media content are experience goods and in some cases merit goods. It may rather be concentrated on guidelines or software. Public hackathons are one way of sharing internal challenges with a crowd of motivated external individuals to work with staffers on developing prototype solutions.

is relevant for innovation labs because it shows that innovation goes beyond technology, which it sometimes is confused with. This has organisational consequences: innovation goes beyond the research and development and the information technology departments. This definition reflects the variety of types of innovation; also, because having been produced by the OECD, it is widely recognised and used by public sector practitioners and policymakers.

Applied to media industries, this definition is interesting because it shows that a media organisation can innovate in all four dimensions, as well as at any point on its value chain. Thus, a new type of programme is not the only possible innovation in media. This can be illustrated using the case of Netflix. The company innovated by putting the video club online: you ordered a DVD on their website and it was delivered to you via mail; this was a product (service) innovation. To ensure smooth delivery of streaming content, Netflix set up its own Content Delivery Network (CDN),⁷⁰⁹ an innovation in process. By introducing a subscription fee for accessing its VOD catalogue, it added a marketing innovation in pricing. In a much-discussed deck on the company's culture, Netflix presented its vacation policy: "No Vacation Policy Doesn't Mean No Vacation", whereby employee vacation is not limited to a fixed number of days per year; this is an organisational innovation.

Beyond innovation within an organisation, the public sector plays a role in fostering innovation in the economy and in society. For instance, and on a broader scale, Marianna Mazzucato (2015) argues strongly for the public sector to make technological bets and foster innovation.⁷¹⁰ Innovation is a keyword that is the object of reports by public institutions such as the OECD (e.g. OECD, 2005) or the European Commission (e.g. Mazzucato, 2018); they typically aim to foster innovation as a driver of economic growth. Furthermore, innovation is viewed as instrumental in tackling large, complex challenges including climate change.

Innovation conceptualised by practitioners

Practitioners have created numerous models to structure strategy development approaches. Management consulting firms are particularly active in developing innovation frameworks. As an illustration, I address the Doblin model (Keeley et al., 2013) and the Innovation Ambition Matrix by Monitor Group (Tuff & Nagji, 2012). The latter charts an innovation on the two dimensions of offering (new versus existing) and

⁷⁰⁹ A CDN is a physical infrastructure that allows for faster loading times for digitally distributed content (Lobato, 2019).

⁷¹⁰ She specifically discusses IT, biotech, nanotech and green tech.

markets (new versus existing). These two dimensions mark circles from the core, optimising the current offering, to adjacent innovation, allowing expansion into new areas, to transformational innovation, creating new markets. This model is typically used by large firms to manage their portfolio of innovation projects, and to identify transformational bets as opposed to core improvements. It builds on management research and on the notion of disruptive innovation, which was introduced by Clayton Christensen (1997) and refers to innovations that generate new markets and disrupt existing ones.⁷¹¹ An innovation that leads to an improvement without being disruptive is thus an incremental innovation. The argument is that an incumbent has a limited capacity for implementing disruptive innovation, as it thereby would disrupt its own business model (also called cannibalisation).⁷¹²

The Doblin model considers ten types of innovation (Keeley et al., 2013). They span from the internal functioning of a firm (profit model; network; structure; process) through the product and service offering (product performance; product system) to the customer experience (service; channel; brand; customer experience). This model takes a holistic approach to the value chain of a firm and the different points that can be optimised or transformed.

While interesting for practitioners, these definitions centre on the value chain and do not address explicitly the organisational transformational challenge that PSM face. They are relevant to this research to the extent that innovation management is a reflexive practice and PSM innovation leaders work with such conceptualisations to develop their work.

Innovation in media

Media innovation may be specific and has been the object of scholarly research and conceptualisation. I now turn to the discussion on innovation in media. By definition, creative industries aimed for innovation. They create, imagine, reinvent: “[t]raditionally, the bulk of innovation inside media organisations has been associated with content creation, and to a certain extent this will always be the case” (Küng, 2013, p. 10). However, innovation increasingly involves technological innovation beyond content. Netflix and Pixar are two prime examples of firms that successfully harnessed technology to captivate an audience’s attention.

⁷¹¹ It builds on Joseph Schumpeter's (1942) discussion of creative destruction.

⁷¹² Perhaps the most commonly example used is that of Kodak, who's business was selling film, which led the firm to miss out on the emergence of digital photography. This strategic failure led to the company's downfall.

Lucy Küng (2013) identifies three forms of innovation in the media industry: incremental innovations; architectural innovations; discontinuous innovations. Incremental innovations are improvements to existing systems or processes. Architectural innovations are based on minor technological changes that lead to major changes, such as the introduction of VOD. Discontinuous innovations use new factors such as systems or competencies, to fundamentally break with previous processes, systems, products. This category includes disruptive innovations, which disrupt markets through technological changes, such as the emergence of forums and chat rooms.

Furthermore, Leyla Dogruel (2013) identifies four cumulative characteristics for a media innovation based on findings from the economics and sociology of innovation: “newness (1), economic or societal exploitation (2), communicative implications (3) and a complex social process (4)” (p. 39). This definition aims at encompassing all dimensions of innovation, including in product and process, as well as its broader implications for society or the economy. In line with critical views on innovation, Steensen (2013) stresses the distinction between invention and innovation, the latter influenced by socio-economic factors. Indeed, a technological innovation may only become a product innovation decades later.

Beyond the degree of change implied by an innovation, one can consider its focus point. A typical duality is that of products and processes. Moving beyond it, Francis and Bessant (2005) also consider market positioning and business model. These four categories largely reflect those defined by the OECD. Addressing media innovation, Storsul and Krumsvik (2013) build on these four types to include social innovation.⁷¹³ They consider business model innovation to be paradigmatic innovation, which I rename organisation innovation. According to Dogruel (2014), this variety of objects of media innovation shows that technology is not the only driver of change. I consider that social innovation reflects the special role of PSM. I adapt these five types of media innovation in the context of PSM as illustrated in the following table.

⁷¹³ In this context, public service media may play a leading role in tackling wicked problems such as disinformation or the sustainability of media with their ecosystem, as illustrated later in this chapter.

Table 21: Five types of media innovation

Type of innovation	Definition	Example in PSM context
Product innovation	An evolution of the service or product	In the context of PSM, this can be illustrated by exploring new storytelling formats using social media, for instance, NRK's highly successful <i>Skam</i> .
Process innovation	A change in the manner in which the product or service is delivered or created	In the context of PSM, this may include innovating in the integration of user-generated content.
Position innovation	A change in the positioning of a product	In the context of PSM, this could mean repositioning a channel to attract a specific audience.
Organisation innovation	A change in the values, business model or culture of the organisation	In the context of PSM, this includes the downsizing of internal production teams to work with the independent television sector; or the shift from a linear schedule thinking to one centred on VOD.
Social innovation	An innovation that pursues a social objective	In the context of PSM, this means expanding the use of products and services for social needs.

Developed based on Storsul and Krumsvik (2013)

Storsul and Krumsvik (2013) identify ten key factors that influence innovation in a media organisation, both internal and external: “(1) technology, (2) market opportunities and user behaviour, (3) behaviour of competitors, (4) regulation, (5) industry norms, (6) company strategy, (7) leadership and vision, (8) organisational structure, (9) capacity and resources, and (10) culture and creativity” (p. 18). These remind us of the levels of the industrialisation of culture framework, particularly the conditions of regulation, technology and economics.

Using the levels of the industrialisation of culture framework by Havens and Lotz (2016), product, process and position innovation fit into the “practices” and “texts” levels. Social innovation fits within “social trends, trends & traditions”, “mandates”, “conditions”, “practices” and “texts”. Organisation innovation fits in the level of “mandates”, “conditions”, and “practices”. Thus, transformation takes place in organisation innovation or social innovation, while process, product and position innovation lead to relatively incremental changes. Furthermore, product innovation is viewer facing, while process innovation is typically internal or at the margins of the organisation. A change in one level can transform other levels. Expanding the

mandate may lead to rethinking practices and texts. Likewise, moving to a new physical building may be an opportunity to rethink the organisation's practices and conditions.

Innovation and PSM

Overall, innovation at PSM can be addressed from several angles: innovation as a corporate value; the role the PSM plays as an innovator on the domestic media market; and innovation in its programmes, particularly in entertainment. Innovation has become a key value for organisations and is often integrated in the corporate vision, including in public service media. The management consulting industry and business thought leaders use innovation as a buzzword; therefore, it is important to maintain a critical view on the use of the term. Yet, as such, innovation labs are a tangible dimension of innovation as a corporate value, provided they are equipped with sufficient legitimacy and support, as well as operational capabilities. One regular criticism of corporate innovation describes it as “innovation theatre”, or it being used in a “corporate script”; this echoes a broader criticism of research on innovation as building on a “pro innovation bias” (Godin & Vinck, 2017).

Public service media organisations are also concerned by innovation as a corporate value, both on a corporate level and in developing content. Innovation is often mentioned in the PSM mandate (Cunningham, 2015). It may also be expressed in strategy documents; for instance, DR's dogmas, which drive its fiction production include the notion of innovation: “DR Fiction focuses on innovation in repertoire, production processes and staff through collaboration between the Senior Editorial Board and HR” (quoted by Redvall, 2013, p. 69). Corporate strategies of PSM increasingly integrate the value “innovation” as a means to better respond to audience expectations.

Beyond the discussion around innovation as a PSM corporate value, scholars have addressed how digital innovation relates to power. Maria Michalis (2016) argues that the focus on innovation in media policy, centered around technology, could have the negative impact of strengthening first mover advantages in oligopolistic industries. Ruth McElroy and Caitrona Noonan (2018) discuss the threats and opportunities that digital technologies afford small nation broadcasters and how this relates to power asymmetries, using the case of Irish language broadcaster TG4 and Welsh S4C. Stuart Cunningham (2015) argues that it is the forays of PSM in innovation in digital services that led to the constraint of *ex ante* public value tests. In the context of national markets, PSM can play the role of a market organiser, namely by setting standards

and ensuring innovation in procurement (Cunningham, 2015), thus repositioning the PSM as a leading player in the digital national markets that further supports the creative industries. It may in particular play a role in fostering media entrepreneurship (Khajeheian & Tadayoni, 2016). Specifically, Cunningham (2015) argues for repositioning the role of PSM innovation as a facilitator for experimentation in research and development for the national media system; thus, PSM innovation is essentially technical innovation impacting the domestic broadcasting system, and innovation in programmes and services.

To summarise, innovation is increasingly heralded as a corporate value, including at PSM. It is the object of research in its own right, research in management practice, and policymaking. In a definition referred to regularly by policymakers, the OECD proposed that innovation fits into four types: product; process; marketing; organisational innovation. An innovation in any of the four types may fit anywhere on the spectrum from incremental to disruptive innovation. Innovation can be conducted as either closed or open, where open innovation mobilises an ecosystem of external partners. In the specific context of media, and PSM particularly, I consider five types of innovation described in the previous table: product innovation; process innovation; position innovation; organisation innovation; social innovation. I now turn to discussing labs in the public sector, which have been more broadly studied than public service media innovation labs.

5.1.2. Labs in the public sector: Digital government units and innovation labs

Viewers who wish to watch content online or on the go now have a broad choice. Portals such as Netflix set the bar high in terms of user experience, let alone through their extensive catalogue and original programming. This experience leads viewers to expect no less than the best user experience from all media. This challenge exists for all public sector organisations as well. To follow the digital leaders, public service media organisations are investing in their continuous digital development in a manner that fits their mandate. In considering the success of such transformation programmes, it is useful to study how the public sector more broadly adapts to the digital transition. I address two points: the notion of government as a platform, introduced by Tim O'Reilly, and digital government units, modelled on the UK's Government Digital Service and tasked with leading the government's digital transformation.

Government as a platform

First, technologists have introduced the notion of government as a platform: “[b]eing a platform provider means government stripped down to the essentials. A platform provider builds essential infrastructure, creates core applications that demonstrate the power of the platform and inspire outside developers to push the platform even further, and enforces ‘rules of the road’ that ensure applications work well together” (O’Reilly, 2011, p. 37). Following the publication of an article by Tim O’Reilly (2011),⁷¹⁴ the notion of the government as a platform has gained momentum. In this view, public administrations must learn from the success of platforms in mobilising a multitude of actors to create services. Furthermore, platforms collect tremendous amounts of data and exploit them to develop new services for their users (Algan et al., 2016). For O’Reilly (2011), the existing model of government can be described as a vending machine, in which citizens pay taxes and expect services. No participation is available other than periodical elections, and protests. As an alternative he proposes the image of the government “as the manager of a marketplace” (p. 15). A successful platform is the digital equivalent to a marketplace: examples include the personal computer, the World Wide Web, and the iPhone. In this sense, a platform can be understood as a basic infrastructure, somewhat like the interstate highway system or navigation satellites. This infrastructure in turn allows private sector investment to deliver services.

Table 22: Two models of government

	Vending machine	Marketplace
Choice	Small	Large
Prices	High	Competitive
Menu of options	Determined beforehand	Provided by a large number of sellers
Vendors	One / limited	Many / community
Role of government	First mover of civic action	Convener and enabler

Based on O’Reilly, 2011, p. 15

Tim O’Reilly identifies seven key principles for government as a platform, namely: openness, simplicity, participation, learning from hackers, data mining, experimentation and leading by example (Margetts & Naumann, 2017). These principles are largely reflected in the labs’ ethos discussed next and are as such

⁷¹⁴ “In a nutshell: the secret to the success of bellwethers like Google, Amazon, eBay, Craigslist, Wikipedia, Facebook, and Twitter is that each of these sites, in its own way, has learned to harness the power of its users to add value to-no, more than that, to co-create-its offerings » (O’Reilly, 2011, p. 13).

relevant to the context of PSM as well. The notion of platform applied to government shares commonalities with the discussion around PSM platforms and public service content. This relates to the relationship between a PSM and its private competitors, both in regard to platform and content.⁷¹⁵ Furthermore, this discussion highlights the value of mobilising the crowd and the evolving role of the producer.⁷¹⁶

Digital and innovation government labs

Beyond public service media, the public sector faces increasing user expectations in their interactions with their administration. The public sector however appears to be largely burdened by technical and cultural legacy systems (Clarke, 2017). Thus, it does not always satisfy these heightened expectations, as users see organisations outside the public sector providing smoother, more personalised digital services.⁷¹⁷ To respond to this challenge, some public sector organisations have created digital government labs or innovation labs, two types of structures I now review starting with digital government labs. This discussion of public sector labs is relevant to this chapter for three reasons. First, PSM are also public organisations and they draw their legitimacy from providing services to citizens; both PSM and governments are expected to act in the public interest. Second, the overall organisational and delivery challenges are similar. Third, government labs were the object of more academic research than PSM labs. One major difference though is that PSM face greater competition than governments in delivering services; public administration typically have a monopoly in their territory.

In 2011, the United Kingdom government created its Government Digital Service (GDS) unit. This team, reporting to the Prime Minister's office, leads the digital transformation of the UK government. This model has since been replicated in a number of public administrations, including in Australia, Canada and the United States. As described by Amanda Clarke (2017), these digital government units share a common orthodoxy, including “agile, user-centric design, open-source technologies, pluralistic procurement, data-driven decision-making, horizontal ‘platform’ based solutions and a ‘delivery-first’ ethos” (p. 1), inspired by practices from the technology sector. These teams pursue the objective of ensuring that technological developments are used in a manner that corresponds to the public service and is worthy of the public's trust. In opposition to traditional approaches to e-government practices, digital

⁷¹⁵ This includes for example the issue of distribution of public service content provided by a PSM through private media platforms as well as the access of private media to the PSM portal to distribute their content.

⁷¹⁶ See the discussion in chapter two.

⁷¹⁷ Citizens expect similar level of digital service quality as from technology firms.

government units “couple pluralistic procurement practices with in-house talent recruitment and government-led development of digital services, versus solutions which rely primarily on provision from non-governmental actors” (Clarke, 2017, p. 2). The two paradigms are described in the table below.

Table 23: Traditional approaches to government IT versus current digital government orthodoxy

Traditional Approaches to Government IT (‘e-government’)	Current Digital Government Orthodoxy
Waterfall design, the long release cycle	Agile, iterative design
Government-centric (focused on adhering to internal government standards, processes and needs)	User-centric (focused on identifying user needs, and tailoring government standards and processes around these needs)
Limited reliance on data in decision making and design	Heavy reliance on data-driven decision making and design
Managing legacy contracts with a small number of big IT providers	Building in house and procuring with a competitive, pluralistic marketplace
Favours proprietary solutions	Favours open source solutions
Siloed (‘one use’, department/initiative specific project development and IT management)	Horizontal, platform models (‘multiple use’, whole of government project development and IT management)
Risk-averse, process-first, hierarchical organizational culture	Hacker, delivery-first, ‘flatter’ organizational culture

From Clarke, 2017, p. 10

It is relevant to understand and describe these two paradigms, as they emerged from the field of software development and information technologies’ strategy. These paradigms have been applied more broadly, leading to these concepts being used by innovation practitioners. The trend is to a fundamental shift from a government-centric to a user-centric approach. The thinking described as the current digital government orthodoxy underlies the innovation ethos, whether or not it is applied to an IT project: agile, open source, collaborative, a focus on culture, and user-centricity.

This ethos reflects a shift from the view of a citizen as a “subject” of the state to a view of the citizen as a “client” of the state. The emergence of such digital government units to drive the digital transformation agenda of governments, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries, may be observed within a range of public sector organisations. The orthodoxy described by Clarke (2017) can be observed at digital innovation units in hospitals, employment offices or public service media. Large organisations can separate their IT department into two approaches, in a practice called “bimodal IT”:

one focusing on predictability and optimisation, and the second centred around exploration and experimentation; labs, to the extent that they work on technology, fit in this second approach. Indeed, while their field of action appears largely focused on information technologies, they typically go beyond IT in order to transform the organisation more profoundly. They build on a broad understanding of their mission and of their field of action: “digital is about applying the culture, practices, business models and technologies of the internet era to respond to people’s raised expectations” (Greenway et al., 2018, p. X).

Beyond digital labs, the public sector has also seen the emergence of innovation labs, with a slightly different orientation, as their focus is not necessarily on IT. Yet, they share the general philosophy of digital labs: they, too, are typically expected to perform with a startup ethos of relative speed, independence and creativity within the organisation. The ultimate aim being to bring out successful ideas, be it products or services, although the degree of maturity of an idea and its diffusion or industrialisation within the regular operations of the large organisation remains a challenge; this is the challenge of innovation transfer. Public sector innovation labs tend to aim at fostering “experimental government and rapid experimentation in policy design” (McGann et al., 2018, p. 249), with a strong focus on service design. After analysing 23 public sector labs, McGann, Blomkamp and Lewis (2018) organise them in four types: design-led labs, open government/data labs, evidence-based labs and mix-methods labs. These labs emerged in response to the trend of evidence-based policymaking,⁷¹⁸ open government strategies and increasing interest in design thinking applied to policymaking. Amongst several methodologies, design thinking has drawn particular attention in its application to policymaking (Clarke & Craft, 2019). The concept of public policy labs gained traction within the European Commission, which published a report mapping policy labs in member states (Fuller et al., 2016).⁷¹⁹

A challenge for digital or innovation labs certainly is the measurement of success: if minimising failure is the key metrics of most governmental agencies, that does not bode well with innovation teams that are expected to take risks and hence fail sometimes. Within a governmental agency, labs integrate the view that an earlier failure minimises costs, as opposed to a late, costly failure, or inadequate service that is not used by citizens.⁷²⁰ Methods used by labs typically build on design thinking (Brown, 2009), agile, or the lean startup approach (Ries, 2011). Acting as a support

⁷¹⁸ Nudges fit in this tradition. See Halpern (2015) on the case of the UK’s Nudge Unit.

⁷¹⁹ It is only one of the forms of innovation that the organisation supports: the Commission also supports a network of Living Labs, a research concept based on a user-centric open innovation paradigm integrating the public and private sectors, academia and civil society.

⁷²⁰ Getting this message across is arguably one of the essential tasks of an innovation lab.

function for the organisation's core business lines, innovation labs and digital labs may be closed down: it was the case for MindLab, one of the earliest and leading public sector innovation labs, founded in 2002 in Denmark,⁷²¹ which closed in late 2018.⁷²² Research on digital government labs, while relevant to this research, faces one specific limitation: it largely focuses on a limited set of government labs, and these are mostly Anglo-Saxon. This makes sense since there is to date no relevant association that groups these structures, which would make their identification easier. The literature on innovation labs in the public sector is, to this day, largely driven by practitioners and public interest organisations such as Nesta (for instance, Puttick, 2014, and Copeland, 2019, for Nesta).⁷²³ As public service actors serving citizens, a largely captive user base, public sector innovation labs appear to share experiences through organisations such as the OECD (through its Observatory on Public Service Innovation, OPSI), or in the case of public service media, the EBU.⁷²⁴ Labs regularly practice knowledge exchange in more or less formalised networks: in France, *Le Lab des Labs* shares findings and best practices of 277 public and private labs (Foliot et al., 2019). Eventually, innovation within the public sector is about transforming systems and organisations from the inside and rethinking the boundaries of organisations. In this context, it faces the challenge of fulfilling expectations; the Centre for Public Impact argued in 2017 that we were at “peak lab” (Buerkli & Kaukab, 2017), referring to the Gartner Hype Cycle that hinted at a hype around innovation labs.⁷²⁵ This, in turn, raises the challenge of a centralised innovation unit, innovation transfer and the broader diffusion of a public innovation culture.

While it is relevant to consider the approach of digital government units, there are limitations to the comparison with innovation teams at PSM. As media organisations in a competitive market, PSM are more focused on content than are governments. Yet the shift in e-government from a government-centric to a user-centric paradigm echoes PSM's shift from a broadcast to a reception perspective. Likewise, the increasing use

⁷²¹ For a discussion of commonalities of major public sector innovation agencies, see Wyden Guelpa, Genoud and Genoud (2016).

⁷²² The closing of MindLab raises the question of the durability of the labs. Is it useful for a lab to last over time? Or is its mission rather to have a temporary existence in order to share certain approaches and methodologies before closing once it is considered to have been successful?

