

INTERACTION, CO-CREATION AND PARTICIPATION IN PSM LITERATURE, POLICY AND STRATEGY: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF FLANDERS, THE NETHERLANDS, FRANCE AND THE UK

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ABSTRACT *The article critically evaluates whether there is a (mis)match between ideas on audience involvement in public service media (PSM) theory and the translation thereof in public broadcasters' policy and strategy documents. The literature section theoretically frames this discussion, first, discussing five objectives of PSM and audience involvement. Subsequently, it studies how the BBC (UK), France Télévisions (France), VRT (Flanders), and NPO (the Netherlands) have to (policy) and intend to (strategy) involve their audiences. These cases have been selected with an eye on including both better-funded (BBC, FTV) and smaller public broadcasters (VRT, NPO), as well as different media systems. For the analysis, the method of goal-means tree analysis is adopted, a type of qualitative document analysis that can be deployed to uncover goal-means relationships in policy and strategy texts. The main argument is that, rather than a mismatch, some of the questionable, normative assumptions made in theories concerning audience involvement and PSM are also present in the PSM policy and strategy texts.*

KEY WORDS

PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA, AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT, PARTICIPATION, GOAL-MEANS TREE ANALYSIS, COMPARATIVE MEDIA STUDIES

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INTRODUCTION

Public broadcasters are gradually evolving into public service media (PSM) organizations. They reach audiences via different technological platforms and involve (parts of) the public in their service production, delivery and consumption (Enli, 2008; Jakubowicz, 2010: 18; Lowe, 2009). Scholars have argued that these developments might enable two-way communication between public broadcasters and the audience (Murdock, 2004). This could/should come with more equitable participation of the audience in PSM. These somewhat technology-optimist accounts of ongoing changes in the media sector are being picked up in government policies and public broadcasters' own strategies. They emphasize concepts like interaction, participation and co-creation – albeit often without defining these concepts and with little clarity on their status as goals or rather as means of achieving certain public service objectives (see for example Council of Europe, 2009).

The transposition of audience involvement as a key component of PSM into practice appears to be challenging. Some dispute the sincerity of public broadcasters' intentions with involving the 'public' in PSM (Carpentier, 2011: 70; Hasebrink, 2011). Many PSM institutions seem to use it predominantly as a strategic means to face the challenges of the digital age (among others, audience retention) rather than to value the involvement of the public in itself (Enli, 2008: 11; Garcia-Aviles, 2012: 432). In so doing, PSM organizations compromise basic public values (Palokangas and Lowe, 2010: 135) and, in addition, frustrate some media users, who feel their impact on public service production, delivery and even consumption is in fact very limited (Coudry et al., 2010: 39).

Research on audience involvement in PSM now mainly focuses on conceptual issues and empirical measurement of (levels of) participation in PSM (Vanhaeght and Donders, 2015; Wardle and Williams, 2008). However, the question also rises how governments and public broadcasters define and operationalize audience involvement in PSM and whether their definition and operationalization of such an important aspect of PSM is sufficiently clear about *what* it is one wants to achieve and *how* one wants to realize it. This article thus critically scrutinizes how audience involvement in PSM is defined and operationalized in concrete PSM policy and strategy documents. We mainly want to find out whether there is a match or mismatch between theoretical ideas and how these are made explicit in policy and public broadcasters' strategy.

Firstly, we discuss five objectives of PSM and audience involvement, drawing mainly from the literature that discusses the transition from PSB to PSM. Secondly, we elaborate on the method of goal-means tree analysis, a type of qualitative document analysis (Karppinen and Moe, 2012) that can be deployed to uncover goal-means relationships in policy and strategy texts. Thirdly, government policy documents and strategy documents of public broadcasters are scrutinized. We included the main legal texts regulating public broadcasters' scope of activities and strategy documents of public broadcasters for the period 2004-2014 (reflecting the critical years of transition from PSB to PSM). Subsequently, we reflect on the differences there might be between policy and public broadcasters' strategy in a separate sub-section. A comparative case study design is adopted for both

the policy and strategy indicators of this part. We study how the BBC (United Kingdom), France Télévisions (France), VRT (Flanders, the Northern part of Belgium), and NPO (the Netherlands) have to (*policy*) and intend to (*own strategy*) involve their audiences. The cases have been selected with an eye on including both better-funded (BBC, FTV) and smaller public broadcasters (VRT, NPO), as well as different media systems (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, see later). Finally, some conclusions and recommendations are outlined.