⁷²³ An innovation foundation based in the UK, Nesta was originally funded by the UK national lottery. It offers policy research, investment and partnerships to support innovation in several sectors.

⁷²⁴ In the field of television, Kuipers (2011) identifies the emergence of a transnational cultural field; in a study of cultural globalisation in four European countries, she finds that television buyers play the role of cultural intermediaries and contribute to creating transnational practices and quality standards throughout and into national cultural fields. In the field of innovation, organisations such as the European Commission support the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL), which represents similar transnational practices.

⁷²⁵ Gartner, an information technology advisory firm, produces a graphical presentation of the maturity and adoption of emerging technologies, which it calls the “Hype Cycle”.

of data across government departments to shape policy reflects PSM's audience research or audience insights team to shape programmes and their delivery.

However, these teams share similarly broad and evolutive perimeters. As support functions, they may have a temporary existence if they succeed or if they fail to diffuse a digital culture throughout their organisation. These teams may be terminated if they succeed because they may not be needed anymore, and if they fail, because they do not fulfil their mission.

Reflecting a broader shift in the understanding of government, the introduction of digital government units and innovation labs in policymaking reflect a stronger focus on user-centric approaches, co-creation and experimentation. Next to the public sector, PSM may be compared to other actors in the media industry. I now address labs in media.

5.1.3. Labs in media

Beyond PSM, the media sector has explored a lab approach. In the private economy as in the public sector, a commonly used metaphor is that a large organisation is a tanker and its innovation lab a speedboat. The latter can move faster, change directions, explore and bring back knowledge to the tanker to help it progressively and slowly adapt its trajectory.⁷²⁶

In a recent report published by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers WAN-IFRA, Nunes and Mills (2019) present the results of a four year multinational research project on media labs. Media labs are defined as conducting media R&D or working on media literacy. Specifically, the project maps 123 active labs and studies the practices and outputs of over 40 labs.⁷²⁷ The research focuses on innovation in journalism; it includes newspaper publishers as well as PSM (BBC, Deutsche Welle, France Télévisions, NRK, RAI, RTVE) and universities.⁷²⁸ The authors find that labs “tend to focus on three broad issues: developing and innovating products, practice and people” (p. 7); they include organisations as diverse as academic research centres, startup incubators and media R&D labs. They conclude that, while labs are very diverse in their mission and tools, “[l]abs create a space for thinking, doing things differently and working with technologies, people and processes beyond the confines of journalism” (p. 22). Their focus on research centres is interesting, stressing the opportunity for PSM to explore innovation with academia and/or entrepreneurs.

⁷²⁶ For an example of the use of this metaphor, see the presentation by Ezra Eeman, head of digital at EBU (2017), at the conference Media Fast Forward 2017.

⁷²⁷ Some case studies are published at: <https://media-innovation.news/media-labs/>.

⁷²⁸ 46% of the labs they mapped are hosted at universities, 31% at media companies.

Salaverría (2015) reviews 31 media labs and finds four types of labs focus points: developing applications and digital technologies; imagining multimedia storytelling and data journalism; promoting startups; training and media literacy. While these resources are interesting in studying the evolving practices of looking and industrial organisations, they do not reflect the mandate specificity of PSM.

PSM labs specifically have been the object of some research. Zaragoza-Fuster and García-Avilés (2020) present a comparative case study of RTVE Lab and BBC News Lab; they conduct content analysis and ethnographic research to observe participants in lab activities. Building on an extensive review of lab projects, they stress the challenge of innovation transfer to foster the contribution of the lab results to the PSM's diversity, universality and quality.

Considering the existing frontiers of organisations, this chapter focuses on labs hosted within public service media and contributes by mapping the diversity of innovation teams and labs at PSM. In studying innovation labs in the public sector, the notion of public value is promising. I now turn to discussing public value in the context of PSM and innovation.

5.1.4. Public value and the strategic triangle

The literature on public value has been reviewed in chapter two. There are broadly four approaches to public value: public value as paradigm; public value as rhetoric; public value as narrative; and public value as performance (Alford & O'Flynn, 2009). Public value as a paradigm refers to the idea of public value as the dominant post-New Public Management paradigm for public administration reform. Public value as rhetoric is a view that is critical of the concept of public value and argues that it is mainly used by public managers as a legitimising tool; this stream was particularly aimed at the BBC following the publication of its manifesto *Building Public Value* in 2004.⁷²⁹ Public value as a narrative refers to the use of stories by public managers as a management tool within the organisation to communicate its purpose. Public value as a performance refers to the use of public value for performance measurement or as a management framework.

In analysing the challenges and roles of innovation labs, Mark Moore's (1995) strategic triangle of public value is particularly relevant as innovation labs require demonstrating value to last, to maintain senior sponsorship and resources. I thus relate the notion of public value to both a narrative and a performance; I explicitly do not consider in this context *ex ante* tests for new PSM services, which were addressed in chapter two and

⁷²⁹ See BBC (2004); the report aims to imagine a BBC for a digital world as a contribution to the debate over the renewal of the Charter.

are reviewed by Gransow (2020).⁷³⁰ Relating innovation, particularly in digital services, and the introduction of *ex ante* public value tests in Europe, Cunningham (2015) argues that the notion of public value tests had constrained the innovation ability of PSM. I make a different use of the concept of public value in relation to innovation, using the conceptual tool of the strategic triangle; this model makes explicit the three actions of a (lab) manager to ensure his or her team's effective contribution, namely managing up (towards the authorising environment), managing down (towards the operational team), and evaluating the public value, or impact, of the organisation, in this case the innovation lab. Thus, it shows how managers not only respond to a mandate, but also actively shape both the authorising environment composed of politicians and the population, and the operational capabilities they invest in this mission. Eventually, the sustainability of a public media organisation overall depends on it demonstrating its public value; this in turn requires innovation. This is also the case for a lab as a support function. The success of a leadership team is linked to this result: Moore (1995) "equates managerial success in the public sector with initiating and reshaping public sector enterprises in ways that increase their value to the public in both the short and the long run" (p. 10). Public value can be contributed to by any team within an organisation, each manager facing his or her own strategic triangle (Bryson et al., 2014).

It is interesting to review the post-mortem published by Jesper Christiansen (2019) following the closure of Danish public innovation unit MindLab. The former team member argues for making explicit the trade-offs that are made regularly in setting up and running an innovation lab in the public sector. Specifically, he identifies four fields of tension: setting up the team; creating a mandate; managing activities; and supporting actions and decisions. These categories are close to the categories of the strategic triangle, demonstrating the relevance of this model for considering labs.

Thus, the public value strategic triangle is a relevant conceptual tool to approach the work of an innovation lab within a PSM; I discuss it further in the next section. Another use of the public value paradigm, applied as *ex ante* public value tests for new digital services, has arguably had a hampering effect on innovation (Cunningham, 2015); I do not use the tool of *ex ante* public value tests to the work of innovation labs. I now combine these elements to introduce a framework to address innovation labs in public sector media.

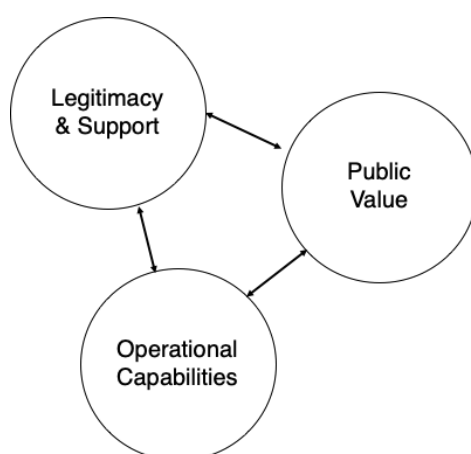
⁷³⁰ He stresses the variability of the concept's use in different PSM for public value tests.

5.2. PSM innovation teams in an evolving environment: constructing a framework

Previous research on labs in the public sector and in PSM has stressed the challenge of demonstrating a lab's impact and of ensuring its resources to fulfil its value proposition. To approach innovation labs, I consider both the manager's task of managing strategic and operational capabilities, and the team's activities along the five layers of PSM (creation, connection, curation, software, hardware) and five types of innovation (product, process, position, organisation, social).⁷³¹ With this in mind, I combine the strategic triangle for managing public value, along both the layers of a PSM and the types of innovation. This is the conceptual approach to innovation labs at PSM that structures the research presented in this chapter.

Given the labs' aim of supporting the delivery of public value, Mark Moore's (2013) model for managing to create public value, the strategic triangle, is of use to analyse the role innovation labs play. The strategic triangle model is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 13: The strategic triangle



From Moore (1995)

It displays the interplay of strategic and operational considerations to deliver public value in the case of a lab. The concept of public value was discussed in chapter two; I refer here to Benington's (2011) definition of public value, namely that which the public values and that which adds value to the public sphere.⁷³² Value is understood here in a broader sense than economic value, to include social and cultural value, political value, and ecological value. As labs tend to focus on user needs while defending the public service mission, this model appears a relevant frame of analysis. The model

⁷³¹ The layers model was discussed in chapter one. The types of innovation were introduced in the previous section.

⁷³² In the case of media goods, this can be understood both as what the public wants and expresses as a need and what the public discovers it wants; the latter refers to the merit good nature of media goods.

can be applied to the function of a lab manager, whether this role is centralised in one person or distributed across a team.

Managing the authorising environment means responding to the individuals, groups or organisations that provide legitimacy and support to the team in fulfilling its mission. In the case of a PSM organisation as a whole, that includes citizenry and elected officials. In the case of an innovation lab, this may be senior management (board, director-general, head of digital, chief editor, ...).⁷³³

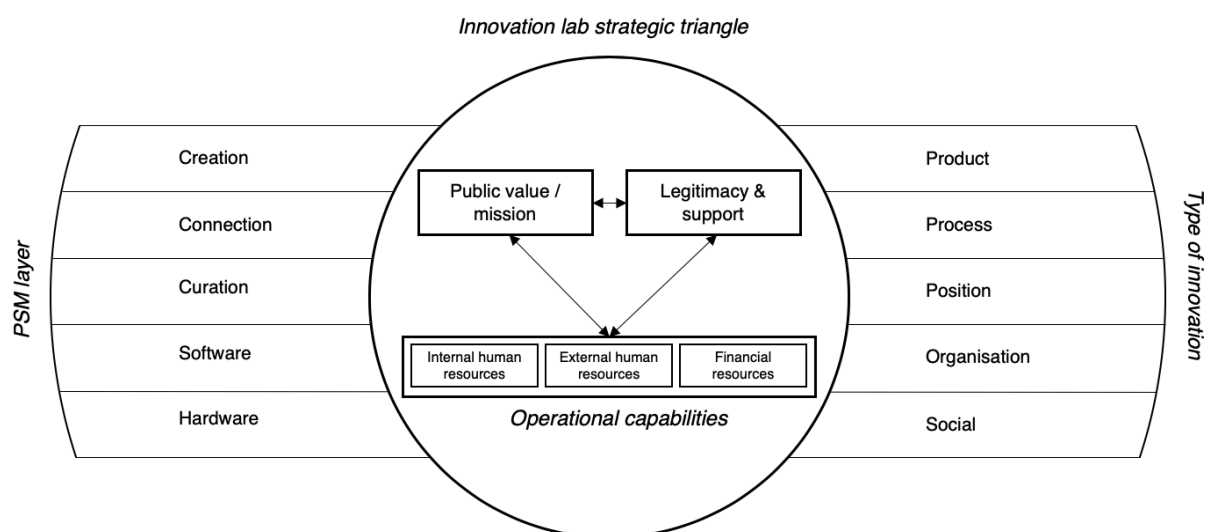
The operational capability describes the resources allocated to the unit, including human and financial, data and competencies. The operational capabilities may include players outside the organisation, making this model relevant to analyse a lab that works extensively with an ecosystem both within and outside the organisation. The internal ecosystem may include other departments, including editorial, technology, and marketing. The external ecosystem may include academics, startups, competitors, and end-users. In turn, enhanced public value strengthens both legitimacy and support, and operational capabilities.⁷³⁴

Looking beyond the interplay of managing legitimacy and support, I address the activities more precisely by building on the five layers of PSM introduced in chapter one, namely connection, curation, creation, software and hardware, while also considering innovation using the five types of innovation in media organisations. I complete the framework by detailing the operational capabilities as the human and financial resources. Human resources may be internal or external to the PSM, opening the analysis to include a network of actors (startups, academia, users, etc.) as operational capabilities; in the optic of open innovation, these capabilities are considered to include relations to the ecosystem such as startups and academic partners (external human resources). Within a PSM, resources may be internal to the team, or in other departments. Eventually, the aim of small innovation teams may be to multiply its impact by enlisting PSM colleagues. External human resources may be paid or compensated in another way (practical experience, prizes, visibility, etc.). The framework for mapping the field of action of PSM innovation labs is illustrated in the following figure.

⁷³³ Of particular relevance for this project is the role of industry executives, which appear in the practices layer of the industrialisation of culture framework. These are people “who play necessary roles in providing institutional support to creators to enable the development and circulation of media products” (Havens & Lotz, 2016, p. 156).

⁷³⁴ An overview of government digital labs has shown that legitimacy and support are essential to a continued activity of the unit.

Figure 14: PSM innovation labs framework



The centre of the model represents the public value strategic triangle, which displays the trade-offs a lab manager must handle. He or she must ensure operational capabilities, including financial and human resources and relations to the ecosystem. Ensuring legitimacy and support is central and is related to demonstrating the public value provided by the lab in fulfilling its mission.⁷³⁵ Each of these blocks interact. This representation has value in displaying the inherently iterative quality of this approach. I expect to find continuous learning and adaptation of innovation teams based on their experiences of what works and what does not work to maximise their impact.

In terms of scope and activities, a lab can be active on one, several or all five PSM layers. Likewise, it can conduct any of five types of innovations. An approach categorising innovation intervention makes sense, since innovation is at the heart of a lab's mission. Furthermore, rather than listing the layers and types of innovation a lab conducts, it may be relevant to consider which they do not address and the reasons for this policy, such as internal responsibility and legitimacy, or lack of resources and expertise. These layers and types of innovation are best explored by considering projects, rather than the lab in abstraction of its operations.

The data collection aims to map the activities of the innovation lab, rather than of the organisation overall. With a view to innovation transfer and to the extent that a lab works as a support function to other teams, the distinction between the activities and innovation of a lab and of the PSM overall may not always be clear cut or relevant.

The eventual aim for an innovation lab is to contribute to the organisation's delivering public value and fulfilling its public service mandate.⁷³⁶ In this sense, the analytical

⁷³⁵ Addressing the lab's mission allows it to discuss the underlying theory of change and the team ethos.

⁷³⁶ The innovation model used is not one of fundamental, disruptive innovation. The hypothesis here is that based on their universalist mandate, PSM continue to serve existing markets and audiences. At the same time, they must

approach to the innovation labs builds on Moore's strategic triangle, whereby public value, legitimacy and support, and operational capabilities interact. Therefore, this framework for public media innovation labs allows it to address both strategic and operational dimensions with the aim of public value.

To sum up, I categorise the innovation activities as rather focused on product, process, position, organisation or social; and map them on the five layers of a PSM. I aim to understand how the innovation lab delivers public value, considering both the authorising environment for legitimacy and support, and the operational capacity in terms of financial and human resources. This framework drives the analytical approach and the research design described in the following sections.

5.3. Methodological considerations

In this section, I address methodological considerations, including research design, data collection, data analysis, and limitations.

5.3.1. Research design

General approach

Since there is limited comparative research on digital innovation units within public service media research, an exploratory research design is adapted. An exploratory research design allows the researcher to tackle a research question in a field in which limited previous research has been conducted. It does not aim to produce final results, but rather to explore the issue and map further avenues for research. It also develops an initial framework that ought to be relevant to practitioners. The framework introduced in the previous section was elaborated based on a review of existing literature on public sector innovation labs and on a preliminary documentary research, including websites, social media reports and profiles of PSM innovation labs; where relevant, I used government reports, PSM annual reports, presentations and press reviews (Rowley, 2002). Furthermore, an exploratory approach is iterative, calling for agility to adapt the research based on intermediary findings. This research is qualitative, a form of research that "aims for in-depth and holistic understanding, in order to do justice to the complexity of social life" (Punch, 2013, p. 238).

The most common method of primary data collection for exploratory studies is interviews. For this research, I conducted semi-structured interviews. They are adapted to this project covering internal innovation teams for which information is not

explore and innovate on the margins to be able to respond to developing technologies, competitive behaviours and evolving audience behaviours. The degree is thus more limited, sustaining or incremental.

always publicly available. The interview guidelines were prepared based on the framework introduced in the previous section and on a review of existing relevant research and secondary data sources. The study focuses on commonalities and differences amongst PSM innovation labs along the following dimensions: lab organisation & missions; value proposition & activities; focus (layer & type of innovation); legitimacy & support; public value. The following table presents the research process, detailing the data collection involved.

Table 24: Process for data collection

Step in the research process	Purpose	Procedure
Literature review, documentary research & framework conception	Identify gap and relevant theoretical approach	Review relevant literature and practitioners' publications
Draft interview guidelines	Apply the framework for data collection	Identify themes and structure questions that allow to gather qualitative data for analysis
Test & revise interview guidelines & framework	Ensure clarity of questions Enhance relevance of the research	Tested on two team members of innovation labs (non-PSM)
Initial invitation to participate	Invite relevant organisations to participate while presenting the research project and objectives	Email sent by EBU to relevant stakeholders at member PSM including an endorsement of the project
Targeted follow-up invitation	Complement the panel with particularly relevant organisations	Sent by researcher to particularly relevant labs; selection by researcher
Interviews	Collect qualitative data	Conducted via videoconferencing, in some cases complemented by follow-up information by email
Description	Producing the written description of the innovation teams and labs	Based on interview notes and recordings
Analysis	Analyse results	Identify commonalities and differences along selected themes
Validation of key elements	Reducing biases and reinforce the validity of findings	Sent key findings on lab to interviewees for review

The case selection and interview guidelines are worth specifically discussing in more detail.

Case selection

The case selection is driven by the research goal. In selecting labs for this research, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) was a natural partner. An alliance of public service media, the organisation has 73 members in 56 countries in Europe, as well as 34 associate members in Africa, America, Asia and Oceania as of July 2017. One of its missions is to provide a platform for sharing technological challenges. EBU acts as a platform to facilitate common developments by project teams across its member organisations.⁷³⁷ It also serves as a platform for shared strategic thinking through working groups, particularly on the digital transformation. The support of EBU for this research enhances the credibility of the research and the likelihood that busy participants agree to an hour-long interview; the use of a qualified introduction is recommended by Dexter (2006). One limitation of using this group however is that it is difficult to define *a priori* if the labs are operating as labs, or essentially communication structures.

The selection of cases was a combination of respondents to an invitation to participate in the research sent to a list of individuals at member organisations selected by EBU and a follow-up selection of labs that were deemed particularly relevant (four labs).⁷³⁸ The initial groups received an invitation to participate sent by the EBU digital community manager based on the organisation's assessment of the relevance for the participants.⁷³⁹ An additional four labs were directly contacted by the researcher because they were mentioned in other interviews as particularly relevant or because they came up in the documentary research; of these four labs, one is at an associate member.

While covering a range of different teams and models in this research, the focus is on internal teams within organisations, rather than external teams or fully independent teams that service several organisations as a supplier.⁷⁴⁰ It also includes organisations that had labs in the past, but which discontinued the teams.⁷⁴¹ Furthermore, there was no selection in the focus of labs included in the study; a focus on labs working on entertainment would have limited the sample size and biased the

⁷³⁷ A new working group on "News Innovation & Digital Empowering Access Subcommittee (News IDEAS)" was launched in March 2020. It aims to support the digital transformation of news services and the impact of platforms, social networks and new technologies. It also supports discussions with FAANGs. Website and membership: <https://www.ebu.ch/groups/news/news-ideas>.

⁷³⁸ Invitees included, but were not limited to, members of the digital storytelling labs EBU group. Respondents went beyond this group.

⁷³⁹ The full list of people the invitation was sent to was not shared with the researcher for confidentiality reasons.

⁷⁴⁰ The WAN-IFRA study (Nunes & Mills, 2019) takes an approach that includes notably a large number of academic labs.

⁷⁴¹ This sample biases towards PSM that have set up such teams. However, as some respondents represent PSM that closed down their lab and given the purpose of this research on innovation labs, the lack of PSM without a present or past lab does not reduce the validity or reliability of findings.

results with regard to the conceptualisation of entertainment in this thesis, which is broader than the general understanding of entertainment. Given the hypothesis that entertainment is central to the future of PSM, it was important to also gather insights about labs that focus on news and journalism in order to understand how their work relates to entertainment in reception.

The profiles of interviewees are varied, from project manager to lab director or head of digital. The diversity of profiles may limit the comparability across organisations but strengthens the validity of overall results as it provides a range of complementary perspectives on the challenges of innovation teams in different PSM contexts, including that of a journalist, manager, innovation coordinator or board member. Furthermore, organisations surveyed include PSM that currently have one or several innovation labs or teams as well as PSM that have closed their innovation lab; this allows us to gather a range of views on innovation labs as a tool rather than as a purpose in itself.

Interview guidelines

The semi-structured interviews were based on interview guidelines that structured the interview along key themes. However, the researcher used them not as a strict set of interview questions, but as an orientation to structure the conversation. One advantage of interviews over other forms of data collection is that they allow for additional questions if the original answer was unclear or opened relevant avenues for further exploration, particularly since many labs are based on projects; “[i]nterviewing is often important if one needs to know what a set of people think, or how they interpret an event or series of events, or what they have done or are planning to do” (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002, p. 673). One assumes that an interviewee tells the truth during an interview, which may be a limitation (Alvesson, 2003); in the context of innovation, one must remember that it is a performative action and that there may be a bias in storytelling around innovation. The interview allows to both gather facts and meaning. When using interviews, the researcher must proceed carefully as some questions may challenge or intimidate the interviewee (Yin, 2013). A disadvantage of the interview is the risk of asking leading questions as well as the practical challenge of time management. Further limitations are addressed below.

The interview guidelines are based on the framework. The topics and framework were discussed with the EBU coordinator, to ensure clarity and relevance. In several cases, additional documentation and follow-up information were made available by the interviewee after the discussion through email.

5.3.2. Data collection and analysis

The primary data collection took the form of videoconference-based semi-structured interviews. The interview guidelines can be found in appendix 2. They are divided in six parts:

1. General data on the interviewee and the lab
2. Activities (value proposition, clients, network)
3. Focus (PSM layer & type of innovation)
4. Legitimacy and support
5. Public value
6. Inspiration & external resources

The interview concluded with an open question on any additional information the interviewee would like to share. With a sample of 12 labs and a variety in the profile of respondents, I deem this a success for this exploratory research. The following table presents the list of surveyed innovation teams.

Table 25: List of participating organisations

PSM	Country	Team name
ABC	Australia	Content Ideas Lab
BBC	United Kingdom	BBC R&D Future Experience Technology
DW	Germany	DW Lab
ČRo	Czechia	Creative HUB
France TV	France	Medialab de l'information
NRK	Norway	NRKbeta
RTS	Switzerland	Labo numérique de la RTS
RTVE	Spain	RTVE Lab
SR	Sweden	Innovation team
VRT	Belgium	VRT Sandbox
YLE	Finland	YLE News Lab
ZDF	Germany	Department of New Media ⁷⁴²

The video conversations lasted between one and two hours. The video allowed the researcher to build rapport with the interviewee and to share the model near the end of the interview as a visual support.

The audio of the interviews was recorded, in agreement with the interviewees. The recordings are confidential; they were solely used for this research. Interviewees were senior executives, managers, coordinators or team members of PSM innovation labs.

⁷⁴² While ZDF did not institute a lab, it used lab approaches in projects, and is as such a relevant case to include in the research.

The interviewees are listed with their name, function and organisation in appendix 3, based on their agreement, thus fitting the requirements of informed consent and the protection of confidentiality (Yin, 2013). The interviews were mainly conducted in English; one was conducted in German (ZDF) and two in French (France Télévisions, RTS). The interviewees act both as respondents for their organisation and as experts on innovation at PSM. Non-attribution of quotes, beyond the description of the lab in the results section, allows a frank and open exchange.

Beyond the semi-structured interviews, additional data was collected for each lab. Secondary sources including publicly available interviews or conference profiles; filmed conference presentations; social media pages; lab websites; various PSM reports and documents, including leadership blog posts, annual reports and strategy documents.

The interview results were analysed to identify dominant themes and patterns in each dimension of the model, with the aim to identify commonalities and differences, as well as key tension issues. The grouping in dominant themes took place in several iterative rounds of refining.

5.3.3. Quality of research and limitations

Results must be evaluated in regard to reliability and validity to assess their relevance as a contribution to research. For applied research, it is also relevant to discuss the usefulness of research for practitioners. I discuss the quality of this research along the criteria of reliability and validity, as well as its usefulness for practitioners.

Reliability describes whether the same results can be obtained using the same method. Due to the conversational nature of a semi-structured interview, there is a risk of bias, caused either by the interviewer or the interviewee. To mitigate this risk, the interviewer followed the interview guidelines to structure the conversation. The guidelines also allow the researcher to address the same themes in all interviews, reducing the risk of orientating the conversation based on a lab's storytelling and public communication, while also adapting to each context.

Validity tests evaluate the research on several levels and relate to its credibility. External validity examines whether the results make sense and whether other causes are possible. The results are largely consistent with findings on public sector innovation labs and media innovation in regard to challenges and vocabulary.⁷⁴³ Internal validity examines the extent to which the research leads to a strong confidence in the findings. Given the exploratory nature of this research, the number of labs

⁷⁴³ They were discussed in the previous section

surveyed, the diversity of interviewee profiles and the use of secondary data sources, I argue that the results display internal validity, with the limitations that I describe below. One limitation in PSM case studies is that it may be difficult to gain access in a time of crisis, and hard to get beyond the success story management presents in times of success (Redvall, 2013). This is true of media companies in general, as they are experts at storytelling, which can be observed in the manner in which they present their vision, innovation, and recruiting. But it is particularly true for innovation labs: one limitation in this research design is that storytelling around a lab's own activity is central to spreading the culture of innovation throughout their organisation and mobilising colleagues towards the PSM's transformation. Mitigation of this storytelling is attempted by requesting examples of key projects. Yet, a lab remains performative in its action; by showing and telling, it contributes to its action, notably by legitimising specific approaches and methods. Thus, this is both a limitation and a core function of a lab, as discussed below in regard to the issue of communication. Additionally, and related to this limitation, digital lab members have a vested interest in presenting the lab's action in a positive light, as labs typically are temporary units and report to senior leadership often with unclear success metrics. This limitation can be summed up as a limit to validity through cognitive bias and an incentive to positive storytelling. In turn, this limitation can be mitigated by asking for examples of projects that illustrate the point being made. This is also mitigated by integrating in the sample three PSMs that have moved beyond the lab approach, which may thus have less incentives to defend this approach and make the case for labs. Conversely, an interviewee may also display an overly critical view of a past lab. Furthermore, innovation is an iterative and reflexive practice that tends to analyse its work in order to continuously experiment and improve. A lab does not remain the same over time; in this sense, a lab that has a continued existence may also share a critical analysis of its past activity and share continuous learnings. Additionally, by renouncing quotes, the researcher favours a frank and critical assessment by the interviewee.

Another limitation in regard to internal validity is the different context of each innovation lab within organisations with varied mandates operating in separate media systems and cultures (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), and thus different national contexts, competitive environments and regulatory regimes. An analysis of the mandate and context of each PSM is beyond the realm of this research.⁷⁴⁴ Furthermore, respondents had a variety of backgrounds and profiles; some differences in their perception and responses may thus be related to function or seniority.

⁷⁴⁴ For a comparison of the remit and funding of PSM in 17 countries, see for example Schweizer and Puppis (2018).

Beyond the media system, two further limitations in internal validity relate to culture. First, some documentary research was translated using automatic translation tools, which may lead to a loss of some substance and nuance. Second, cultural factors may impact the importance of tradition, hierarchies and processes; these all impact in turn a culture of innovation within an organisation. Discussing the impact of culture on management, as analysed by Geert Hofstede (1984), is beyond the scope of this research.

Another limitation to the internal validity of this research relates to the notion of innovation located within one team. It is a consequence of the scope of the project. A broader approach to innovation at PSM would consider the case of arguably more mature organisations, in which innovation may be spread out and part of the activity of every team, rather than centralised in one group. Yet, I argue the division is not so clear cut, and an organisation can foster innovation throughout while building on a legitimising lab, as discussed below. This diffusion ensures innovation transfer, a recurrent challenge for innovation teams. This research however mainly considers labs as organised teams; it includes organisations that previously had a lab and closed it down. The hypothesis is that the role of a lab implicitly formulates and reflects the innovation thesis of senior management.

Additionally, there may be a pro innovation bias in innovation research (Godin & Vinck, 2017). This is mitigated by explicitly asking why the innovation team is needed and exploring the performance measurement system.

Beyond contributing to scholarly research, this project aims at being useful for practitioners. To evaluate the usefulness, I refer to the criteria described by Thomas and Tymon (1982), namely: descriptive relevance, goal relevance, operational validity; and non-obviousness. Meeting these criteria cumulatively is necessary to ensure the relevance of theory and findings for practitioners. Descriptive relevance relates to the match between the theory and findings and the reality of the organisation. Goal relevance, to the match between the goals of the study and those of the practitioners. Operational validity implies that the player has the power to act on the findings or has a control on the independent variables. Non-obviousness requires that the findings are useful to practitioners and non-obvious. As typically small, recent structures using unusual methods within a large organisation, innovation labs require legitimising evidence as well as best practices to strengthen the efficiency of their operations; this relates to both goal relevance and operational validity. By surveying lab members across a range of several PSM, I ensure the descriptive relevance. Goal relevance is demonstrated by the participation of interviewees and their interest in the results of the project. Lab managers often work with concepts and build on a theory of change:

innovation is a practice that works with research to improve its methods and approach. Lastly, as an academic survey of public service media innovation labs, it contributes to the exploration of research in this field. I thus believe that the research fits these four criteria concerning its usefulness for practitioners.

After discussing methodological considerations, I now present the results, before turning to the analysis.

5.4. Results

In this section, I present a descriptive discussion of the data collection results. After an overview of the sample, I present each lab,⁷⁴⁵ introducing its mission, functioning and, if relevant, its evolution over time. In the case of PSM that include several separate labs, I contextualise the lab within the internal innovation ecosystem (VRT, France Télévisions). Each lab description concludes with a list of three projects the team was involved in; the projects should show the range of innovations the lab works on, rather than those projects that focus on entertainment as broadcast or reception.⁷⁴⁶ I then discuss comparative findings on topics including the mission, values, methods, and challenges.

This section focuses on the role of the lab and its integration within the PSM, its evolution over time and clients or partners of the lab. In other words, it studies the practices rather than texts, although examples of projects are mentioned for each innovation team.

Before introducing the sample, a few remarks on the results. The description of a detailed innovation process does not mean that this is the only process for innovation at that organisation to the exclusion of any other. It is rarely exclusive, as some flexibility allows the team to seize opportunities or themes as they arise. It however displays a structured approach and an underlying theory of change.

If a structured performance measurement system is setup, it is mentioned in the lab description. Otherwise, considerations are included in the discussion later in this section.

The use of the team, or its value, is described based on the assessment by the interviewee. This was not challenged or verified using another source at the PSM. This allows the researcher to approach the argument that is made in regard to the lab or team's added value; it must nonetheless be assessed critically.

⁷⁴⁵ The labs are discussed in the alphabetical order, based on the acronym of their PSM.

⁷⁴⁶ These three projects were selected by the interviewee.

5.4.1. Overview of participating labs

Innovation teams or labs representing 12 public service media organisations took part in interviews for this project. They are listed in the following table. The names and roles of interviewees are included in appendix 3.

Table 26: Overview of participating labs and PSM

PSM	Country	Type of PSM	Team name	Period	Staff ⁷⁴⁷
ABC	AU	All	Content Ideas Lab	2018 – today	10
BBC	UK	All	BBC R&D Future Experience Technology	2017 – today	45
ČRo	CZ	Radio	Creative HUB	2016 – today	4
DW	DE	International	DW Lab	2017 - today	2-4
France TV	FR	Television	Medialab de l'information	2016 – today	3-5
NRK	NO	All	NRKbeta	2006 – today	7
RTS	CH	All	Labo numérique de la RTS	2013 – 2018	3-4
RTVE	ES	All	RTVE Lab	2011 – today	17
SR	SE	Radio	Innovation team	2015 – 2019	6-8
VRT	BE	All	VRT Sandbox	2014 – today	2.4
YLE	FI	All	YLE News Lab	2013 – today	52 ⁷⁴⁸
ZDF	DE	All	Department of New Media	2004 – 2014	3

The sample includes PSM that historically were radios (ČRo, SR), televisions (France Télévisions), or both. It also includes one PSM addressing international audiences (DW). Three of the surveyed PSM discontinued their lab; however, they all still pursue innovation.

The PSM addressed in this study differ in the extent to which they have integrated convergence within their operations; this is reflected in the way they allocate budgets and human resources.⁷⁴⁹

ABC's Content Ideas Lab

Created in 2018, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Content Ideas Lab focuses on digital projects: it works on attracting under-served audiences with the aim of

⁷⁴⁷ Staff evolved over time. Temporary staff, including interns, was regularly mentioned; I include the staff in the number. Also, as the mission evolved and the teams are reorganised, the figures can vary.

⁷⁴⁸ The core team is 21 members, the remainder are consultants hired for projects.

⁷⁴⁹ As this is not a deep study of twelve PSM but rather an exploration aiming at understanding the diversity and commonalities of innovation labs at PSM, I do not analyse this question further.

creating the ABC of the future. After two years of existence, its mission evolved. Initially conceived as an in-house incubator to create new products and services for new audiences, the mission of the Content Ideas Lab has shifted to focus on supporting the organisational transformation by enabling innovators across the ABC. This transition has come with a new organisational report, from the director-general to the head of strategy.⁷⁵⁰

In its first period (2018-2020), the Lab managed an AUD 20 million grant, the “Great Ideas Grant”. Under the patronage of the then managing-director, it supported the development of 9 projects, of which 4 still run in 2020. This process was disrupted by a change in the conditions around the ABC (change in leadership and budgetary constraints). In this initial period, the Lab also conducted work on the international strategy of the ABC.

The team then developed a seven-steps “Ideas Commissioning Framework”, which starts with insights from the data rather than from ideas. Focusing in a first step on opportunity discovery and definition, the framework then includes the steps of “proposition generation stage”, “concept development stage” and “pilot production, testing & publishing stage”. A successful pilot can then be pushed to beta, which implies its operationalisation and business integration, thus highlighting the goal of developing new products and services to integrate in the regular offering. This conceptual work allows the team manager to display the lab’s mission and its process to its internal stakeholders.

The Lab supports the content teams in getting traction within the organisation for their projects that fit into the lab’s goals. It also serves the technology, audiences and marketing teams to help them reach shared goals. Overall, its current role is to crystallise latent needs within the organisation, for example in regard to the connected car; in this case, the Content Ideas Lab plays the role of a convenor bringing all internal stakeholders together around this emerging theme.

For the Lab to be effective within the organisation, relationships are key: indeed, the ABC has over 50 offices around the country, making established relationships all the more relevant. The majority of the ten-people lab staff comes from other departments of the ABC. The Lab does not systematically work with external stakeholders; it does, however, build on extensive user research and user testing.

A challenge for the Lab is that, compared to established channels (radio, television) its new content does not yet have an audience that its internal creators can mobilise to resist cuts in programming and funding.

⁷⁵⁰ During this time, the ABC’s director-general changed.

The team is an asset for the organisation. From a leadership perspective, its main advantage appears to be that it brings a different view on digital natives. From the lab's perspective, its main contribution is to ensure that the ABC remains relevant in the future and to connect silos within the organisation with the aim to align goals so that all can act as one team.

1. **ABC Life:** The Content Ideas Lab launched ABC Life in 2018. It was a new digital destination for 20-40-year-olds providing content relating to lifestyle and well-being. This editorial team included 20 staff members. The Lab was notably responsible for the service design. ABC Life has become a channel in itself to develop new storytelling formats.
2. *Content:* The Content Ideas Lab accompanied the development of the ABC's first scripted series produced for vertical consumption. The series was released in 2019.
3. **Discovery around evergreen digital content:** The Content Ideas Lab explores object-based media and content distribution workflows to rethink how the ABC makes its content available to its diverse audiences.

BBC's R&D Future Experience Technology

The BBC's R&D Future Experience Technology (FET) team is tasked with contributing to transforming the BBC and to helping it become the most innovative it can be. The team currently includes 45 members. This follows the 2017 merger of two previously separate teams: an innovation team and a research team, the latter working on longer term technologies and developments. The FET team comprises approximately ten roles, including developers, test engineers, technology architects, researchers project managers, producers, UX experts and creation directors; the team is spread across the Manchester and London offices of the BBC. FET is part of the BBC R&D department (approximately 200 people), the organisation's technical research department, which itself is part of BBC Design & Engineering (2'000 people), the BBC's technology division that is responsible for all its digital media services and products as well as technology procurement. BBC R&D builds on a long tradition of technological innovation for PSM, including the use of noise-cancelling microphones, the first transatlantic television transmission, and HD TV; its mission is anchored in the BBC Royal Charter.

The work of FET is organised around workstreams; the exact list of workstreams evolves over time. Adding a workstream may be suggested by three sources: audience insight; business needs; industry trend. Each workstream has a team and a

team leader who collaboratively define Objectives and Key Results (OKR) for the next two years; these are reviewed every semester. The OKRs allow FET management to structure the conversation, and the team to remain focused even though the themes addressed may be broad. The workstream must systematically consider how its work may be transferred within the broader BBC: as a piece of technology, a way of thinking about the issue (presentation / whitepaper), a toolkit.

The workstreams operate as small labs. In mid 2020, the workstreams are:

- BBC Taster:⁷⁵¹ An audience-facing platform to test new ideas. Its tagline: “The BBC’s home of new ideas”. Viewers can test pilots and rate them.
- Connected Studio:⁷⁵² Launched in 2012, this workstream aims to facilitate digital innovation within the BBC. Particularly, it makes R&D tools accessible to staff members in other departments. It particularly works around events and structured programmes. Connected Studio evolved: it initially commissioned and piloted innovation projects, yet it observed that this resulted in insufficient impact. The team now supports other teams within the BBC as well as external agencies by providing them the tools and methods they need, such as object-based tools to reorganise media content fitting individual preferences. The aim is to lead to pilots that can be tested on BBC Taster.
- Public service Augmented Reality:⁷⁵³ This workstream, leading to the launch of the BBC Reality Labs venture, works on understanding when and how to use AR at the BBC to best serve the public. This workstream has produced both an AR app as a pilot and a strategy piece.
- Render Engine Broadcasting:⁷⁵⁴ A workstream that allows producers to create television using technology pioneered in the video game industry. Launched in 2019, this should contribute to delivering personalised and interactive user experiences. It entails exploring standards, the use of 5G networks and tools.
- AI in Media Production:⁷⁵⁵ This workstream explores how artificial intelligence and machine learning may transform media production at the BBC since 2017. Specifically, the team works with production teams at the BBC to find use cases for these technologies to make media production more efficient. This could for instance allow work on automated metadata generation in archives.

⁷⁵¹ See the website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/taster/>.

⁷⁵² See the website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/connectedstudio/>.

⁷⁵³ See the website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/blog/2017-09-bbc-reality-labs-virtual-augmented>.

⁷⁵⁴ See the website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/projects/render-engine-broadcasting>.

⁷⁵⁵ See the website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/projects/ai-production>.

- Object-Based Media:⁷⁵⁶ This workstream explores how to adjust the content of programmes to each individual based on personal needs or preferences. Object refers to the audio, the video but also the frame or caption of a programme.
- Human Data Interaction:⁷⁵⁷ A workstream that works on ethics in the use of data, including personal data. Launched in 2017, it is an interdisciplinary research programme that aims to empower users in their approach to personal data, foster the public good and favour privacy. This workstream includes for example working on a better understanding of the public's view of data, creating privacy technologies.
- Human values:⁷⁵⁸ This workstream looks at people's values and how to design for those values and to measure against them, depending on life stage. It was launched in 2019 and has developed a framework of fourteen core values that build on the viewer's psychological needs.

Each workstream may include a set of projects that each produce deliverables (prototypes, white papers, etc.) and insights. These workflows are complementary. Several are temporary and focused on a technology or topic, such as those working on the issue of personalisation, interactivity and immersion. Another major transversal topic is that of digital wellbeing, or how to better understand human values and their evolution in a digital age and across life stages. Other workstreams are continuous services for the BBC, such as Connected Studio and BBC Taster. Furthermore, these workflows are complements, as one project on AR might be facilitated by Connected Studio and move on to BBC Taster to gather feedback and data.

Communication is important to FET's work in order to make it accessible, exciting and not intimidating to colleagues throughout the BBC. It also communicates extensively on its projects through its website, making its insights largely available to the public and the global media ecosystem. Furthermore, FET works with agencies and university research labs on projects, while ensuring that the technology lead remains at the BBC and involving internal stakeholders. This allows the BBC to gain knowledge and competence while building on external skills and ideas.

The team is needed to ensure the BBC is future-proof; the television and radio are stretched and under pressure, focusing on day-to-day operations. FET is there to look at the next trend, help colleagues within the BBC explore them and advise leadership.

⁷⁵⁶ See the website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/object-based-media>.

⁷⁵⁷ See the website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/projects/human-data-interaction>.

⁷⁵⁸ See the website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/publications/human-values-psychology-digital-age>.

1. BBC Taster: The platform was initiated by BBC FET. The team is both the operator and a user of the platform to make new services and experimental prototypes available to audience members to test, rate and share.
2. Virtual Reality: In 2016, the FET team identified VR as an emerging trend. It launched a commissioning brief funded with GBP 40-50'000. It then selected three projects to pilot, which were put live on Taster. To share results across the BBC, it launched an internal VR festival that brought staff members together. The leadership noticed the work being done around VR, notably due to awards, and decided to setup a VR hub with a dedicated commissioning budget. This is an outlier in its apparently seamless process.
3. Object-based media: This workstream illustrates the multidimensional work of FET. First, it includes the production of research published as white papers on specific themes such as the user experience, made publicly available. Second, it develops tools that are made available across the BBC, such as the StoryKit tool for object-based-media. These in turn allow producers to develop pilot programmes such as the 2019 *Instagramification*, which was made available on BBC Taster.

ČRo's Creative HUB

Launched in 2016 following the election of Czech Radio's new director-general who had made the creation of a lab part of his proposal, the Creative HUB builds on a team of four people; team members come from outside the PSM. The proposal to create this team came as a by-product of ČRo's participation in the EBU "Vision 2020" project and its local implementation. The lab's existence can be divided into two periods. First, it was tasked with bringing new formats, ideas, and content. It launched three major and successful projects, which gained attention abroad. In a second period, it produced a podcast, opening up numerous strategy questions, such as the third-party platform strategy. It was thus positioned early on as bringing people and budgets to open up new topics and audiences.

Projects are either initiated by the lab or through internal or external proposals. The lab also has a structured open call procedure. Anyone can submit a proposal through an online form. A group of experts representing marketing, content production, and analytics discuss the opportunity of each proposal. If the project is interesting, they assign a producer to develop the project before pitching it to the programme board which has the authority to grant a pilot budget. The final step is a decision by the director-general for full production. Typically, out of six proposals, half are made into

a pilot and half are rejected. Of the three pilots, one is rejected, one approved for a grant, and one selected by radio.

The lab's two main clients are: authors, to whom it offers financing and the freedom to be creative; and stations, to which it offers the opportunity to work with trends from abroad, and to which the lab brings new names and experts, including younger people. The HUB's fixed annual budget is mostly used to pay authors. It also works with universities for student projects, including in design and sound engineering.

The lab's overall performance is measured along three dimensions. First, the number of ideas or topics it brings in and ideas it generates. Second, the ideas it brings to the programme board. Third, awards, building on the insight that it is easier to gain recognition outside of the organisation than within.