INVOLVING THE 'PUBLIC' IN PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA: ASPIRATIONS AND OBJECTIVES IN THEORY

The evolution from PSB to PSM has been mainly approached from a so-called social responsibility perspective. Public broadcasters have to contribute to the needs of a democratic society. This approach stands in sharp contrast with market failure approaches to PSM, limiting public service delivery to the production and delivery of niche services with a focus on supply and not demand (Elstein, 2008). Contributions fitting the first paradigm are most relevant for this article, albeit we also take into account market failure approaches to PSM, which can affect audience involvement as well.

The dominant assumption in the PSM literature is that the evolution from PSB to PSM is a 'good' one, allowing public broadcasters to serve their audience better and to involve the audience in the PSM project (Jakubowicz, 2010: 18; Lowe, 2009). Social responsibility perspectives on PSB and PSM have much in common. Indeed, the objectives with regard to audience involvement in PSM, elaborated upon below, all claim to further PSB's core democratic principles (Bennett et al., 2012) of universality (equal access to independent quality content), creativity (enabling self-actualization, cultural identity and innovation), diversity (including a diversity of opinions in the public debate), social cohesion (sustaining national culture and feelings of solidarity) and participation (fostering the democratic processes within PSM and in society).

Two noteworthy differences between PSB and PSM can be discerned, though. The first difference is that while PSB sets out from radio and television broadcasting, PSM is technology neutral. Public services are offered on all relevant platforms and digitization enables users to create content themselves (Donders, 2012; Jakubowicz, 2010: 18). The first two objectives, elaborated upon below (enhancing universality and creativity), focus on these new opportunities new media bring about. The second difference is that PSM can go further beyond one-way communication than PSB. Namely, the idea of PSM should aim for more equitable participation of the audience in the PSM organization and in society (Council of Europe, 2009: 46). This idea is further elaborated in the last three objectives (enhancing diversity, social cohesion and participation) discussed in this section.

Accordingly, we thus identify five, sometimes idealistic, objectives scholars have put forward with regard to audience involvement in PSM.

UNIVERSALITY: ENABLING ACCESS TO PERSONALISED, INTERACTIVE AND ON-DEMAND CONTENT

The first objective aims to enhance the universality principle by enabling access to personalized and interactive on-demand and online content. By granting individuals and specific target groups (minorities, youngsters) access to personalized content, PSB's classical dissemination experience of providing mass media content is extended (Moe, 2008: 273). The individual citizen can learn more about a specific news topic online (Bennett et al., 2012: 20), youngsters can be reached via mobile applications specifically designed for them and minorities are catered for by specific digital TV channels or PSM websites (Jakubowicz, 2010). Furthermore, it is argued that a more individual content experience, brought about by, amongst others, selection possibilities, causes heightened feelings of involvement for the audience (Lowe, 2009: 11). Eeva Mäntymäki (2009: 98) and Espen Ytreberg (2009: 14) contend that these claims often lack empirical substantiation. Besides, the personalization of content and providing it according to the "Anything, Anytime, Anywhere" paradigm are condemned for undermining PSM's objective of social cohesion, and instead servicing the mere 'consumption' needs of the audience, hence, neglecting 'citizenship' aspects of media use (Bennett et al., 2012: 18; Hasebrink, 2011).