1. *Zhasni!*: The Creative HUB launched the first Czech original podcast series created for the online environment. While ČRo had made its radio broadcasts available as podcasts, *Zhasni!* was created independently of a broadcast. Its topic is sexuality. The Creative HUB worked with young authors and linked this podcast to Radio Wave, ČRo's channel for young audiences.
2. *Project 1968*: The Creative HUB developed a VR experience and a mobile application including an interactive podcast complete with AR to immerse listeners into the 1968 Prague Spring and ensuing invasion of Czechoslovakia on the occasion of the event's 50th commemoration. This project was granted the Journalism Award for Digital Projects and the Best Digital Audio Project at the Prix Europa.
3. *Yusra Swims for Her Life*: ČRo and the BBC jointly produced an interactive online audio documentary about a Syrian refugee's journey to the Olympics. The episodes were broadcast by both Czech Radio and BBC. A website provided audiovisual material, photographs and maps.⁷⁵⁹ This collaboration was led by the Creative HUB at ČRo and won the Journalism Award for the best innovation in media.

DW Lab

Deutsche Welle is a special PSM in this sample, as it is an international broadcaster with programmes in 30 languages.⁷⁶⁰ It stands out with an audience that is largely foreign and plays a role in Germany's soft power; it is tasked with making Germany understandable from abroad. More fundamentally, Deutsche Welle's mission is to

⁷⁵⁹ See the website: <https://interaktivni.rozhlas.cz/yusra/>.

⁷⁶⁰ In 2017, it reached 157 million weekly users globally, according to figures published by the organisation.

foster democracy and freedom of speech globally. The DW Lab is tasked with combining technological innovations with journalistic ideas and to develop prototypes for new digital offerings. Across its two locations (Berlin and Bonn), it comprises a core team of two coordinators with technology and journalism backgrounds. Two other teams drive innovation within the PSM: DW Minds, which organises the exchange of best practices between staff, and DW Research & Cooperation, which participates in research projects with European funding.

The DW Lab mission implies two key internal clients: employees of DW to whom the Lab teaches innovative ways of working to prototype ideas they have; and the departments that benefit from prototypes and funding to develop them. For the organisation overall, the aim is to increase its audience reach.

The Lab has developed a structured approach to innovation. Projects must fulfil three criteria to be eligible for the support of the Lab: the project must involve both new technology and journalism; it must create a digital product (as opposed to a linear, broadcast focus); and it must be new to DW, and not a mere improvement. The director-general is involved in this process, ensuring high visibility and attractiveness for employees.

To source projects, the Lab organises a quarterly ideation day during which six multidisciplinary teams of three people (journalist, tech, marketing) develop a pitch. The ideas can be based on the Lab's tech trend monitoring, which prioritises themes that are relevant to the organisation (past topics included TikTok, newsletters, AR, smart speakers). Employees can also directly pitch their ideas.

In an ensuing two week-long "lab phases", a larger team including designers, programmers, builds a prototype that is tested within the organisation. Then, a three months pilot phase allows the lab to bring out a pilot, test it, measure and iterate. In a final jury session, the decision is made to make the pilot a regular product or not. A small share of projects makes it all the way to being deployed as a regular service, with the aim of understanding fast what the monthly costs are and whether this service is valuable. Recognising that the service is not valuable and terminating it is not considered a failure. Overall, forty projects were conducted since 2017.

The team is useful to the organisation on three levels. First, to accelerate the speed at which new ideas can be tested. Second, to increase the reach of DW by using new technology. Third, to improve employee satisfaction and creativity.

While entertainment is not explicitly part of DW's mandate when understood as entertainment programmes, it is implicitly a requirement in reaching specific audiences. When exploring TikTok to reach audiences around 14 years old, the Lab explores entertaining content that reflects the organisation's core values.

As an illustration, the following three topics are themes that were selected in calls for projects

1. TikTok: The DW Lab explores how journalists can use TikTok to reach new audiences and how to adapt their reporting to this platform.
2. Augmented Reality: In exploring immersive journalism, the DW Lab supported projects that prototyped reporting using AR. It also organised an AR hackathon.
3. Voice assistants: Using Google, Amazon as well as Russia's Alice (Yandex) voice assistants, the DW Lab accompanies projects that explore how to use these platforms to better respond to the needs of target groups around the world.

France Télévisions' Medialab de l'information

The Medialab de l'information is one of several innovation teams within France's public service television. Launched in May 2016, it fits within an internal ecosystem of innovation. The director of innovation of France Télévisions created the Medialab to have a team that thinks about the future of information, fully integrated within the national news editorial team. Next to the Medialab de l'information, France Televisions has three other innovation teams, the first of which was initiated in 2008: a team on innovation and technology working on the use of technology for production, recently focusing on AI; a team working on innovation and digital development, working on the tools that the audience will use, to ensure that the PSM's offering can reach the audience; lastly, a team working on innovation in advertising, accessing external funding to explore technologies such as VR and AR and experimenting on events such as *Roland Garros*. With this organisation, the Medialab focuses on connection and creation, while software and hardware belong to the realm of the digital innovation team.

The lab's clients are journalists. Its value proposition is to allow them to discover tools, launch a Proof Of Concept (POC), as well as to help in the deployment of a technology, for instance by offering training. The Medialab works for all editorial team members, including the numerous offices in regions preparing the news for FR3 régions. The director of innovation responsible for the Medialab reports to the director of national information.

The team includes two video journalists and one project manager, as well as a regular roster of interns. The two journalists are experienced within the overall team and have an extensive network within the editorial team. Their office was originally separate, which may have led to the perception of the Medialab as a team of geeks having fun

with devices, while the news editorial team worked under pressure in continuous production; the Medialab's office was subsequently physically integrated in the editorial team, with an office next to the editorial conference room, with the purpose of making it easy for any journalist to walk in.

The Medialab focuses on television, web, and information. It occasionally works with startups or academia, for instance on a tool for fact-checking. The team communicates through its blog, *Méta-Média*, through which it shares insights and its thinking on the future of news and information.⁷⁶¹

Medialab's exploration of the use of TikTok for information allows us to display what appears to be its recurring model. It first conducts a study of the platform, while experimenting with a Medialab account run by an intern familiar with this platform. A POC allowed Medialab to gather first insights that build a case of whether or not to launch an account, a decision made by the director of France Télévisions information web. In parallel, the PSM contacts TikTok to study potential partnerships, for instance on filters.⁷⁶²

Yet the team is needed to ensure that the information is developing in the right direction and does not remain centred on a television logic. By contrast, the editorial team does not have the time to think and strategise about this. The lab plays the role of a visionary within the editorial team. Medialab faces the challenge of being properly integrated in the editorial team, in a context of increasing tasks and reduced human resources. Overall, the key is to get colleagues from the newsroom on board. The cultural challenge in information is important: there are social codes around journalism (seriousness, dress code) that do not necessarily fit with the Internet culture; information on the news may require more fun, while remaining serious, as shown by YouTubers and infotainment; this is an illustration of the way labs focusing on news effectively work on entertainment, viewed from the reception perspective.

1. Fake News: The Medialab de l'information developed a training programme for journalists to deal with fake news and provided them with tools for fact checking.
2. July 14 Augmented Reality: To complement the reporting on the French national day celebration, the Medialab de l'information supported the editorial team in deploying Augmented Reality allowing the anchor to display virtual models of planes and helicopters on location.
3. TikTok: The team is exploring the use of this platform to reach younger audiences for information. It is using a testing account to better understand how the platform works and pilot adapted formats.

⁷⁶¹ See the website: <https://www.meta-media.fr/>.

⁷⁶² The digital team has two employees who are in contact with major platforms (Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, etc.).

NRK's NRKbeta

Progressively emerging as of 2006, NRKbeta is tasked with helping Norway's NRK carry on its mission during changes, mindful that NRK is an organisation that was conceived in a different time. The mission of NRKbeta covers three main areas. First, it publishes content on technology, media and society. Second, it provides expertise and offers strategic insights for the entire organisation. Third, it conducts practical and advisory work. Overall, the team has the resource of time to think and to discuss what NRK is doing, and what is happening around it. Following a reorganisation, NRKbeta reports to the head of product rather than strategy.

Its clients are varied and include senior management, middle management, journalists, technical staff. NRKbeta considers the five levels of a PSM from a strategic point of view, with the perspective that it is important to be able to address all five in their interdependence. The team's remit is large and allows it to explore topics that may not be of immediate use. Projects can be initiated both by the team and by stakeholders within NRK.

The seven-member team is self-organised and of varied backgrounds. The largest post of the team's budget is human resources (salaries); it has a small budget for participating in conferences and buying devices, amongst others. Within NRK overall, budgets are platform neutral: they are not allocated separately to television, radio and Internet. NRKbeta's team office is a lively space for conversations and hosts a clutter of devices.

NRKbeta has an active policy of sharing its findings, both internally and externally. It gives internal presentations, communicates on the Intranet and has a running group chat. Externally, it publishes on NRKbeta's website and offers presentations to the media industry and other institutions to share insights. This latter offering fits within NRK's remit, whereby it is tasked with upholding media plurality.

NRKbeta faces three challenges. First, it has a lot of demand. Second, it has a dilemma around team growth: with seven members, the self-organising team cannot grow forever without changing its structure. Third, it has an issue in balancing field experience and diversity: while all team members have broad and diverse educational and professional backgrounds as well as field experience, the diversity in terms of gender and ethnicity is limited (white, middle-class, male).

NRKbeta's performance is not formally measured, but feedback is collected informally. Its work may serve to legitimise the licence fee; its work may be referred to by management; it may be mentioned by politicians to adapt a law; it may be cited by other media.

The team is needed to help the rest of NRK understand change and how it relates to the PSM's main mission; it thus provides support in thinking about how NRK provides value to the Norwegians in the present and in the future amidst changing conditions. The values of NRKbeta are centred around the core value of having a functioning PSM and a concern about media in a functioning democracy; the understanding that technology can offer great opportunities if well implemented and understood.

1. Insights for risk management: This programme is central to the work of NRKbeta. The team systematically analyses changes in technology and media, relating them to evolutions in society and to the impact this has on NRK's mission and functioning. In turn, they focus on defining what NRK will need to understand, and strive to develop insights on how to respond. This process is separate from conventional power relations and budgets within the organisation. These insights are made available both internally and to other media organisations in Norway through regular presentations.
2. *Alltid sammen* channel: During the corona crisis, NRK decided to launch a new online channel that streamed content 24/7 to help Norwegians face the potential boredom of a corona quarantine. The channel streamed live concerts, light entertainment radio shows, Q&A sessions with the Prime Minister and live streaming from a cats refuge. NRKbeta provided consulting on setting up this slow TV project.
3. Publishing: NRKbeta has an editorial voice of its own, raising issues relating to media, technology and society. One example is its reporting on data privacy and the use of applications by military personnel, considering the impact on national security.

RTS' Labo numérique

Created in 2013 within Switzerland's French-language PSM, RTS's Labo du numérique was dissolved in 2018. Its mission was to support innovation in the digital department, as opposed to radio and television. The multidisciplinary team of three people (technology, journalism, product) was considered relatively isolated from other parts of the organisation. It focused on explorations in the field of gaming and entertainment. The lab was dissolved because it was largely working on stable fields, namely VR, AR, e-sports and second screen strategies for entertainment; this may have been a consequence of the team stability. The dissolution of the lab was also a consequence of team members moving on to other projects; in particular Tataki, a social media-based offering for young audiences, and the Initiative for Media

Innovation (IMI), a joint initiative of RTS and universities.⁷⁶³ In 2016, the director-general introduced an internal innovation process with a dedicated fund, innov@rts.⁷⁶⁴ This process was eventually outsourced, to a certain extent, to IMI. RTS works with competitors, and startups largely through IMI rather than directly.

After the dissolution of the Labo du numérique, an innovation sector (6 people) within the digital department (60 people) was created. The latter includes four sectors: production and technology; distribution and platforms; organisation; innovation.

Currently, projects are typically initiated by the innovation team identifying a topic and looking for an internal partner, or by the editorial team that needs support to realise an idea. The innovation team provides foresight, observing evolving practices and aiming to identify important weak signals. Projects vary in length and scope, from short projects like rethinking podcast distribution, leading to a proof of concept (POC) of WhatsApp distribution within 90 days, to long-term strategy around 5G.

In the field of innovation, RTS faces the challenge of its independence while fitting in a coherent strategy and in coordination with SRG SSR.⁷⁶⁵ The governance of innovation at SRG SSR largely builds on the expert competencies in the regions, such as at RTS. Projects such as the “hackdays” have minor budgets. PlaySuisse, the PSM portal, is a rare centralised project steered directly by the director-general of SRG SSR; most apps are developed locally, allowing the digital managers to collect the data.

The key challenge in innovation projects is its transfer, ensuring that internal partners have sufficient resources to deploy a project. To facilitate transfer, the innovation team set up a community of practice throughout the organisation, gathering colleagues who are digital and innovation friendly.

The innovation team faces the internal challenge of involving the whole organisation, transforming its culture and its understanding of the digital ecosystem. The greatest challenge may be around middle management, which tends to resist change. As a consequence, the innovation team needs agility but also an acute political sense, courage, humility and the ability to doubt in order to learn, and a strong public service ethics. The innovation team does not currently conduct an active external communication; rather, it manages an internal community of practice, internal innovation meetings and a regular foresight written briefing. RTS is strongly networked through EBU and the *Francophonie*, ensuring regular exchange of best practices and informal benchmarking.

⁷⁶³ Both Tataki and IMI are discussed in chapter four.

⁷⁶⁴ The then director-general of RTS has since become director-general of SRG SSR.

⁷⁶⁵ See chapter four for a discussion of the governance tensions within SRG SSR.

The current innovation team is needed because given the competition for audiences and attention, it is key that someone within the organisation has time to innovate while the editorial and programme teams are continuously under pressure to deliver.

1. *Hors-Cadre*: The Labo numérique supported the production of a VR series immersing the viewer into famous paintings by Swiss artists. The series can be viewed through a dedicated app or through platforms such as YouTube.
2. *Dans Ton Quiz*: Working with youth radio channel Couleur 3, the Labo numérique conceptualised and launched a competitive musical quiz application in 2015, thus exploring gamification in the context of radio. They involved a local independent game development company to build the game and the radio's speakers to include their voices in the app.
3. Smart speakers: The Labo numérique conducted a project to explore the potential of smart speakers to distribute audio content of RTS on demand through podcasts.

RTVE's Lab

Founded in 2011, the Spanish PSM Lab's mission expanded in 2018. Originally tasked with identifying new storytelling formats, mainly for recurring annual events (such as the *San Fermi Bull Run*), the Lab is now tasked with testing new technologies. The aim is to scale technologies and practices across the whole company; it thus has to "sell" digital innovation to the whole company.

This broader mission comes with a larger team of 17 people, including 4 journalists, 3 designers, 6 developers and 3 television producers. Half the team are previous PSM employees and half come from the technology sector, hired on temporary public contracts. The Lab's offices are integrated into the news and entertainment newsrooms; it has an open-door policy. Furthermore, the team organises lab talks, informal lunch gatherings.

The Lab's clients include four groups: journalists in the newsroom; organisers of major events; producers with needs for post-production; and management. For editorial projects, it appears essential to involve journalists in the use of tools to train them for autonomy. Major recurring event organisers present an opportunity to try new technologies and educate audiences to new forms of storytelling, for example the use of VR for the *Goya Awards*. Producers require support for post-production to adapt formats for social media; the Lab then develops a concept and prototype. Management, in turn, requests research on digital issues such as platforms and distribution strategies.

RTVE Lab understands itself as a team working on narratives rather than as a technology team. As such, it has its own voice in Spain, for instance by setting the agenda on fracking in 2013. It is also a convener, working on understanding how best to make use of existing content and how, for instance, television can help radio. The webseries *Back-Up*⁷⁶⁶ on cybercrime and the risks of the Internet was originally a vertical documentary for Instagram TV; it has expanded into an own radio, a weekly television content. This lab idea spread through the company and onto all platforms, thus demonstrating that content can be scalable.

Projects can be initiated by the team, driven by content or pushed to the editorial team based on their ongoing projects. For example, during the 2020 pandemic, the Lab created a memorial, acting as a responsive internal tech team. As a principle, the Lab aims to not do the same thing twice. It thus aims to stay focused on novelty, ensuring great variety in its projects with the aim to help the rest of the company.

The team works with academia and startups, as well as competitors. For instance, it worked with *Maldita*, a platform for fact-checking during the April 2019 elections, based on the model of *First Draft News*, a project funded by several technology firms and philanthropies. This project allowed RTVE to constitute an internal fact-checking team.⁷⁶⁷

The Lab team is needed because the newsroom is arguably not thinking innovatively. The team contributes to transforming the organisation. Yet, the aim should be to kill the labs and have innovation all over the organisation; the Lab has succeeded when it is no longer needed. A strength of a PSM for innovation is that it is open to intergenerational work. RTVE Lab works on being able to learn and showing humility; its aim is to work for all within the organisation rather than a selected innovative elite.

1. Webdocs & interactive video: RTVE Lab is known in Spain for producing quality webdocumentaries and using interactive video for storytelling. Webdocumentaries may relate to digital topics, for instance *Back-Up*.
2. Design: RTVE Lab stands out in RTVE's offering through its design. During the coronavirus crisis, the Lab developed an online memorial for the people deceased from this virus.
3. RTVE Verification team: RTVE Lab is involved in the cross-company verification team that regularly debunks disinformation relating to the public sphere, for instance in the context of political campaigns or crises. Its involvement in a first experiment demonstrated the value of such a service.

⁷⁶⁶ See the website: <https://lab.rtve.es/lab/backup/>

⁷⁶⁷ See the website: rtve.es/verifica.

SR Innovation team

The Innovation team at the Swedish Radio SR was launched in January 2015 and subsequently closed in January 2020. Its initial mission was to explore how to reach new audiences by building prototypes. However, internal teams were more interested in better understanding the needs of audiences, which led to a shift in the mission towards facilitating the identification of audience needs and the development of ideas to meet those needs. This new focus was particularly welcomed by the digital team, which previously considered the Innovation team as internal competition that botched their product roadmap. Thus, the Innovation team shifted from a prototype factory to a facilitator team, with the ability to accompany any internal project.

An early lesson was the importance of including a mentor from the organisation for each project, to reduce the risk of perceived threat from the Innovation team and reducing the risk around innovation transfer, or the “not invented here” syndrome whereby a project or POC is not adopted by the organisation because it is perceived as external.

The team also operated a shift from mainly working on prototypes to focusing on exploring key areas that were not yet covered by existing teams, for instance working on new digital channels for elderly people, or the topic of personalisation. On this topic, the Innovation team collaborated with an external company that worked on personalisation algorithms. The team structured the data, tested the quality of personalisation and built the user experience (UX) interface; the prototype was demonstrated internally in 2016 and led to the digital department being awarded a budget and team to develop this service. The Innovation team worked on focus areas; a hackathon allowed it to identify and hire teams that built a POC.

As part of the public service radio, its focus was on digital and radio. The team had three main clients: the director-general, the head of the news department, and the digital director. The team benefited from a strong support from the director-general. Projects were either initiated by a request from the head of the digital department, or from the innovation team. In the latter case, an idea generating workshop was organised on a topic such as “radio for men” or “atomized news”.

The team was half sourced internally, half externally; on average, it included 4-5 people, and up to 8. It built on a roster of 12-month contracts to ensure fresh ideas, and internal rotations. The team was comprised of two staff who worked on content (1 digital, 1 audio), one on UX, and two coders.

The Innovation team had its office in the basement, a large, white room, very functional, for workshops. Every week, users were invited to come in and explore. Testing on a

real audience is key to the relevance of insights from the Innovation team. The lean startup approach of build, test and measure is more appropriate than the focus group. Looking back, the Innovation team was at its best when it was provocative internally. Its major challenge was the competition from the digital department, and understanding internal friction and acting on it; in other words, getting everyone on board. The key question is how much friction the team is allowed to expose the company to. The Innovation team stood for the idea that it was essential to truly embrace exploring audience needs rather than functions of an historic radio company. The team was useful for bringing in new ideas; it transitioned into a permanent focus on voice and third-party platforms in early 2020.

1. Developing a digital radio channel for seniors: The Innovation team developed the new channel serving senior citizens after meetings with hundreds of elderly people throughout the country to understand their needs, build, and test the concept using a design thinking approach. It is now a major channel in Sweden.
2. Atomised news: The Innovation team explored how to adapt news to the personalised needs of audience members. This has been tested both on the SR app and in partnership with Volvo in the context of cars.
3. Personalisation: The Innovation team partnered with an external firm that specialised in personalisation algorithms. The Innovation team structured the data, provided the UX and tested a prototype. Based on this, leadership granted the digital team a budget and human resources to develop and industrialise personalisation at SR.

VRT Sandbox

Launched in 2014, VRT Sandbox was created based on the understanding that interesting things were done outside Belgium's VRT in regard to technology, and particularly at startups. As a large regional organisation, the Flemish PSM was missing one main interlocutor for startups that acts as an external contact point and an internal accelerator; this made it difficult for it to access external, emerging technology from startups. The VRT Sandbox team is part of the VRT Innovation department, which includes 38 members. Currently composed of 2.4 fulltime equivalents (FTE) of part-time staffers, there are four roles within the VRT Sandbox team: coordination; understanding what startups are doing and engaging with the ecosystem; onboarding them; communicating; UX.

The innovation landscape at VRT is complex, with a range of specialised, small units working on varied and complementary approaches to innovation. VRT DPC develops

tools; Open VRT collaborates with students; VRT Startup is the PSM's internal startup for experimentation; VRT Video Snackbar supports web video makers; Creative Lab is VRT's digital production team. Lastly, VRT is a partner organisation in Media Invest Vlaanderen, an investment fund.⁷⁶⁸ VRT Sandbox recently spun-off Sandbox Hub. This latter team has the mission to deploy the Sandbox's effect throughout Europe with partner PSM. The fundamental philosophy of the expansion of VRT Sandbox through its Hub is to foster collaboration on technology, mainly by sharing learning, while competing on content. Furthermore, European funds from Horizon 2020 allow the PSM to fund shared projects. This knowledge exchange and mutualisation of project funding is in line with the purpose of EBU.