CREATIVITY: ENCOURAGING CO-CREATION

The second objective is to encourage users' creativity by enabling co-creation of content (Jenkins, 2006; Wierdsma, 1999: 31). At the production level the opportunity is gradually given to the public to create and/or upload photos, videos, ideas, etc., which can or will be used in the PSM programs or services, depending on the selection criteria of the media producers. The co-creation of content is a relatively new phenomenon as only recently the threshold for users to create media content has been significantly lowered. Especially in PSM projects targeted at youngsters these co-creation opportunities are adopted, enhancing both youngsters' creative and critical media literacy skills (Temple, 2013: 245). Yet, enabling co-creation is expensive in terms of financial investment and human effort, and opinions are divided as to whether or not the result is worth the cost (Moe, 2013: 114; Wardle and Williams, 2008). Therefore, co-creation is mainly an option for organizations, such as public broadcasters in particular, that ought to value audience contributions beyond their financial value (Bakker, 2011: 250).

DIVERSITY: INCLUDING ALL GROUPS AND OPINIONS IN SOCIETY

Specific target groups such as minorities and youngsters can be better catered to through digital TV channels and PSM websites (*cf. supra*: universality). Next to this, a greater diversity of audience opinions can be present (Garcia-Aviles, 2012: 443; Jenkins and Carpentier, 2013: 281), for example on PSM websites, since the online community is considered a *new forum* for public debate (Moe, 2008: 262). Enhancing diversity is an important democratic objective for PSM, as it grants a better representation of its

audience in the public sphere (McNair and Hibberd, 2003). In this respect, many authors conceive interactivity online as a means to expand the traditional democratic objective of PSB, providing ordinary citizens with a voice in the public space (Council of Europe, 2009: 46; Enli, 2008: 117). Yet, research shows that it is still mostly a small and more privileged part of the population – those who already have knowledge of the social and political worlds (Bergström, 2008; Jenkins and Carpentier, 2013: 282) – are those who interact.

SOCIAL COHESION: FACILITATING DIALOGUE AND DEBATE

Evidently, this new forum for public debate also bears the potential to enhance social cohesion through dialogue and debate ideally, but not necessarily about public life (Freedman, 2008: 147). Social relatedness, on the one hand, and respecting a diversity of opinions on the other, can be enhanced between members of the public (Council of Europe, 2009: 7). This objective is also clearly mirrored in Graham Murdock's ideal of an online civic commons (Murdock, 2004), an online space where citizens debate and receive feedback from one another. The question whether public broadcasters deploy their own websites or adopt social media to create this public forum, is still under debate though (Van Dijck and Poell, 2015: 149). In any case, many argue that the democratic quality of these debates remains highly disputable (Couldry et al., 2010: 39). Also, while audiences are more able to express their opinions, they have, due to the abundance of online interactions, fewer means to ensure they are actually read or heard (Thorsen, 2013: 122).

PARTICIPATION: INVITING THE CITIZEN IN

The fifth objective is to enable the audience (i.e., non-professionals) to be structurally involved in public broadcasters' production, concept design and strategy formulations (Council of Europe, 2009: 7). In this, the core of the PSM idea, participation of the audience in the PSM institution, manifests itself. Two-way communication between the public broadcaster and its public seems to hold its own set of challenges. For instance, when this is facilitated online, research shows that many media producers do not even aim to follow up on audience input (Temple, 2013: 241). Accordingly, the difference with co-creation lays in the fact that participation also refers to the co-decision power of the public in the PSM institution, which brings the notion of power to the foreground. Indeed, participation of the public in PSM inextricably presupposes an ideal type of power-sharing (Carpentier, 2011: 130) between ordinary citizens and media experts, which is aimed for in PSM policy documents as well (NPO, 2014a).

Participation of the public in PSM institutions is regularly conceived as a means to achieve a greater end, namely participation of that same public in democracy (Jenkins and Carpentier, 2013: 281; McNair and Hibberd, 2003). The argument underlying this causal assumption between participation *in* the media and participation *through* the media in society is threefold. Firstly, it is assumed that members of the audience can increase their impact on the public debate by voicing their opinion in the media (Picone et al.,

2015: 40). Secondly, it is argued that people learn to act democratically by participating in smaller media projects where they have the opportunity to exchange opinions, discuss and decide for themselves (Jenkins and Carpentier, 2013: 281). And, thirdly, this has to do with accountability, and the importance of ordinary citizens critically scrutinizing not only political elites but also media professionals (McNair and Hibberd, 2003).