Overall, VRT is structured along three poles: the brands (traditionally known as channels), the layer of technology, and the crew, an internal pool of specialised technical staff such as sound and light engineers. VRT Innovation acts between technology and brands. In this context, VRT Sandbox has the role of scanning technology opportunities at startups. For VRT Sandbox to be successful in its mission, it is central for it to successfully collaborate with brands by better understanding their roadmaps.

VRT Sandbox initially conducted 10 sandbox cases per year, in a context of difficult internal communication. Trust-building with brands favoured later collaboration. The value proposition for a startup is the possibility to help validate the product on a live broadcast over a period of 3-4 months. The Sandbox works with a closed wallet approach, meaning that it does not pay the startups; rather, it offers them visibility and the possibility to test their product in a live setting. The decision to collaborate is fast, and typically met within 4-8 weeks. At the end of the 3-4 months initial period, the PSM can decide whether it is willing to pay for the service, or whether it remains at the stage of capturing the lessons from the experience. VRT currently works with 15-18 startups annually, becoming a paying customer for 1-10. VRT Sandbox has recently developed a focus point on education technology (edtech), reflecting the educational mission of VRT overall.

VRT Sandbox allows VRT to play a role in fostering not only its own transformation, but also the development of the media ecosystem of Flanders, Belgium and Europe. As VRT becomes a relatively smaller organisation within its relevant market, it needs international collaboration; the Sandbox Hub allowed it to expand collaboration with Dutch NPO and British BBC fast.

⁷⁶⁸ The fund invests between EUR 250'000 and 1 million. See also <https://www.media-invest-vlaanderen.be/>.

VRT Sandbox does not consider itself a lab, as that would suggest it is separate from the production team; rather, the team's pitch to startups is that they work the floor and make the products go live, fostering collaborations between VRT brands and startups. Its core value proposition and approach can be summarised around a set of statements. They offer startups the possibility to test their products or services live. They foster collaborations outside-in. They act on the European level. They go for "moonshots". They have the courage to share and to grow with competitors. They work to continuously improve their innovation process. They recognise that they do not know everything.

While VRT Sandbox has a key message that it will help startups, its core mission is to respond to VRT needs. It plays a role in the PSM's acceleration in transforming to survive. Eventually, its role is to ensure that VRT overall better serves its audiences, which implies making use of the latest technologies to help respond to their needs and produce better content.

VRT Sandbox supports about twelve cases per year. The following shows one example case and two spin-offs from the five years history of VRT Sandbox.

1. Live-data on listeners to improve a programme: In 2018, VRT Sandbox worked with startup Voizzup and music brand VRT MNM to experiment gathering live data on listeners in the production of a morning radio show.⁷⁶⁹
2. Video Snackbar: This service was initiated as a VRT Sandbox project in 2017. It supports VRT video content creators, with a focus on helping them explore new technologies and processes. It was spun-off with dedicated budgets and human resources in 2019.
3. Sandbox Hub: A second spin-off of VRT Sandbox, Sandbox Hub aims to increase the impact of Sandbox Hub by replicating it for other European media and networking these hubs. In turn, the exchange of best practices and of startups should serve the shared interest of the continent's media systems. The access to potential clients throughout Europe helps relevant startups scale.

YLE News Lab

Founded in 2013 within Finland's YLE, YLE News Lab has 52 team members. 26 are YLE employees, the rest are external consultants and developers. The unit sits within YLE News and Current Affairs, which reports on current affairs and sports and operates 22 regional desks. The Lab works with a new unit that aims to position products: YLE

⁷⁶⁹ For an example of the learnings from a case, as published by VRT Sandbox, see the following webpage: <https://sandbox.vrt.be/cases/voizzup>.

ASTRA, audience insights and strategy. Given the large audiences of broadcasts are largely elderly Finns, the Lab's focus is on growing the share of youth that YLE reaches. YLE has aimed to be mobile first since 2015.

YLE News Lab serves two clients: the newsroom, which it invites to build the future with its team, and the audience, which it aims to serve better by being more inspiring than they would expect. It is essential to involve the journalists in the work of the lab; the profession may feel threatened by digital technologies, yet if they get involved in reinventing the organisation, the Lab can build on ideas and the energy of more people. The key idea of YLE News Lab is to get all brains to work together to innovate. This involves all levels of YLE News, from management to grassroots reporters.

Small projects such as tech-oriented content typically are initiated by the Lab team; the aim is to involve reporters more in initiating such projects. Larger projects which require substantial investment such as a new app typically are initiated by management. In realising them, the Lab aims to involve all internal stakeholders to enhance ownership of the project.

Strategically, YLE News is rethinking its performance measurement: should a public service news outlet really aim to maximise a user's time spent using its services? Indeed, it could be argued that news reporting should aim to be time saving, efficient in providing the information, while the PSM's entertainment portal, YLE Areena, is the space to spend time. The shift from clicks to time spent to a new metric shows the strategic level of work of the lab. Furthermore, perhaps the regular flow of news stories is part of the problem, and that public service is particularly relevant in providing context, perhaps based on how much the viewer already knows.

The Lab's resources include the fixed salaries of its employees, while consultants are paid by YLE Development budgets and dedicated editor-in-chief budgets are made available for additional projects.

The team is particularly needed because, as it is not responsible for everyday news work, it has time to think about how society is changing over longer time periods. Its key asset is the time it can spend to create the future differently. Furthermore, the challenge for PSM in the coming years may be not only to sell itself, but also the idea of democracy.

1. *Troll Factory*: YLE News Lab developed an educational game inviting Finns to play the role of a professional troll aiming to influence the public opinion via social media. This game aims to foster digital media literacy amongst adults, particularly those who are less exposed to classical news.

2. News Strategy: YLE News Lab is involved in facilitating the development of the News department strategy, considering evolving user practices and their expectation for personalised and relevant content.
3. *YLE NewsWatch*: In 2015, the News Lab created an application to allow citizens to filter news content by personalising topics they want to reach them. In 2018, the app introduced Voitto, a “smart news assistant”, a continuously refined recommendation tool building on machine learning.

ZDF Digital

Germany's ZDF abandoned the labs approach of a centralised innovation unit due to two recurring problems: innovation teams eventually did not operate a project, and innovation transfer led systematically to massive losses; and while innovation teams can sometimes remain innovative, they usually end up defending what they did in their early years. Labs existed within departments, for instance the former department of new media. Three people were an innovation and development team, a team that existed 2004-2014, prior to the use of the term “lab”. It was dissolved for the reason described above. This team was tasked with developing the Mediathek (ZDF portal); they also worked on developing social media strategies for programmes, for example with an afternoon, German telenovela in 2005. This showed the added value of an innovation team, that helped along the television linear internal producer.

Within ZDF, innovation is about recognising changes in user behaviour and the new possibilities offered by technologies, aiming for public value. In the context of this PSM, innovation is largely decentralised, for both cultural reasons and to increase its impact, and is largely project-based. Most projects are initiated by the editorial teams, for instance in science. Media policy is another driver of innovation; management supports innovation more than drives it. The role of management at ZDF in regard to innovation is to support the impulse from employees. The aim is to offer free space and flexibility to develop projects. This in turn requires first the support of management, which exists due to the challenges and pressure of digitalisation. Furthermore, media policymaking is a driver of innovation: pressure from elected officials on ZDF led, for instance, to the launch of a network for the young on social media; Funk launched in 2016 and is a success.⁷⁷⁰

ZDF benefits from a subsidiary, ZDF Digital, a company with 150 employees that develops technological solutions for ZDF. The firm takes requests to build projects, such as the *Digitale Kunsthalle*.

⁷⁷⁰ See the website: <https://www.funk.net/>.

Innovation is a necessary response to the digital transformation of the organisation. The ZDF approach to emerging topics such as audio control or big data is to gather a working group internally, with the capacity to make decisions. The aim is to gather colleagues who are able to cooperate and those who must be on board to engage the organisation.

The governance of digital themes at ZDF involves all senior management, which meets one to three times a year for major strategic decisions; this includes issues such as the non-linear distribution or the split of budgets between linear and non-linear distribution. A digital delegation gathers more regularly and addresses specific projects. Within the departments, workshops or meetings are planned. The ZDF oversight board expresses interest for topics and gets reporting, which in turn allows the head of digital to develop a coherent conceptualisation to arise from the decentralised approach to projects and innovation. Thus, ZDF does not operate on a major plan and strategy in regard to innovation; rather, it operates in a decentralised fashion.

The greatest challenge is to strengthen the internal human capacities, the timing and recognising what can and cannot be done at one point in time; and the patience and resilience to support that which does not work out. This fits within the overall challenge that PSM faces in an evolving self-understanding required to move beyond silos.

The following three projects illustrate the implementation of digital innovation at ZDF; in this case, the work was not necessarily driven by a lab.

1. *ZDF Digitale Kunsthalle*: This service is an online digital museum. While it was built by ZDF using its subsidiary ZDF Digital, it is operated in collaboration with museums that organise exhibitions online.
2. Funk: The joint digital content network of ARD and ZDF launched in 2016 provides VOD for people aged 14-29.
3. Social media strategy for a telenovela: In 2005, the innovation team developed a social media strategy to engage with viewers.

5.4.2. Thematic approach to the results

I turn to addressing comparatively how innovation teams and labs are positioned in terms of PSM layer, type of innovation and overall mission. Then, I review specific themes, including: the understanding of innovation, the case of news labs, stakeholders of innovation teams, performance measurement and influences. In these sub-sections, insights are not necessarily attributed to a specific PSM, lab or interviewee to facilitate an open conversation. The aim is to gain insights from recurring points or outliers.

Positioning the labs in regard to their levels of activity

One can consider the level of activity of the lab: strategic, operational, and editorial. Strategic refers to broad orientations; operational means conducting specific projects or supporting colleagues in digital or in editorial; editorial refers to an independent production of content for the general public. Choosing to explore a topic, such as AR/VR, by use of the development of a project, may be considered as either strategic (horizon-scanning and advisory), operational (conducting a pilot project) or editorial (reporting on the technology or commenting on its potential in a programme). In regard to the strategic level, two models emerged: the lab manager sits on the board of management and challenges the general thinking, while bringing up ideas and projects and sourcing projects from other directors (e.g. ČRo); in another case, several lab members are considered experts who can be consulted by anyone within the organisation (e.g. NRKbeta). Five teams are active on editorial (ABC, BBC, NRK, RTVE, SR), while more support producers in their work. Labs tend to act on the strategic and operational level, in some cases on editorial. These different perspectives are argued to complement each other, increasing both the expertise of the team and its credibility within the organisation.

Nearly all labs are active on the three layers of creation, connection and curation. Exceptions relate to the specific context of the organisation. Most labs are also involved in software, while only three work on the hardware layer.

All teams surveyed work on processes, most on products organisation and position, and some on social innovation. Social innovation is less of a priority per se, or rather dependent on editorial priorities (e.g. ABC worked on a project related to the indigenous people). The focus on process is linked to a technology focus that implies rethinking the content to fit emerging audience practices. Organisational innovation is a natural consequence of the work of an innovation team, yet not systematically central to its core mission. As in the broader public sector, PSM have been exploring digital innovation, for story-telling purposes and for enhancing products, services and organisational processes. However, innovation covers many different areas and is not limited to the digital field.

Thematic focus points

The trends that labs explore tend to be similar, reflecting specialised consulting firms' hype cycle. After exploring social media strategies to engage with audiences in the early days of labs ten years ago, this topic has now transferred to the regular

operations, namely the production and marketing teams. Early social media strategies related to entertainment programmes, including reality TV shows and series.

To a varying degree, depending on the PSM's context, the organisation's priorities and preferences of lab managers, major thematic focus points of labs include the major consumer technologies, such as smart speakers and voice command, as well as upcoming social media platforms particularly those used by the younger audiences, such as TikTok. Augmented and Virtual Reality have been the object of pilot projects. Labs from radio PSM have typically spearheaded the effort to introduce podcasts within the organisation. These technologies, even when applied to information, appear to foster interactivity and the gamification of news consumption, thus contributing to the entertainment in reception discussed in chapter three.

Beyond the focus on technologies, two trends seem to emerge from this data collection. First, several labs are working on the societal impact of technologies, as illustrated by projects and strategies related to the topic of disinformation. Second, there appears to be increasing work on the use of data to gain insights into audiences; this may be related to the development of new capacities in audience research, as is the case at YLE News.

This brief overview reflects the situation in mid-2020 and is bound to evolve fast.

Understanding of innovation

The understanding of innovation within the context of a lab is relevant to its activities and its conceptualisation of its work. Several common themes came up regularly in the words of interviewees. The common thread was what innovation is not: it is not a shiny object and an end in itself.

The conceptualisations of innovation fall into three categories. First, new ways of working, including distribution, production, decision-making or organisation. Second, understanding new modes of consumption or new channels, and developing new forms of content or programmes for them. Third, exploring new technologies and their use throughout the PSM. All innovations can be more or less disruptive to the organisation, which can be described as the degree of friction the PSM is exposed to by its lab. Several interviewees stressed the notion of ideas that challenge others within the organisation, that make the stakeholders look at a problem differently.

The focus on solving problems, in workflow, technology or narratives, was regularly stressed, rather than a focus on pushing solutions. Innovation, as described by interviewees, often means embracing prototypes, anticipating developments and

prototyping solutions. Lastly, innovation can also lead to a solution not being implemented.

The description of innovation as an abstract question is useful to identify the focus in their practice of innovation that a proposed definition suggests. Thus, none of the teams surveyed considered its role to be fostering innovation as an end in itself, nor a focus on delivering shiny pet projects. Three angles are taken on innovation: through technologies, through the audience and its practices, and through organisational processes.

News labs

Two labs in the sample focus explicitly on news: France Télévisions' Medialab de l'information and YLE's News Lab. This focus means that they serve the editorial team; yet they are tasked with supporting those teams in better serving audience needs. They are fully integrated within the news department. A news lab has time to explore new devices, technologies and partners (such as social media), whereas the newsroom works under constant, immediate pressure. Serving audience needs, particularly of under-served audiences such as the young, means exploring entertaining formats to communicate information using an adapted audiovisual grammar. News labs also appear to be introduced by the head of editorial, aware of this challenge facing the newsroom specifically. Thus, the existence of news labs and of their projects displays the relevance of entertainment in reaching younger audiences with information.

Stakeholders

Innovation labs have both internal and external stakeholders. While their direct clients are internal (leadership, journalists, producers, digital or development teams), their indirect client is the audience for whom they aim to make the PSM better.

Yet only a minority of labs interact with the end-user. This direct interaction can take two forms: either through qualitative feedback from users coming into the PSM office to test services or programmes, or the innovation team going to meet users around the country, both of which the SR Innovation team did. User feedback can also be collected asynchronously, online, through testing platforms such as the BBC's Taster. Internal stakeholders are relevant to the innovation team's impact. Most labs work with internal teams early on; their sponsorship of projects appears to increase the likelihood of transfer. Four groups of internal stakeholders typically emerge across labs: leadership; editorial; marketing or audience insights; digital or technology.

Some innovation teams work with external stakeholders, yet not all. This work is mostly on a project-basis rather than structured. Only teams that are explicitly focused on bringing external expertise or products into the organisation systematically involve external stakeholders; VRT Sandbox's work with startups is an example. Without a dedicated internal support team and a clear process, working successfully with startups seems to be difficult, making VRT's Sandbox Hub all the more relevant for PSM across Europe.

Academia is sometimes involved through two groups: researchers participating in projects such as RTVE Lab, or by inviting students to build projects, as does ČRo's Creative HUB with technical and design students.

Few innovation teams directly work with competing media. Three cases appear: first, because it is part of the PSM's remit to contribute to media diversity and the innovation team shares findings with private media (NRK);⁷⁷¹ second, the innovation team develops services that are then made available to local media (YLE); third, private and public media work together on shared issues that are relevant to the public sphere, for instance on fact-checking (RTVE).

In limited cases, policymakers and elected officials are also stakeholders. This is typically the case when the innovation team has its own editorial role and it brings technology-related issues into the public sphere, playing an agenda-setting role. In other cases, policymakers or oversight boards are partners in driving or fostering an internal transformation of the PSM.

Thus, a key differentiating factor across labs is the variety of internal stakeholders they interact with and the frequency and range of external stakeholders they work with, which may include academia, competing media, startups, creators or end-users.

Values

The values that the innovation team represents were largely similar across organisations. They fit into four categories: values in regard to the lab's contribution; values in regard to the way the lab functions; values relating to its relations with its partners; and values relating to the PSM's mission.

A value that the lab aims to spread throughout its organisation is typically the notion of audience-focus. This is often related to the notion of experimentation, involving users, using insights from data, and iteration. These values can be realised by inviting users to the lab to test prototypes or gain insights and feedback from audience members

⁷⁷¹ Although in the case of NRK this practice was introduced before it was anchored in the remit, which thus officialised the existing role of NRK in regard to the domestic media system. It reflected the NRKbeta team's ethos of openly sharing their findings.

through a platform such as the BBC's Taster. This audience focus relates to the notions of audience research and audience development discussed in chapter three. The labs tend to work in applying the values of collaboration, openness and transparency. They demonstrate a readiness to fail and want to stand for creativity: new ideas and innovative thinking. For teams working with external partners, be it authors or startups, the value of fairness and transparency was also mentioned. This is typically made tangible by a structured selection process. Overall, the innovation teams have a strong commitment to the notion of public service.

Methods

To the extent that the innovation team refers to methods, they typically refer to techniques that are common to the practice of innovation, independently of the sector. These include service design, agile, human-centred design, UX and product methodology, design sprints, scenarios, and design thinking. In some rare cases, these methods are viewed mainly as legitimising tools.

Office space

The lab space appears to be an important operational capability. It seems to typically be required to represent both the proximity of the team to its clients (newsroom or other teams) as well as the different quality of its work. With this in mind, labs typically go for open plan spaces, sometimes with a hot desk policy, testing areas and walls that allow it to support creative work. An open-door policy typically allows any PSM colleague to come along with an issue. PSM labs are rarely open to the general public.

Communication

Given their internal clients, most labs have some form of internal communication. They need partners in other teams to be able to provide value. This internal communication typically includes a mix of digital communication (intranet, newsletter) and physical meetings (community of practice, briefings, open door policy). A dedicated technological monitoring or foresight internal newsletter belongs to the offering of some digital labs.

Some labs use a public blog to communicate to their media innovation peers and within their organisation on ongoing projects. The following table provides an overview of this external communication.

Table 27: Overview of labs' external communication channels

PSM	Website	Blog	Newsletter	Social media
ABC	No	No	No	Yes ⁷⁷²
BBC ⁷⁷³	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CRo	No	No	No	Yes
DW ⁷⁷⁴	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
France TV ⁷⁷⁵	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NRK	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁷⁷⁶	Yes
RTS	No	No	No	Yes ⁷⁷⁷
RTVE	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
SR	No	No	No	No
VRT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
YLE	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
ZDF	No	No	No	No

The previous table presents the external communication of the surveyed labs. A website presents the team's mission and, if it is relevant, how to get involved with them. A blog is regularly updated, allowing the team to present its findings and its activities. A newsletter builds on similar content to the blog and may allow it to issue calls for participation or proposals. Social media are an additional channel to keep stakeholders updated, allowing them to react.

In regard to social media, lab managers and staffers typically actively engage with their community and share insights on social media, and particularly on Twitter.

Labs that stand out for their website and the wealth of information they contain are the BBC, France Télévisions, NRK and RTVE. In each of these cases, their websites are regularly updated and engaged with. The importance of communication, both internal and external, was regularly highlighted by interviewees. Yet, given the limited operational capabilities of the teams, communication is not always prioritised. It is recognised as important for both increasing impact and demonstrating value to ensure legitimacy. Blogging appears to offer innovation teams the most agile form of corporate communication that allows it to build a continuously updated public database of projects and insights. Twitter is used by many lab managers and team members to engage with peers.

⁷⁷² Through individual team member(s).

⁷⁷³ In the case of BBC R&D's FET, the website and blog are shared with the overall R&D department. Some of its programmes, including BBC Taster and BBC Connected Studio, have their own newsletter and social media channels, reflecting specific external stakeholders they aim to reach.

⁷⁷⁴ DW Lab is integrated within DW Innovation's page and social media.

⁷⁷⁵ France Télévisions' Medialab is particularly involved in the blog Méta-Media, which is open to other innovation teams throughout the PSM.

⁷⁷⁶ This newsletter is limited to an automated email notification of new blog postings.

⁷⁷⁷ Through individual team member(s).

Performance measurement

The issue of performance measurement for innovation teams or labs appears to be a difficult topic. While single projects can be evaluated, typically using a mix of qualitative (prizes) and quantitative measures (number of viewers or users), the overall innovation team's performance is more difficult to assess. Indirect indicators can be chosen, yet they are dissatisfying or may set adverse incentives. These include the number of teams across the organisation involved in projects, the references to the lab's work in parliamentary debates, the quantitative evaluation of lab participants, or a qualitative evaluation of insights gained from the overall work of the lab. However, if one considers the innovation team as a strategic function rather than an extended project in itself, the performance measurement reasoning shifts. A critical view of performance measurement for innovation is that it is mainly used as a legitimising tool for leadership and policymakers.

The two Anglo-Saxon PSM involved in the study, BBC and ABC, both work with OKRs for programmes and KPIs for single projects. Particularly successful projects that were built for the benefit of the PSM, for example to ensure it can gather early user feedback, can be spun off, another sign of success; this was the case with ABC Life, VRT Video Snackbar or BBC Taster.

Influences

All interviewees named external influences in setting up their team or in its work. Other PSM are frequent influences: in innovation as otherwise with PSM, the BBC is an outlier; the Nordics and Belgium were regularly mentioned as well. There appears to be a strong willingness to share their thinking amongst peers, and the work of EBU in this regard seems to bring an added value to these innovation practitioners.

In the private sector, four types of companies were mentioned: firms that produce great content (Netflix, Pixar); gaming companies; technology companies, particularly those in the culture sector (Spotify); and firms that have built a strong marketing and media department (Red Bull Media House). All these private sector influences belong to the realm of entertainment defined in this thesis.