Yet, Michal Glowacki (2014: 191) wonders whether the public is actually willing to take an active part in the production and strategic arrangements of public broadcasters. Against this backdrop, the concept of the 'implied audience,' elaborated in Sonia Livingstone's (1998) seminal article on how to strengthen external relations between audience research and other domains of media, springs to mind, highlighting the discrepancy between the way the audience is perceived in socio-cultural theory and policy, and the way the actual audience behaves.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Goal-means tree analysis

Gijsbert Kuypers (1980: 51) defines policy as a system of chosen elements of different means-ends relationships. To reconstruct the way in which means are advanced to achieve certain ends, we make use of a so-called *goal-means tree analysis*, also called a means-ends diagram. Goal-means tree analysis is a type of qualitative document analysis, relying on visualization as a technique to analyze policy texts that are often rather chaotically organized in a structured manner (Kuypers, 1980: 67). When conducting a goal-means tree analysis one is mainly interested in questions like: what are the objectives of policy?; what are the means to realize these objectives?; are the means appropriate and sufficient to realize the goals?; and on which causal and normative assumptions is the relation between goals and means grounded (Van De Graaf and Hoppe, 1992: 125)? Besides that, we must also be aware that a goal-means tree analysis can never fully capture all the intended goal-means relations in the policy document. That is also why it is important to adequately contextualize this type of textual analysis. While most goal-means tree analyses target only a couple of pages of one selected policy text per tree (Van de Graaf and Hoppe, 1992: 108), this need for contextualization made us opt for an adapted approach, analyzing different policy and strategy documents for each PSM system within one goal-means tree. In the tree itself, a goal and a means are connected with an arrow pointing in the direction of the goal. The arrows represent goal-oriented relationships directing our attention towards desired outcomes in the future (Kuypers 1980: 53, 55; Van de Graaf and Hoppe, 1992: 110).

Documents included in the analysis are policy documents concerning PSM and strategy documents of public broadcasters. Policy documents are the main legal texts governing PSM, i.e., media laws and the ongoing and previous management contracts. Subsequently, we selected public broadcasters' strategy documents (in so far accessible) that have marked the transition from PSB to PSM (like, e.g., the BBC 2004 report 'Building Public Value', FTV's strategy on new media *Nouvelles écritures*, VRT's *Media Literacy Plan*,

NPO's new branding vision and several *Meerjarenbegroting* texts etc.). While we discuss these policy and strategy documents together in the analysis, in the sub-section *Policy and strategy: a (mis)match* we consider the differences in emphasis between PSM policy and strategy. With an eye on making our discussion of policy and strategy objectives more concrete, we also, when relevant, refer to programs and projects of the public broadcasters that have been implemented over the last few years.

The five above mentioned objectives with regards to audience involvement set out for PSM in theory will be deployed as main analytical framework:

1. Universality: Enabling access to personalized, interactive and on-demand content
2. Creativity: Encouraging co-creation
3. Diversity: Including all groups and opinions in society
4. Social cohesion: Facilitating dialogue and debate
5. Participation: Inviting the citizen in

Case selection

The four cases, i.e., the BBC, FTV, NPO and VRT, have been selected for the following reasons. The BBC has the most elaborate audience involvement strategy with plenty examples of projects that aim for interaction, co-creation and participation (BBC, 2004). France, a prominent EU Member State with a big public broadcaster, notably has a more *étatiste* and also top-down PSM tradition than the other cases (Hallin and Mancini, 2004), but has asked FTV to start experimenting with audience involvement in PSM nonetheless. To this end, FTV created a new cel in January 2013 *Nouvelles écritures*, specifically aimed at the development of digital strategies and innovative audience formats. Flanders and the Netherlands are small PSB regimes. Both are questioning the online expansion of PSM activities, but contend to place public participation more than ever as a central component in their institution (VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2011; NPO, 2014a, b). Differences in terms of organization, partnerships, financing, and remit make a comparison interesting (Bardoel and d'Haenens, 2008).