The use of studying other organisations for benchmarking serves two purposes: improving one's thinking and justifying one's recommendations or choices internally. Insights from these influences include: the way a team works internally or within the organisation; the way a company works; the formats it develops; the way it reaches its audiences; the way it uses technologies.

The role of EBU

EBU actively supports labs as instruments of the transformation of PSM, both through networking and knowledge exchange, and by helping scale initiatives.⁷⁷⁸ Organised groups such as the Digital Storytelling Labs group assemble individuals rather than teams. This group has about 100 individual members with very different roles, including a focus rather on the technology or on the editorial side. Overall, the main focus of this group's meetings is on topics related to editorial work. Another relevant EBU group for this project is the Implementing Open Innovation group. Both groups centre their activities around theme visits at EBU members. This exchange may favour the emergence of what Giseline Kuipers (2011) describes as the transnational cultural field when analysing the role of television buyers.

As a knowledge sharing platform, EBU can be a partner in supporting PSM organisations scale successful initiatives across organisations, notably by leveraging EU funding.

Labs as an illustration of the turn to entertainment

In relation to the broader theme of entertainment, this research raises several points. First, entertainment programmes were often the pilot for early social media strategy explorations. Second, only a limited number of labs explicitly focus on entertainment programmes; rather, a focus on news is more frequent. This may reflect the negative view on entertainment and the implicit higher regard for information, thus facilitating the work of gaining internal legitimacy and support. However, third, the work and projects of labs is very much centred on making the experience of the user more enjoyable and thus entertaining; to reach younger audiences, the PSM must improve the reception experience and use entertainment to inform. Therefore, entertainment is key to the lab delivering public value. And fourth, the lack of explicit recognition of this point in turn highlights the commonly held negative view of entertainment; it may be difficult for an innovation team that is already disrupting processes and practices to furthermore argue for the importance of entertainment in journalism.

The argument put forward by lab managers on this issue typically goes as follows: based on the Enlightenment perspective founding the mission of public service media, it must also be entertaining; the majority of citizens will not seek out the information they need to be informed, engaged citizens, even if it is free.

⁷⁷⁸ EBU is not the only organisation that can create such networks, as VRT showed when scaling its Sandbox by setting up a Sandbox Hub, opening its network to other European broadcasters.

Summary

This overview of results showed commonalities and differences in innovation labs at PSM. While their focus varies, for instance on one ecosystem actor (startups for VRT Sandbox) or due to the department they are a part of (the newsroom for France Télévisions' Medialab and YLE News Lab), they share an understanding of innovation as serving to transform the organisation to adapt to the current world and ensure the PSM's durability and legitimacy. An audience focus appears to be another common point. They differ in regard to their communication strategy and stakeholder groups. The thematic focus points are largely similar across PSM, with varying degrees of focus on a technology as opposed to its societal impact. I now turn to an analysis of these findings.

5.5. Analysis

Innovation is a reflexive practice. Lab practitioners develop and share conceptual models to frame their activities and mission. By the nature of their mission, these organisations tend to be project-based and in flux, both in their object matter and their own organisation. I analyse the results described in the previous section, grouping insights into five categories: the mission and its evolution; operational capabilities and the team; tactics and fitting in the organisation; success factors and challenges. Next, I propose seven roles that an innovation lab may play within a PSM. In this analysis, it is essential to stress that each context is different; the aim of this analysis is to contribute to general insights on the innovation function within a PSM, particularly the lab format. The analysis also considers elements from PSM that have moved on from innovation labs, as they may be on a track that highlights lessons for other PSM.

5.5.1. The mission and its evolution

The description of labs and innovation teams reviewed in this study shows a diversity in their approaches. These teams share some traits in their mission and are different in other regards. Furthermore, a lab's mission regularly evolves. Those PSM that have moved beyond labs argue that this means they are further along on a (digital) innovation maturity model. In some cases, the PSM went on to develop specialised labs that have a focused mandate (for instance, the IMI of RTS or VRT's Sandbox). Furthermore, labs may develop services for the overall organisation that they use in supporting projects or to test new tools for storytelling (for example ABC Life, BBC Taster, VRT Video Snackbar).

The emergence of a lab and its initial mission is sometimes difficult to define. It may accompany an ongoing strategy development process; it may have evolved from a previous team; or it may be reorganised for a new mission after a certain time and/or a change in management. The director-general's sponsorship sometimes counts in the creation of the team. Overall, innovation labs appear to be focused on digital projects and topics, and generally on topics that others are not yet addressing but that management, the team or their clients feel that someone should be working on.

PSM innovation labs are focused on supporting the PSM fulfil its mission in line with the technologies and user practices of its time. To varying degrees, the underlying mission for innovation labs, beyond the official mission statement, seems to be an urgent mission to future-proof the organisation ("to save the [name of the PSM]"). Implicitly, this means better responding to (younger) audiences' expectations; in turn, this suggests the turn to entertainment, as programmes or as a feature aimed for even in providing news, as displayed in explorations of TikTok. It is remarkable that a major source of inspiration for labs outside of PSM are from the entertainment and technology sectors; and yet, they do not internally reflect this in their discourse.

While the notion of "lab" appears to be a loaded term, sometimes implying an isolated team, it seems to carry values that most innovation teams can relate to: humility; experimentation and iteration; curiosity; a relative liberty in the topics it explores and in the use of its resources, particularly in the allocation of its staff's time.

Beyond this, mission statements are not always clearly defined. This may be a consequence of the fast-evolving field they work in and of the logic of building as they go. An iterative approach to one's work, when applied to the team's mission, means a logic of experimentation to increase one's impact when faced with the realities of an organisation and change management. The iteration ethics that are practiced by most innovation labs are reflected in their own self-understanding. Most labs have undergone a major adaptation of their mission or task, either due to what they learnt in regard to their impact, or due to evolving conditions surrounding their activities (such as a change in leadership).

The importance of audience insights, related to the increasing datafication of audiences, is rising within PSM; audience insights are increasingly a key resource that an innovation lab can provide innovators across the organisation. A finer understanding of audiences in their diversity allows the PSM to better serve the public, beyond a general intention to attract "young audiences". Whether the innovation team can provide this service, or does so working with an audience research or audience insights team, as at YLE News, depends on the organisational setup.

This study found differences in the mission labs are tasked with. While contributing to the organisation's transformation is a consequence of the innovation team's conducting their work, it is rarely explicitly part of their core mission. A lab may be considered a space to think ahead, or a factory for proof of concept or pilot projects; one could describe this opposition as that between the think tank and the do tank. Sometimes, the lab is a facilitator between technology and content. In turn, this may be aimed at internal publics or external audiences. For instance, RTVE works with large external event organisers with the intention of expanding audience habits and making them familiar with new technology, while attracting them with entertainment content. Implicitly, the PSM thus arguably plays a role in fighting a digital divide. Furthermore, a lab may have an editorial expertise in its own right: NRKbeta team members are invited to share their views on technologies and their impact on society in both programmes and articles; RTVE Lab launches its own editorial projects. In turn, this leads to brand recognition for the lab and its projects.

An issue that was brought up in relation to the necessary transformation of the broader organisation and its professions is the required development of PSM staff members' skills. This is not a core mission of the labs, but their work may contribute to this transformation as a consequence of their participation in projects. In turn, this issue raises the question of the lab's role in an organisation's transformation and the challenge of centralising this role in a small team. One specific view of this issue can be found at YLE News Lab, where the vision is to engage the whole of YLE News in contributing to the Lab's mission of inventing the future of journalism. Facilitating the emergence of communities of practice and their animation are means to contribute to this goal.

One could present the emerging picture of innovation labs at PSM as follows, while stressing that each story and context is different. This research appears to show a move away from a centralised unit building independent prototypes, back to ensuring an active participation by the editorial or other teams in innovation projects. There appears to be a recurring sequence in the evolution: an early phase of innovation labs sponsored by the director-general, then the issue arises of innovation transfer and potential competition with digital teams, and then the increasing integration within the existing organisation, either as a team that remains independent yet mission-orientated or spread across the organisation. Put another way, it is the story of a shift from strategy and pilots to organisational culture; labs may thus accompany a period in the slow transformation from a public service broadcaster to a public service media. While this is a broad-brush story, each context is evidently different.

5.5.2. Operational capabilities and the team

Operational capabilities include financial and human resources. Human resources include both internal team members and the ecosystem the lab can count on. A lab is essentially a small team with a varied skillset, an understanding of the industry, of the importance of understanding user practices, and of external trends. Staff members appear central in an activity that requires creativity, discipline and adaptability.

With this in mind, this study has found teams with a passionate staff aiming to “save” their PSM and animated by a sense of urgency. Diversity within the team appears to be reached in a range of manners. This may be by building on a permanent team and a range of external consultants engaged in projects (for instance at YLE) or interns who understand younger audience needs (France Télévisions), or by favouring rotations and staff turnover within the organisation. Teams appear varied both in skillsets and in age: PSM tend to be organisations with a higher average age than competing media organisations, and the intergenerational work appears to yield relevant results. Some rotation in the team may favour a continued fresh outlook and reduce the risk of the team wearing out in the face of internal resistance. Team motivation and the energy to drive change in the face of resistance to change may be a challenge. This research found that typically at least half of the staff of the innovation lab are previous PSM employees; the key risk in a fully external team is that of acceptance by other departments.

Smaller teams are more agile and require less structured information sharing processes. The BBC’s R&D FET has a structured internal communication system and processes to organise and manage the work of a large team. The lab manager often plays the role of a coordinator. In some cases, the lab members are effectively coordinators who facilitate projects in and between departments (DW Lab).

Part of the work of an innovation unit is to observe what is happening outside the PSM. This may specifically include working with the ecosystem: startups, scholars, or audience members. While observation of developments in the ecosystem and the media sector globally belongs to the realm of an innovation unit, active engagement with specific groups does not. VRT Sandbox is an example of a lab that is centred around engagement with one stakeholder group, startups. The extent to which an innovation unit collaborates with competing media depends on the PSM’s remit: when sharing insights or working on projects with competing media serves the purpose the remit states, as in the cases of RTVE Lab, YLE News Lab and NRKbeta, which all aim at fostering media plurality and fighting fake news.

The challenge of managing an innovation lab is the balancing act of maintaining connection to the broader organisation while also maintaining a fresh outlook. The first

is achieved through an established existing network combined with an understanding of the industry, while the second needs energy to push for change. The ideal setup depends on the context and on the mission of the innovation lab, as well as on the external resources it can build on.

5.5.3. Challenges and success factors

Innovation labs face the challenge of demonstrating their impact and of fitting within the organisation. This has consequences for staffing, the type of projects the lab is involved in, its processes and its communication. Several tactics to increase the impact emerged during this research, which I discuss now. These success factors relate to the strategic triangle for managing public value, operational capabilities and legitimacy and support. I discuss five challenges or success factors for innovation labs: performance measurement; resources and power; innovation transfer; fitting within the organisation; communication.

Performance measurement

While innovation is a particularly reflective practice, these units struggle with impact measurement. They typically have key performance indicators for single projects. At the same time, they often develop processes and theories around their action. Likewise, having some projects fail is considered a success: a lab that never faces failures is not taking enough risk. In terms of impact, the innovation team must also demonstrate that it works for the whole organisation and not only for an internal innovation elite.

It could be argued that, in line with Eric Ries' (2011) thinking about startups, the performance of these units could be measured by the insights they provide. This view fits with the role of a permanent strategic function for reflection on the developments and their impact on the PSM and on society (such as at NRKbeta). As part of their reflective nature and to increase their impact, labs share findings. They use “show & tell” events to present their projects both internally and externally. The external communication on findings and projects through a blog contributes to this effort to generate knowledge for the PSM and the media sector.

Resources and power

Within a large organisation such as a PSM, budgets relate to power. At many PSM, the largest share of budgets still goes to legacy channels, with a minority deliberately organising budgets independently of distribution channel. When budgets and hence

power are still largely directed to legacy channels, that limits the internal authority and power of innovation units to drive action. Limited human resources may also mean relying more on outsourcing and on phasing projects. Given the limited resources of PSM, funding innovation projects means not investing elsewhere. In this context, incumbent programmes and channels have vocal external supporters, as becomes visible any time a PSM announces a change to programmes; new programmes, by definition, do not yet have an audience that can call for them. Innovation labs are at the centre of the tension between new and incumbent programmes, technologies and practices.

Depending on the PSM governance structure, an oversight committee can be a valuable partner for an innovation team. Typically representing external stakeholders, the oversight committee or audience representatives have an interest in ensuring that the PSM serves the citizens' interest, independently of the organisation's internal change management issues. Thus, the oversight committee's orientations may provide support to the innovation unit's work of advancing innovation throughout the PSM.

Director-general sponsorship of an innovation unit is a double-edged sword. While it may provide decisive support and funding in the early days, a change in director-general can challenge the continued existence of the team, as it may be branded a pet-project of previous leadership. It thus appears relevant for the team to ensure that it gains internal support across the organisation beyond leadership.

Funding is a recurring challenge, yet it is also an asset: limited funding requires pitching projects to other departments, thus getting those departments engaged in projects that are relevant to them early on. Funding for deployment of a new service or programme in the regular offering is the decisive point for the PSM overall.

Innovation transfer

While few labs have precise overall performance measurement frameworks, they have to manage their legitimacy by demonstrating their value. The passage from the phase of pilot projects by the lab to deployment by the relevant department is the difficult step of innovation transfer; it is particularly difficult if the department was not involved in the pilot or considers it a fully external project that may destabilise its planification. This latter point is particularly the case with development or technology teams, when the governance of innovation within the PSM is not clear and such projects come on top of the existing roadmap. However, editorial teams typically also want to develop their own innovative projects; a successful innovation unit appears to find a way to support

internal innovators throughout the organisation, notably by convening relevant stakeholders. It may lead the way in opening up new topics or audiences and engaging with internal stakeholders to develop new services. Furthermore, projects facilitated or supported by labs are often viewed as “fun” projects, since they explore novel areas, topics, technologies; finding colleagues across the organisation that are excited to take part in such projects is a key task of a lab.

There is a risk for an innovation unit of performing what critics describe as “innovation theatre”; this is innovation for show, with limited impact. To prevent this, innovation units work on supporting existing teams, enabling and facilitating their work and using senior sponsorship to open doors.

Several behaviours emerged as contributing to successful innovation transfer. Some examples are: selecting thematic focus points amongst the many emerging topics, recent examples are voice command or augmented reality; defining a clear process for identifying issues that the PSM should follow; involving other departments and leadership in the results of explorations; and understanding when to relinquish control of a topic, accepting that it is transferred to another department. Not accepting transfer of a topic risks the unit staying focused on a limited set of topics for too long, while monopolising them within the organisation. This is another challenge of innovation transfer: rather than another department not accepting the innovation, the innovation lab refuses to let go of an innovation and prevents others from integrating it.

Fitting within the organisation

To be impactful within a PSM, a lab manager must manage the team’s mission, its operational capabilities and its legitimacy and support. This has implications for budgets and human resources, managing the relationship with senior management while providing value. Innovation tends to generate resistance; good human relations and a strong tactical sense are essential to overcome this resistance.

Innovation labs face internal politics. There can be an immune reaction from existing silos when they encounter a team that attempts to foster cross-sector collaboration outside of regular processes. Furthermore, in some cases the perimeter of a lab’s activities can be challenged by other teams, notably the technology team. Also, the digital team may perceive the innovation team as internal competition working on “shiny” projects that gain the attention of leadership and the public. In this context, the choice to name the unit in relation to “innovation” or “digital” is often linked to considerations of internal legitimacy. To prevent the immune reaction of silos against projects carried by the innovation unit, the team needs to involve the relevant

departments in projects and decision-making. Striking the balance between involving the necessary people and remaining agile and innovative is difficult.

In case of a strong immune reaction, an innovation lab may end up tamed and face the risk of being used essentially as mere workshop and meeting facilitators in an organisation that has strained resources. A lab must thus keep a reflective focus on its own mission within the organisation, while also considering that this mission must evolve and adapt.

The central question for an innovation lab within a PSM appears to be to manage the right amount of discomfort it exposes the organisation to; it is about managing the balance between provoking a reassessment of existing practice and provoking resistance to change. A successful project depends on finding the right internal partners at the right time. Yet, while some teams may be relevant to a given topic, they may prefer not to participate for lack of interest, time or funding.

Labs appear to reflect their PSM in their mission and organisation. Some PSM, namely VRT, NRK, YLE and BBC appear to be more digitally mature. They also have bigger teams for their innovation units, which are in some cases specialised. Their budgets are less allocated to legacy channels, namely radio and television. Thus, budget allocation appears to be a major lever in the transformation of the organisation. This in turn changes the relative position of innovation teams within the PSM. To face limited financial and human resources (operational capabilities), regional PSM appear to leverage international networks and funds for their transformation (VRT).

With innovation transfer and organisational transformation in mind, several innovation units appear to increasingly focus on the transfer of competencies to colleagues in other departments. Ensuring credibility by providing support and demonstrating results rather than pure strategy, this could be reframed as "show rather than tell".

Communication

Communication, while often not prioritised by innovation units, is recognised as important to its impact. Furthermore, for innovation units that have an established innovation process, transparency on selection criteria is essential.

The success of an innovation unit could mean that it is no longer needed: if colleagues throughout the organisation actively seek out technologies and practices to develop new formats, processes and projects, and if the organisation supports this, the innovation unit may no longer be needed. A lab's success may lead to its discontinuation.

5.5.4. Seven roles of an innovation lab

This review of innovation labs at PSM allows me to propose seven key roles that such teams may play. Rather than focusing on defining a precise mission or a type of innovation, this approach allows the lab to define how it can support the organisation and a range of internal or external stakeholders in the necessary and continuous transformation of the PSM. One single lab or innovation team may take on several roles in general or relating to a level of PSM, for instance, by being a strategist on infrastructure in both software and hardware because these are under the responsibility of the digital or development teams. Likewise, a PSM may have several innovation teams performing different roles within the organisation, as at BBC, France Télévisions and VRT. Furthermore, a given lab may shift its role over time, based on first experiences and insights gained within the context of the organisation. Typically, the issue of innovation transfer and cultural change arise, leading to an attempt to be more integrated within the organisation.

The seven roles I propose are: the think tank; the strategist; the coordinator; the facilitator; the interface; the do tank; the editorialist. I briefly introduce each role and illustrate it with a case from this study. They differ in the extent to which they are strategic as opposed to operational and editorial, and the extent to which they are integrated within the organisation and support other teams.

The think tank

The think tank offers its team members and its organisation a space of freedom to consider futures and explore them. The think tank is typically composed of a range of self-governed specialists who can afford to explore topics that may appear irrelevant in the short term but may become very relevant in the mid-term. While not necessarily very integrated within the organisation, the think tank scans the horizon and works with any member of the organisation that understands the support the think tank can provide. Example: NRKbeta.

The strategist

The strategist scans the horizon for trends and proactively considers the projects that ought to be conducted within the organisation to explore technologies. Typically, this is a small team close to senior management or a member of it. The strategist plays the role of an expert advising the leadership and sponsoring special projects. Example: ZDF.

The do tank

The do tank builds prototypes. Thanks to internal team resources, it builds prototypes and proposes them to the responsible departments. The degree of the involvement of the owner department appears to increase with the age of the lab. The do tank can be generalist, or specialised on a specific segment. This is the case of France Télévisions with the following specialisations: audience's use of devices; production technology; technology for advertising purposes. Examples: RTVE Lab, YLE News Lab, RTS' Labo numérique, SR Innovation, BBC's R&D FET, France Télévisions' Medialab de l'information.

The coordinator

The coordinator plays a role in ensuring the coherence and overview of ongoing innovation initiatives throughout the organisation. It can offer lab participants and project managers an access to senior management and ensures the efficient use of resources and the sharing of information. The coordinator may facilitate a structured innovation process. It may also convene individuals to jointly explore an emerging topic. Examples: ČRo HUB, DW Lab, ABC Content Ideas Lab.

The facilitator

The facilitator supports the transformation of the organisation by accompanying teams in their projects. The lab projects a humble posture in this role: it provides support, allowing the team leading the project to fully take ownership while considering itself the leader conducting the innovation in its own context. This aims to foster ownership, the lasting impact of the innovation and eventually the transformation of the organisation. Example: France Télévisions' Medialab de l'information, BBC's R&D FET.

The interface

The interface is specialised in the processes of opening the PSM to external partners such as startups or scholars, sometimes granting access to the PSM's teams. Recognising the importance of mobilising an ecosystem in transforming the organisation, the interface is focused on understanding both internal needs and the external ecosystem's strengths to accompany the process of collaboration. Example: VRT Sandbox.

The editorialist

The editorialist develops editorial subjects that address the general public through the programmes. Team members are invited as experts on technology and its impact on society. They may build programmes of their own and have a brand that the public as viewers and listeners recognise. Examples: NRKbeta, RTVE Lab.

Some innovation teams described in this study may cover several or all of these roles; some PSM have separate teams for different roles. BBC R&D FET may have all of these roles. VRT and France Télévisions have different teams playing different roles. Furthermore, in several cases, the head of the lab is also a member of management and as such plays the role of a strategist as an individual, while the team essentially works as a facilitator. Furthermore, national cultural specificities including the importance of hierarchies may favour one set of roles over another for effective innovation transfer. All of these roles require scanning the environment and setting thematic priorities.

This raises two questions. Are all these roles needed within a PSM? Are there roles where a centralised approach as opposed to a decentralised approach is relevant? It seems that some of these roles reflect the organisation's approach to innovation and may be the product of national and company culture as well as the maturity of the organisation on these topics. The type of response or support an innovation team can bring is driven by the extent to which teams across the organisation take ownership of innovation and have the means to implement innovation. Two roles for which centralisation may be relevant are the think tank and the strategist: a metaphorical space within the organisation for taking a big picture approach to the developments and challenges ahead. These are incidentally the two roles that operate on a strategic level. This, however, requires a leadership that shows a critical interest in the insights that these roles may provide.

These roles proposed here may be used by PSM in order to clarify the mission of the innovation team and its value proposition for other departments. Differentiating roles for each layer within a PSM could facilitate the team mitigating misunderstandings or competition with other teams such as digital or technology development. The articulation between the roles and the layers of a PSM are represented in the following table.

Table 28: The lab roles - PSM layer matrix

	Think tank	Strategist	Do tank	Coordinator	Facilitator	Interface	Editorialist
Creation							
Connection							
Curation							
Software							
Hardware							

As such, the proposed typology of seven roles could be a valuable tool for lab managers and PSM management.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that innovation labs are not the only players in PSM innovation; furthermore, a PSM may have several specialised labs. While an innovation lab may reflect an initial impulse from management and its vision of innovation, these teams actively shape their mission. It evolves based on initial results. In surveying twelve PSM that have or had innovation labs, I found that innovation teams evolve over time, based on their understanding of their effectiveness and impact and given their evolving constraints, whether imposed or observed. While they mainly support internal teams, they may also play a role in fostering the sensibilisation of the general public to technologies through familiar events. The term “lab” itself appears to be loaded, in some cases. It may be associated with a separate group within the organisation, highlighting the importance of the network and the issues of innovation transfer.

Innovation labs are thus tasked with supporting the PSM to adjust its practices and texts to respond to evolving trends and mandates. Innovation labs typically count on senior management buy-in to operate with extended freedom in comparison to regular internal units, leading some to describe them as “in-house startups” or think tanks.

Innovation labs face the challenge of focusing on their mission while actively shaping it, in a context in which both other departments and leadership view the team as resources that can be allocated to a range of activities (strategy development, workshop facilitation, etc.). Most labs show a shift from a focus on pilot projects and strategy, to working on organisational culture and staff capacities. This may suggest a general trend with the rising PSM digital maturity towards a hands-off, experiment-savvy strategy team with a strong network throughout the organisation and the ability to providing resources and audience insights to support innovators throughout the organisation. Reflecting the conceptualisation of entertainment in chapter three, labs are not as much focussed on entertainment as a category of content as they are on

the reception by audiences, and thus the entertainment experience of programmes, including in journalism.

As the coordinating group within EBU shows, there is a real potential for sharing knowledge, best practices and finding project partners across similar member organisations. This potential is a consequence of the similar challenges all PSM face; this exchange may not be limited to PSM and include other incumbent media firms.

Labs may have a limited life, progressively approaching a form of transformation project team. As such, their methods and tools may disappear with the eventual dissolution of the lab. There may be a potential for the EBU to serve as an archive for methods and tools to share across organisations and over time. In this sense, EBU may itself play the role of a facilitator for its members.

This research found that innovation labs can play one or several of the roles of a: think tank, strategist, do tank, coordinator, facilitator, interface and editorialist. They have the benefit of time and space to innovate within organisations that are under pressure, and thus cannot offer existing teams much space for strategy and exploration. Innovation labs work on building audience insights and follow technology trends, thus accompanying the shift towards entertainment from a public service perspective; this includes working on how to make programmes more accessible and enjoyable. This research found that labs do not focus mainly on infrastructure, but rather on the layers of connection, creation and curation, which in turn shows their focus on the PSM's service delivery rather than on technology as an end in itself.

Labs face several challenges. The balance between involving enough people across departments to ensure that an innovation is continued, yet not so many as to reinforce resistance to change. Innovation units are at the centre of a rising tension between the existing and the new, be it in programmes, processes or technologies. Labs aim to facilitate change, but need to ensure they do not create too much tension that it provokes resistance instead of evolution. The challenge of innovation transfer remains key; innovation teams have addressed this challenge by involving other departments in projects early on, and specifically in playing the role of the facilitator. The sample includes teams in diverse cultural contexts, and the relative importance of hierarchies in these cultures and organisations may play a role in the manner in which innovation is practiced.⁷⁷⁹

⁷⁷⁹ Two dimensions of further research would be useful for practitioners. First, impact measurement for the innovation team overall, specifically in the context of (public service) media. Second, the issue of gender in innovation. PSM tend to be male-dominated organisations, particularly in management. Innovation teams often must challenge the status quo and so issues relating to power relations, notably around gender, may be worth further research.

While this research has not found entertainment programmes to be an explicit centre of the work of innovation labs, it has displayed the awareness of lab managers of the importance for a PSM to captivate their audience's attention, often by providing entertainment, even in journalism. This chapter is a complement to chapter four in demonstrating the increasing recognition of entertainment's central role for PSM to fulfil their universal mandate.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The future is already here - it's just not evenly distributed. William Gibson

Introduction

In the summer of 2020, the president of the United States announced his intention to ban Chinese-owned social media platform TikTok unless it changed ownership. The social video-sharing platform, used by millions of young Americans and known for its lip-sync videos, thus became the battlefield in the ongoing Chinese-American trade war. Through this announcement, the American government publicly recognised the risk that social media platforms pose to national sovereignty, through the data they collect and their potential to modify behaviours – a precedent European leaders may refer to in the future. Commenting on the US policy developments, conservative historian Niall Ferguson (2020) wrote : “TikTok is not just China’s revenge for the century of humiliation between the Opium Wars and Mao’s revolution. It *is* the opium — a digital fentanyl, to get our kids stoked for the coming Chinese imperium.” He went on to specify the threat he believed TikTok represented on three points: the competitive threat to Facebook; the health and security threat to children; and the geopolitical threat in exporting the Chinese government’s worldview. This discourse is similar to that of European critics of Silicon Valley firms. It also echoes critics of radio and television when these were emerging technologies.

The example of TikTok also showcases the importance of the evolution of the viewer to a produser. It is an application that is fundamentally mobile and builds on an invisible AI infrastructure that personalises the experience.

While TikTok is a platform rather than a portal, it fits within a wider screen culture. It is the latest example of technology firms that PSM must consider as competitors for the attention of their audience, especially young viewers. At the same time, PSM also explore the platform’s codes and its users’ practices in order to adapt their own programmes. Indeed, numerous PSM are exploring TikTok as a distribution channel for them to connect with younger audiences. Opponents of such a strategy worry about the amount of data the application collects

TikTok highlights how public service media are at the interplay of politics, culture, and commerce. PSM are impacted by government regulations, technology, the competitive environment and evolving audience practices.

In many European countries, original broadcast media were a public monopoly. First radio, then television, was provided by a public service broadcaster modelled on the BBC and tasked with informing, educating and entertaining the public.

As a consequence of expanding hours and channels, the broadcasting of American entertainment productions and formats in European PSM was debated: do sitcoms and reality TV really belong within the offering of a European national public service media? In our digital era, public service media face the challenge of defining their public service mission in entertainment. Netflix and other portals are increasingly funding local productions, adding to the complexity PSM face defining their public service mission in entertainment. Further complexity arises with the transformation of the viewer to a producer as well as the rising costs of sports competition broadcasting rights. This thesis is a contribution to research on public service media policy with a focus on entertainment.

This dissertation aimed to conceptualise public service entertainment. To do so, I addressed three research questions. First, I conceptualised mediated public service entertainment. Second, I studied the evolving mandates and practices in regard to entertainment in the case of the Swiss PSM SRG SSR. Third, I researched how PSM use innovation units to explore new technologies and evolving user practices to connect with their audiences and create content that the public wants to consume, particularly younger audiences. This research builds on a multidisciplinary approach using research in sociology of culture, public management, and television studies, as well as the concepts of ecology of attention and of the public sphere.

This thesis argues that entertainment is central to public service media, not a secondary mission or a by-product. To capture and hold the attention of its audience, be it individual, joint or collective attention, PSM must provide enjoyment. Otherwise, PSM risk being perceived as an elite media funded by the general public and of therefore losing their legitimacy. Public service media are fragile, so they must actively manage their political stakeholders (citizens and their elected representatives) by demonstrating the public value they provide. Explaining and practicing public service in entertainment, and providing entertaining public service, is crucial for the contemporary PSM.

In this chapter, I review this project's main findings and contributions. I discuss how these findings may contribute to both scholarly research and practitioners' thinking. Finally, I outline avenues for further research.

6.1. Key findings

This research pursued three main objectives. In conceptualising public service entertainment in PSM, it aimed to contribute to PSM policy research. It also aimed to highlight how entertainment may contribute to realising policy objectives, beyond the mere economic policy objective of developing creative industries. Furthermore, it aimed to demonstrate that entertainment, technology and society have evolved jointly, and that entertainment is particularly relevant to the defence of a public sphere in a context of attention scarcity.

To fulfil these three objectives, this dissertation developed both conceptual and empirical contributions: a framework for mediated public service entertainment; lessons about the evolution of technology, entertainment and society in the case of Switzerland; and a list of roles of innovation units at PSM.

Chapter 3 – mediated public service entertainment

This research has shown that public service media has always been a political project. Yet the notion of public service may sometimes have been used as a justification to defend an organisation, rather than as a solid conceptual grounding for a public service mandate. It is particularly important to develop such a theoretical conceptualisation for entertainment. This dissertation contributed an exploration of the topic to this discussion.

Although entertainment is a highly moralised concept, it has been a key goal for PSM since the early days of the BBC, part of the Reithian triad, next to informing and educating. Digital technologies and the Internet have led to the rise in importance of entertainment in capturing an audience's attention.

Tim Wu (2016) describes the continuous collective negotiation of the terms of the deal we have with the “attention merchants”;⁷⁸⁰ likewise, there is an ongoing negotiation with public service media. This negotiation is a collective one, at the interplay of culture, politics, and technology, part of the discussion about how we want to organise our attention. Specifically, what do we expect from our public service media in regard to entertainment, now and in the future? As we are approaching the BBC's centennial, this research proposed to go back and review the fundamentals of the public service mission in our transformed environment.

⁷⁸⁰ He argues that “[s]ince its inception, the attention industry, in its many forms, has asked and gained more and more of our waking moments, albeit always, in exchange for new conveniences and diversions, creating a grand bargain that has transformed our lives. In the process, as a society and individually, we have accepted a life experience that is in all of its dimensions – economic, political, social, any way you can think of – mediated as never before in human history.” (Wu, 2016, p. 5).

To keep users engaged, many forms of communication have adopted elements that are characteristic of entertainment formats; this is clear in the gamification of many user interfaces. Gamification also suggests the rise of the player as a new mode of the citizen. While many fields of life have adopted elements of entertainment, to argue that all is entertainment would mean to state that nothing is.

During the broadcasting era, entertainment was commonly experienced by all viewers, given the limited number of channels. In a digital age, entertainment is highly personalised, as big data enables entertainment providers to build an individualised profile and target each user with entertainment that aims to keep that person engaged as long as possible. The whole paradox of public service entertainment is that it is required to be distinct from purely commercial offerings, i.e. purely responding to what the public wants, but that it must not entirely neglect the audience's preferences either. This can be referred to as a challenge of a libertarian paternalistic approach. A PSM is also expected to provide some shared experiences to contribute to the sense of community. This is where the universalism principle enters: personalisation can enable PSM to provide something for everyone, whereas the limited previous choice necessarily excluded some audiences. Indeed, a limited set of broadcast channels meant choosing which audience segment the broadcaster was going to serve. The history of entertainment in PSM outlines the rising importance of, and necessary interest in, audience preferences to guide programming choices. This was a consequence of increasing choice for listeners and viewers and, arguably, a diminishing acceptance of paternalism. The establishment of audience research units also fits within this trend. The rise of entertainment corresponds to rising competition and the need for entertainment that serves the public interest collectively, jointly and individually.

This research has posited that a public service media ought to play the role of a positive institution, that aims to foster both positive individual traits and positive subjective emotions, as defined by positive psychology. Public service entertainment should respond to either hedonic or eudaimonic needs. A PSM addresses its audience as citizens, not as consumers. In relation to entertainment, what is an entertained citizen? In this thesis, I proposed a model of the citizen in three roles: the co-decider, the contributor, and the individual.

A PSM's offering should address its audience both in its unity and its diversity, when considering its portfolio of programmes. A coherent approach to public service entertainment requires moving beyond a sheer focus on content creation, to consider connection, curation as well as software and hardware. While support for the domestic television and film industry is put forward to legitimise the role of a PSM, its service to

citizens also requires connecting with all people in the nation in their diversity. The layer of curation becomes increasingly relevant in an age of personalisation and heightened user expectations. Both connection and curation are critical to rethinking the traditional PSM brands, channels, and how they serve the audience. The PSM infrastructure that software and hardware represent are also relevant to the delivery of programmes; a review of research on portals has highlighted the politics of platforms and the values that they carry.

Entertainment as a public service mandate requires a clear intention, a political justification for levying a tax and intervening in the market. The argument put forth in this dissertation is that the justification, today, is fourfold. First, entertainment shapes culture and values. Second, the specificities of the type of media product and its consumption, mean that the market may carry either too little offer or generate insufficient demand for public service entertainment, without PSM intervention, compared to what is considered socially optimal. Third, liberal democracies must work to pre-empt their citizens' disinterest, apathy, and distraction, and instead encourage their engagement as co-deciders. Fourth, it may become essential to provide a framework for individual citizen happiness in an attention ecology in which numerous players do not pursue this objective, whereas public service entertainment may.

Chapter 4 – lessons from a century of entertainment in public service media

It is common to argue that PSM are currently undergoing a crisis. Yet, as this research showed in the case of the historical development of Swiss public service media SRG SSR, the narrative of crisis is a recurring one: while the current financial and competitive pressures are obvious, it has arguably always been the case. One can conversely consider the ongoing public debates around PSM as healthy: they show that the role of mass media in the public sphere and of a functioning democracy are relevant to citizens, politicians and the media. This was displayed in the Swiss case with the popular vote on the *No Billag* initiative in March 2018, resulting in clear popular support to the licence fee that largely funds the PSM. Yet the challenge to provide concepts and mandates that demonstrate public value remains central to PSM leadership's and policymakers' work.

The continuous negotiation between the public, its elected representatives, private media, cultural industries, and the PSM drives the evolution of the mandate in general, and conditions surrounding the scope and practice of entertainment in particular. Fitting within the tradition of Swiss federalism and direct democracy, the intention of having a national, or rather language-regional, public sphere of informed citizens was considered an important policy objective. On the local and regional level, private media

therefore gained a public service mandate for local information, but not for entertainment.

The history of policymaking on PSM is intricately bound to the policy fields of infrastructure, telecommunications, media and culture. The Swiss case shows cultural and political specificities across language regions within one common, national regulatory framework, expressed in practices and texts. As it continuously had to reaffirm its legitimacy, SRG SSR broadcast programmes that defined and reflected the national identity; it displayed interregional solidarity by developing equal offerings in the German, French and Italian language regions, despite different population sizes and hence different licence fee revenue in each language region; and it fought to ensure its independence from political actors.

The review of the history of SRG SSR is divided into six periods, structured around major shifts in conditions (regulatory, economic or competitive). Until 1931, Switzerland saw the experimentation with radio and the development of an initial radio regulatory framework. From 1931 to 1938, the public service radio broadcasting organisation was setup. Starting in 1938, the Swiss government developed a policy of national Spiritual Defence, which led to the founding of a national cultural policy in which the national broadcaster played an important role. Television experimentations led to the roll-out of a permanent television service starting in 1958. Competition in broadcasting was introduced in 1983. The challenge of digitalisation started during that period in production and broadcasting technology; yet, competition from digital-native firms, the ensuing rise of the produser and increasing viewer expectations became particularly visible in 2006, highlighting the societal impact of these technologies. In the latest development, SRG SSR launched a portal in late 2020, making entertainment content from the PSM's catalogue available across the country on-demand. From this review of the PSM's history, this research identifies recurring themes, from which I draw eleven lessons, which relate to entertainment, new technology, market dynamics, and Swiss policymaking.

In regard to entertainment at SRG SSR, I argued three findings. The emergence of new technologies necessitates the reinvention of entertainment formats to make the best use of the potential of the technology. In the Swiss case, entertainment programmes shifted from being considered broadcasts that fill available time slots to an art and a science of responding to audience needs. Overall, the adoption of new technology by the general public, particularly reception devices, was driven by the promise of specific entertainment programmes, as was the case with radio and television devices.

This case illustrates two key ideas relating to new technology. Technology applied to entertainment awakens recurring fears from experts and the population alike. These fears can be placed in four categories: the negative impact on health; the social impact on community cohesion and the family unit; the commercialisation of the private and public spheres; and a threat to a pre-existing cultural identity. In the Swiss case, technologies were experimented with before they were regulated and introduced in regular service, reflecting an iterative and exploratory approach, often in partnership with universities.

The case allowed me to propose two insights into the relations with private media, the competitors of a PSM. The mediatic and political attacks on PSM tend to focus on the types of programmes that are the most profitable for private media. In the early days of public radio, newspapers successfully prevented the radio from developing an independent news service. Decades later, private media compete with the PSM for football championship rights and complain about the broadcasts of acquired American fiction. Next to this competitive tension on the domestic market, the Swiss media system faces what it perceives as a common threat from abroad, namely from global technology firms vying for the Swiss audience's attention and for the national advertising market. With this in mind, coopetition is emerging.

As a case study in the development of policymaking in the context of federalism over time, SRG SSR's history illustrates four ideas. Broadcasting contributed to the definition of the national shared identity, particularly in the run-up to World War II. Under threat from fascist propaganda from abroad, the government developed a national cultural policy built on the notion of diversity. Related to diversity and the federal structure, local identities and interests have proven a powerful resistance to change, while also ensuring the diversity and proximity to audiences. Repeated popular votes about media in general, and public service media in particular, remind the reader that institutions are fragile; maintaining the legitimacy of a PSM is a central and permanent task for its leadership and for policymakers.

Swiss policymakers and SRG SSR management face three key challenges in the coming years. First, defining what policy objectives public service media and public service entertainment pursue, within the fields of industrial policy, regulatory policy, infrastructure policy and cultural policy. Second, SRG SSR must ensure it remains relevant to both its audiences and its ecosystem. Third, the PSM must be able to demonstrate its impact, which implies rethinking its measure of success, in a digital era in which broadcast viewership no longer accounts for the full reach of programmes and other datasets are technically available to gain a finer understanding of audiences and the reach of programmes.

These findings are relevant for three categories of readers. First, media scholars will find an extensive case study. Second, scholars of Swiss policymaking and federalism can follow an argument applied over time to the case of public media that may be applied to other fields of policymaking. Finally, SRG SSR management may find this history a relevant lens through which to view current and future strategic moves and the ensuing political debates.

While the evolution of the conceptualisation and practice of entertainment is insightful, it is not detached from the organisation's development. The silos of radio and television tend to last, as do the internal budget and power distributions. Convergence, the keyword of PSM corporate transformation, is hard. To address it, this research also explored innovation units.

Chapter 5 – roles of innovation labs to future-proof public service media

This research has explored the mission and actions of PSM innovation labs. While public service media have continuously evolved and adapted, several have instituted innovation teams, some called labs. In an empirical research based on semi-structured interviews with 12 PSM and EBU, this research contributed a typology of roles an innovation team may play. This relates to the team's mission and position within the organisation and in relation to the ecosystem. The following seven roles were identified: the think tank; the strategist; the coordinator; the facilitator; the interface; the do tank; the editorialist.

The study built on the strategic triangle for public value management, the layers of PSM and five types of innovation in media. This conceptual framework allowed the researcher to propose an approach to the mission of innovation labs, to their legitimacy within the organisation and to their operational capabilities, which include team members, external human resources and their ecosystem, and budgets.

This research addressed the commonalities and differences between PSM innovation labs with regard to mission, scope, focus points, budgets, and communication strategies. It put forward key insights in regard to several themes, including performance measurement, innovation transfer, and fitting within the organisation.

The mission of PSM innovation teams appears to regularly evolve, reflecting the conceptual work of the team and the iterative ethos of labs. In turn, the team and other operational capabilities of a lab are central. Finding the balance between new relevant skills and an understanding of the organisation, combined with an extensive network within the organisation, seems central to increasing the impact of a lab's work, both in terms of its relevance and of innovation transfer. Lab staffers appear to share a perception of an important mission to "save" their PSM. This research also established

insights related to tactics to ensure the lab fits within the organisation with the aim of fostering innovation transfer. Creating enough tension to facilitate change, but not so much tension that it provokes resistance instead, is a challenge, as is the management of the relationship with other teams such as digital and development. Success factors and challenges were identified, including the issue of impact measurement beyond that of single projects. Sponsorship by the director-general is a double-edged sword, as it may allow the team to be initiated and funded yet challenges its continuation should senior leadership change.

Regular exchanges take place between similar innovation-practice functions across PSM, notably facilitated by the European Broadcasting Union, which fosters discussions on both technological and public value issues.

This research is relevant to media innovation research, as it contributes a study of large legacy media organisations undergoing a transformation. It is relevant to practitioners in providing an external comparative categorisation of their innovation work.

What is mediated public service entertainment? I have offered three key approaches to answer this question. First, I have conceptualised public service entertainment, proposing that it requires both a psychological approach and an industrial approach based on an understanding of the effect pursued on an individual and a collective level. Second, I have discussed how the mandate for entertainment was fulfilled in the case of Switzerland, and how this evolved over nearly a century. Third, I analysed how PSM currently stay up to date with the rapid evolution of audience practices, technologies and the competitive environment.

6.2. Limitations

In each part of the study, relevant conceptual and methodological considerations have been addressed. This thesis, as an exploratory study of the concept of public service entertainment, has several limitations that are addressed now. These are broad limitations in the overall construction of this research project.

The mediated public service entertainment framework requires adaptations to be applicable to the specific context and mandate of a PSM. A further chapter applying the framework to the programmes and offering of one PSM could complete the thesis; however, I decided to perform an in-depth study of the development of the entertainment mission over time in the Swiss case, focusing on the trends over time rather than the status at a given point in time.

The findings relating to the development of the mandate and practice around entertainment draw from a case study of Switzerland. The comparative approach within the case study does not aim to generalise findings to other contexts. However, some tensions and dilemmas may be relevant to other organisations or other policymaking fields. As such, these findings may not be applicable to public service media around the world, or in specific media policy contexts.

Innovation at PSM may be fostered by an innovation team. The creation of an innovation lab appears to be a frequent step in the innovation development process at PSM, mandating this study. Yet a broader study of innovation would allow us to look beyond labs and innovation teams. A maturity model of innovation at PSM could support such a research project.

The broader discussion this thesis fits into is the following: if public service is a political project, what can it be in the 21st century? I attempted to contribute to conceptualising one central mission, entertainment, arguing that both the missions of information and education were increasingly linked to the notion of enjoyment and hence entertainment. Yet an approach centred on the role of entertainment may lead to an incomplete view of PSM.

6.3. Relevance

In turning to practical implications of this research, I briefly address three key stakeholders: policymakers, practitioners, and scholars. Policymakers include media and cultural policymakers, practitioners are PSM managers. While the relevance of each segment of this research was addressed in prior chapters, I argue that this research may be relevant in a broader perspective.

A policy-makers toolbox

This research can be relevant to policymakers on two levels. First, it provides concepts and empirical findings that may support policymaking relating to PSM, media and culture. Second, it offers a case study of a sector relevant to the public sphere and public space that faces disruption by technology.

With the objective of fostering positive outcomes and reducing negative outcomes, political scientists and policymakers typically use impact models to conceive and evaluate a public policy. From an attention ecology perspective, it appears the need is double: to “save” the citizens’ attention; and to prevent citizens from becoming disengaged, distracted and apathetic to the public sphere. An additional positive outcome is supporting the motion pictures and entertainment sectors. Currently,

support for the film industry is a major line of defence for entertainment broadcasting by PSM.

The product of a political project, public service media are active in a competitive field that was disrupted early by players created in the digital era. Other fields of policymaking are feeling the pressure of competing actors, challenging the sovereignty of local authorities in urban planning, mobility, and education. The audience-orientation implied by a digital offering and by an enjoyable experience may be an inspiration to the public sector at large. Ensuring connection with citizens, in the shift from government-centric to citizen-centric as described in chapter five, appears essential to maintaining the effectiveness and legitimacy of government. PSM explore how to mobilise user-generated content; governments explore how to mobilise collective intelligence and the crowd to solve nefarious challenges and deliver public policies. Overall, this topic fits within a broader trend towards a participatory state, or a turn to increased citizen participation facilitated by digital technology. In particular local governments are increasingly aiming to reach policymaking goals through empowering local populations and stakeholders, through co-creation or concepts such as participatory budgeting. The findings on innovation at PSM, while focused on a public media context, may be relevant for other areas of public sector innovation, for instance in the role the innovation team takes in relation to the broader organisation.

A practitioner's practical findings

For a PSM manager, this research may provide some theoretical concepts to address and justify necessary choices made in terms of the organisation's activity on the layers of creation, connection or curation. In the discourse around public service media, the key is to show the value of PSM to the citizen as an individual and as a group. It is not mainly about protecting jobs, or an institution. Citizens have a legitimate interest in understanding what a PSM has to offer them and how it compares to competing offerings. The argument may be structured on the individual, joint and collective levels of attention. On the conceptual level, this research contributes to recognising that, while entertainment can be a purpose in itself, it can also become a dimension within news reporting.

Findings about innovation in PSM may contribute to further understanding and sharing best practices across PSM organisations. It may also help articulate the contribution of the PSM in innovating to better serve its audiences.

An agenda for further research

Implications of this research for scholars have been introduced throughout the thesis. I turn to outlining areas that offer the potential to expand on the findings or dilemmas that this research highlighted.

The concepts developed in this dissertation, particularly the mediated public service entertainment framework, could be operationalised using a partner organisation while referring to the organisation's mandate.

Following the relaunch of Danish political drama *Borgen* by Netflix and Denmark's PSM DR, there is the potential to explore the implications and functioning of partnerships between global portals and PSM in co-production deals, and the impact that this has on the distribution outside of a national screen culture. Furthermore, the layers model of public service media showed how the five layers can be separated and provided by different market participants. Scholars could explore the rationale for using regulation to engage private portals in providing public service entertainment on the layers of connection, curation and creation.

There is a need to rethink the performance measurement of public service media in the digital age, to allow citizens, policymakers and management to assess the performance overall and in relation to specific target audiences across channels. While PSM have operated using the measure of success in broadcasting, namely market share, since the introduction of competition, this measure is not as relevant in the digital world. In a digital world, the measure of success often is the time spent on a programme or content. Yet in the context of public service media, maximising time spent may not be a goal to optimise towards; perhaps the case can be made that information should be provided efficiently (by minimising time spent to get the information and context), while entertainment, centred around hedonic or eudaimonic goals, could be measured around time voluntarily spent.

Public service entertainment can be explored through the lens of research on happiness. This approach has been used as a method to evaluate other public policies and so could be applied to public service media's offering.

This study may have implications for scholars of Internet studies: beyond the commercial Internet and the commons, PSM websites, apps and portals are a model of service provided by an organisation with a public mandate. This may warrant research into how this mandate and these values are operationalised in the user interface, the functionalities and the architecture choices. It may also be related to the research on information and disinformation as they intersect with media business models and the political decision-making. This area is relevant to PSM practitioners, as signalled by research work at BBC R&D on human values.

The entertained citizen could be explored through the lens of the datafication of viewers and personalisation. This in turn may be related to the building of practical knowledge. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to explore the development of smart citizens who can use the benefits of technology in their best individual and collective interest, beyond the logic of the smart city.

Conclusion – entertainment and building the future

This thesis made the case for a clear conceptualisation of entertainment in public service media. Entertainment can draw people in, foster communities and help one make sense of one's life. Yet, the concept of entertainment is highly moralised and often viewed as having negative consequences. I am optimistic as to the importance of public service media in society and the role it can play, particularly if it can defend and articulate its vision around entertainment.

Entertainment has a central role to play in helping society face major global challenges. As an illustration, I briefly discuss two such global challenges: climate change, environmental economics and the green new deal; the future of work in the face of automation. Our collective attention shapes the world; entertainment can draw our attention to these issues and contribute by helping us imagine better potential futures. We have the potential for utopian imagination, by a community, a nation, and the planet.

Climate change is a major challenge for current generations. A Green New Deal has been proposed by the American Left to imagine a societal and political response to this challenge. These ideas have since been applied abroad, including in Europe. By taking a holistic approach to a Green New Deal, Aronoff, Battistoni, Aldana Cohen and Riofrancos (2019) consider the interplay of energy, housing, mobility, work and leisure. Specifically, they argued that leisure and recreation are an integral part of a Green New Deal. They refer to the investments in what Klinenberg (2018) describes as social infrastructure: parks, swimming pools, communal areas in public housing. From this perspective, decarbonising leisure and recreation make them a motor for the transition. Climate change and PSM entertainment might interact in two ways: by using stories to engage the population towards a greener future, and by providing public service entertainment that is sustainable, so this transition becomes a constraint for PSM.

Entertainment has a role to play in the debate around the future of work during this period of rising automation and inequality. Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee

(2016) study the impact of machine intelligence on the economy, arguing for technological, societal and economic progress. Recurring themes in this discussion are the role of the government in providing initial or continued training, leisure, entertainment, as well as a universal minimum wage. The rise of artificial intelligence technologies and the automation of blue- and white-collar jobs are replacing globalisation as the main threat to employment in western economies. Some argue these forces will bring about as strong a transition as the industrial revolution, a period that saw terrible living conditions for large swathes of the population. The state was legitimised by providing physical security from foreign powers to its citizens, not economic well-being. This is the period of the famed Luddites, a recurring theme in contemporary media when discussing artificial intelligence. Currently, as increasing automation leads to surging inequality, state legitimacy is increasingly questioned. Beyond the issue of redistribution of opportunity and wealth, some discuss what to do with the time made available by automation; a discussion that may remain a fiction, just like economist John Maynard Keynes' (1963) prediction of a 15-hour workweek for his grandchildren. In some design fiction scenarios, the state will provide entertainment to its citizens the way it provides schooling to children.

We live in a time of growing fears around identity and cultural anxiety. The rise of populism and nationalism is challenging globalisation. Political scientist Ian Bremmer (2018) describes this when discussing what he calls the “failure of globalism” in his book *Us vs. Them*. It is urgent to rediscover our shared identities. The shared identity, the imagined community of the nation were central to the early plea for public service broadcasting and is still relevant today for PSM.

These topics illustrate the importance of collective decision-making for the resilience of a society; one can argue that involving citizens increases the resistance of a society to external shocks. Structured collective decision-making processes require the existence of spaces for debate, of a public sphere. The public sphere is currently severely challenged by the algorithmisation and the personalisation of culture and mass media. To counteract these trends, we need to reinvent the public sphere. PSM entertainment may play a role in developing a sense of community, empowering citizens, and imagining a shared destiny.

In turn, the scholars or activists working on each of these major current topics should consider the role that entertainment could play in reaching their objectives as well as how entertainment itself is impacted. For example, how to mobilise the population to

take action or pressure their elected representatives and companies to do so, or how entertainment may be decarbonised to reduce climate change. How to use entertainment to ensure that no one is left behind as jobs are displaced, and that each and every one of us has a life-long learning experience to meet the challenge of automation. How to ensure that groups within a community develop empathy, and that an individual has the conceptual tools to lead a happy life.

Reflecting on the early phases of the COVID-19 crisis, the editor-in-chief of scientific medical journal *The Lancet* Richard Horton (2020) writes: “[w]e need to foster better and more informed conversations (and criticisms) about our present and future, about the kinds of people we want to be, about the kind of society we wish to inhabit, and about what we owe to one another” (p. 114). By being transparent in the way it curates, connects and creates, by engaging with its community and ecosystem and by opening the discussion about its mandate, I am convinced that public service media play an indispensable role for our future.

While I would like to close this thesis by referring to Looney Tunes’ “That’s all Folks!”, it is more fitting to remind the reader of the importance of entertainment and of the threats and opportunities that lay ahead for public service media by quoting Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way [...]”. Policymakers, PSM managers and citizens are responsible for defining the PSM and, eventually, the entertainment that they want for themselves and for their society.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Foundation date of original EBU members

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) was founded on February 12, 1950, as an alliance of public service media organisations. Its predecessor organisation, the International Broadcasting Union (IBU) was founded in 1925, yet, as many international organisations at the time, it lost its credibility during the events leading to World War II.

The original membership of EBU, based in Geneva, Switzerland, comprised 21 members, expanding progressively to account for 70 members representing 116 organisations in 56 countries (July 2019).

Table 29: List of the founding members of EBU

Country	Member organisation	Acronym	Foundation year
Belgium	Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroeporganisatie	VRT	1930
Belgium	Radio-Télévision Belge de la Communauté Française	RTBF	1930
Denmark	Danmarks Radio	DR	1925
Finland	Yleisradio	YLE	1926
France	Groupement des Radiodiffuseurs Français de l'UER ⁷⁸¹	GRF	1923 ⁷⁸²
Greece	Ελληνική Ραδιοφωνία Τηλεόραση	ERT	1938
Ireland	Raidió Teilifís Éireann	RTÉ	1926
Italy	Radiotelevisione Italiana	RAI	1924
Lebanon	تلفزيون لبنان / Télé Liban	TL	1934 ⁷⁸³
Luxembourg	RTL Group	RTL	1929
Monaco	Groupement de Radiodiffusion monégasque	GRMC	1943
Morocco	Société Nationale de Radiodiffusion et de Télévision	SNRT	1928
Netherlands	Nederlandse Publieke Omroep	NPO	1947 ⁷⁸⁴
Norway	Norsk Rikskringkasting	NRK	1933
Portugal	Rádio e Televisão de Portugal	RTP	1935
Sweden	Sveriges Television och Radio Grupp ⁷⁸⁵	STR	1925
Switzerland	Swiss Broadcasting Corporation ⁷⁸⁶	SRG SSR	1931
Tunisia	Établissement de la radiodiffusion-télévision tunisienne	RTTT	1938
Turkey	Türkiye Radyo-Televizyon Kurumu	TRT	1926
United Kingdom	British Broadcasting Corporation	BBC	1922
Vatican	Vatican Radio	VR	1931

⁷⁸¹ This includes France Télévisions, TF1, Canal+, Radio France and France Médias Monde.

⁷⁸² Radio PTT, a national public radio service, was founded in January 1923.

⁷⁸³ Under the French mandate in Lebanon, Radio-East broadcast as of 1934.

⁷⁸⁴ Creation of the Netherlands Radio Union (NRU)

⁷⁸⁵ Includes Sveriges Television (SVT), Sveriges Radio (SR) and Sveriges Itbildningsradio (UR)

⁷⁸⁶ Includes Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (SRF), Radio Télévision Suisse (RTS), Radiotelevisione svizzera (RSI) and Radiotelevisioni Svizra Rumantscha (RTR).

Appendix 2: Interview guidelines for innovation labs

These interview guidelines were used for semi-structured interviews described in chapter five.

The interviews were planned for 60 minutes.

Section 0. Introduction.

- Present the research project & its objectives
- Present the interviewer
- Present the structure of the interview
 - o May I record our conversation and will use it for this research? May I name you and your organisation?

Key points about the research project and the interview

- Research conducted at the University of St.Gallen in collaboration with the EBU
- Focus on teams that are formalised as innovation teams; I fully understand that innovation may take place at several locations throughout the organisation.
- I understand that PSM has continuously innovated due to changes in technology, user behaviour, competitive environment and regulations.
- Research results will be shared with participants
- Conversation structured around your role and the lab; its activities; its focus, in regard to both PSM layer and innovation; legitimacy and support; and public value.
- Within the broader research, I define public service entertainment as follows [if interest by interviewee]: “addresses a viewer as a citizen on one of three levels (co-decider, contributor, or individual) to provide him or her enjoyment with the purpose of reaching a positive impact on the individual physical system, psychological system or the collective social system”.

Section 1. General data

Person

- What is your name?
- What is your job title / role?

Lab

- What is the name of the lab?
- What year was it created?
- What is the team’s mission statement?

- How many people work in the lab (FTE)?
- What are their roles? (E.g. manager/technical/content/designer/facilitator/...)
- Are team members previously PSM employees or external hires?
- Does the team build on an internal network / ambassadors?
- How does the team integrate within the organisation?
- Where are your offices located?
- Beyond human resources, what resources does the lab have? Does it have a dedicated budget?
- What is the team's mission statement/value proposition?

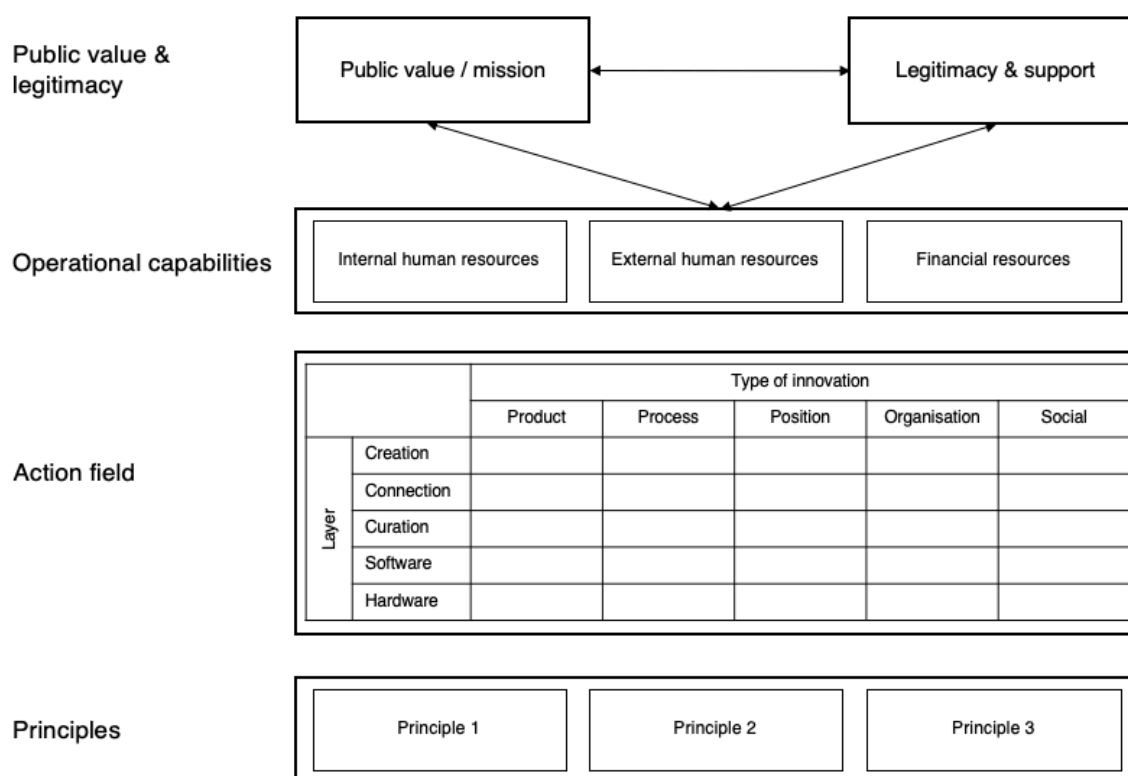
Section 2. Activities

- Do you focus on a distribution channel (radio, television, digital)?
- Do you work more on information, education, entertainment, or no priority?
- Who are the team's clients (internal, external, management, etc.)?
- What is the team's value proposition for these clients?
- Who typically initiates a project (team, management, other departments, ...)?
- [Network] Do you work with startups?
- [Network] Do you work with academia?
- [Network] Do you work with PSM competitors?
- [Network] Do you work with end-users?
- What methods do you use (design thinking, ...)?
- Do you communicate externally about your activities (through social media; newsletter; other)?
- Can you give me an example of three projects the team was involved in, showing the breadth of your activities?

Section 3. Focus

- How do you define innovation in your context?
- Briefly introduce the categories of the model

Figure 15: Tentative framework for PSM innovation labs



Layer of activity

- Briefly define the five layers of public service media networks (based on Goodman and Chen, 2010, p. 128 and Benkler, 2000, p. 562) and present them on a visual support (see figure above)
 - Connection: Engaging the public with public service media content across platforms;
 - Curation: Identifying content & applications of particular value and supporting broad access to the public;
 - Creation: Creating content & applications the market does not support;
 - Software: Logical infrastructure used to transmit public service media content & applications;
 - Hardware: Physical infrastructure used to transmit public service media content & applications.
- Does your lab work on connection?
- Does your lab work on curation?
- Does your lab work on creation?
- Does your lab work on software?
- Does your lab work on hardware?

- Is entertainment a focus point for your lab?

Type of innovation

- Briefly define the five types of innovation (based on Storsul and Krumsvik, 2013) layers and present them on a visual support (see figure above)
 - o Product innovation: describes an evolution of the service or product offered by the PSM. In the context of PSM, this can be illustrated by exploring new storytelling formats using social media.
 - o Process innovation: describes a change in the manner in which the product or service is delivered or created. In the context of PSM, this may include innovating in the integration of user-generated content.
 - o Position innovation: describes a change in the positioning of a product. In the context of PSM, this could mean repositioning a channel to attract a specific audience.
 - o Organisation innovation: describes a change in the values, business model or culture of the organisation. In the context of PSM, this includes the downsizing of internal production teams to work with the independent television sector; or the shift from a linear schedule thinking to VOD.
 - o Social innovation: describes an innovation that pursues a social objective. In the context of PSM, this means expanding the use of products and services for social needs.
- Does your lab work on product innovation?
- Does your lab work on process innovation?
- Does your lab work on position innovation?
- Does your lab work on organisational innovation?
- Does your lab work on social innovation?

Section 4. Legitimacy and support

- What is the team governance structure?
- Who is the lab accountable to?
- Does senior management publicly refer to your work?

Section 5. Public value

- How is the lab's performance measured?
- Why is the team needed?
- Overall, what are the major challenges for the lab?

Section 6. Inspiration & external resources

- What lab did you use as a model to build your lab?
- What would you say are the driving values that your lab stands for?

Section 7. About this research

- Do you have any additional comments, suggestions, or questions?
- Is there a final thought you would like to share with me?
- Is there any other PSM manager that you believe I should talk to and you would want to talk to about this research?

- Thank you very much. I will follow-up if there are any clarifications required on my end. I am available for any questions you may have. Also, I will share a report with all participants.

Contact person

Alexander Barclay

alexander.barclay@unisg.ch

Appendix 3: List of interviewees for chapter 5

- Format: Surname, First name. PSM. Team. Role. Date.
- Amlung, Robert. ZDF. Head of Digital Strategy. 29.05.2020.
- De Paepe, Peter. VRT. VRT Sandbox. Manager. 08.06.2020.
- Gallet, Nathalie. France Télévisions. MediaLab de l'information. Journalist. 29.05.2020.
- Giefer, Andreas. Deutsche Welle DW. DW Lab. Coordinator. 21.05.2020.
- Granryd Tomas. Sveriges Radio SR. Head of Voice Platforms. 25.05.2020.
- Hernanz, Miriam. RTVE. RTVE Lab. Deputy Director of New Storytelling & Lab. 04.06.2020.
- Hofseth, Anders. NRK. NRKbeta. Journalist and Strategic Advisor. 21.05.2020.
- Kudláčová, Edita. Czech Radio CR. Creative HUB. Chief Creative Producer. 21.05.2020.
- Martin, Anne-Paule & Borgo, Eric. RTS. Head of Digital & Head of Innovation. 20.06.2020.
- Niva, Jukka. YLE. YLE News Lab. Manager. 29.06.2020.
- Sharp, Eleni. BBC. BBC R&D Future Experiences Tech. Executive Product Manager. 29.05.2020.
- Stengel, Angela. ABC. Content Ideas Lab. Head of Content Innovation. 11.06.2020.

Preparatory conversation with Eeman, Ezra, Head of Digital and Salucci, Stefano, Digital Community Manager, EBU on 30.04.2020.

Curriculum vitae

Alexander Barclay

Born November 30, 1986, in Geneva, Switzerland

Education

University of St.Gallen	St.Gallen / CH
Ph.D. in Organizational Studies and Cultural Theory	2014-2021
University of St.Gallen	St.Gallen / CH
M.A. in International Affairs and Governance	2010-2013
University of St.Gallen	St.Gallen / CH
B.A. in Economics, B.A. in International Affairs	2005-2010

Work experience

State of Geneva	Geneva / CH
Advisor, Digital Policy and Innovation	since 2016
Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po)	Paris / FR
Adjunct Professor (Maître de Conférence)	since 2015
Swiss Federal Administration	Bern / CH
Scientific Advisor	2015-2016
RoomActually	Paris / FR & New York / USA
Co-Founder	2012-2015
UBS Investment Bank	Zurich / CH
Intern – Equity Capital Markets IBD	2010