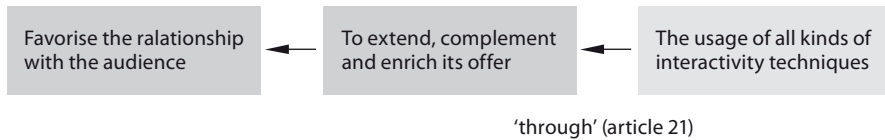
INVOLVING THE 'PUBLIC' IN PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA: PSM POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

1. Universality: Enabling access to personalized, interactive and on-demand content

The objective to enable access to more personalized, interactive content is set by the four broadcasters. The BBC considers one-size-fits-all broadcasting as a thing of the past (BBC, 2004: 50), and aspires a more personal approach towards its audience members (BBC, 2004: 52). For instance, BBC digital networks and local websites (e.g. *BBC Asian Network/55 Where I Live-websites*) enable to serve and inform ethnic minorities and local communities in the UK more extensively (BBC, 2004: 35). NPO adheres to a dual strategy, incorporating new media on the one hand, but also strengthening its linear broadcasting

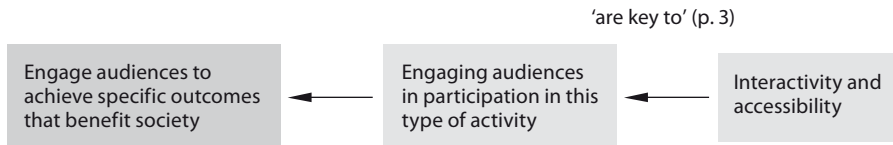
channels on the other. Similarly, VRT speaks of “personalized content offered online” (VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2006: 3). Within FTV, and its new department *Nouvelles écritures*, the experience of the user in particular takes centre stage (FTV, 2013; MCM, 2009: art 21). Accordingly, the means to realize this objective are the digital technologies itself (BBC, 2004: 50), and particularly on-demand offers and cross-media strategies (FTV, 2013; NPO, 2014a: 4, 70).

While these goal-means relationships seem logical, and sufficient, this first objective is also often conceived as a means itself to achieve certain ends. For instance, the BBC believes that by investing in multi-platform and personal content ‘the impact of content will be deepened’ (BBC, 2007). Similarly, FTV and VRT depict that interactivity enriches content (MCM, 2009: art 21; FTV, 2009: 15; VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2011: 4, 20, 22), in terms of providing additional value to the media users (VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2011: 4, 20, 22).



▲ Figure 1.
Cahier de Charges de France Télévisions.

What is exactly meant by this value, is not specified though. For instance, with the BBC, interactivity sorts under democratic value and is considered key, next to reliable news and radio phone-ins, to let audiences participate in types of activity that benefit society (BBC, 2004: 30-39). As said before, such causal assumptions should be questioned as interactivity leads only in very limited cases, i.e., if there is a well-thought out participatory framework, to participation in media, let alone in society.



▲ Figure 2.
BBC (2007). BBC Public Purposes: Promoting education and learning.

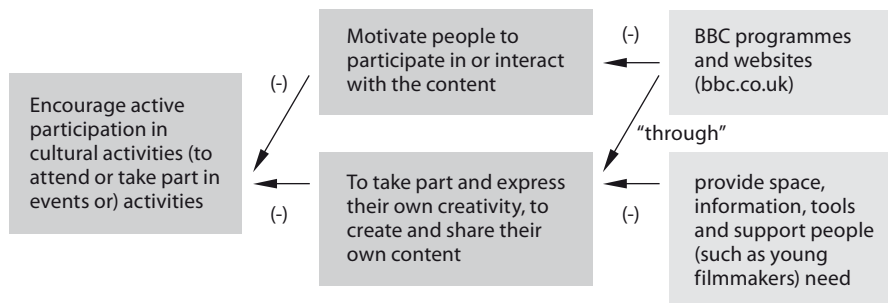
Overall, interactivity and participation as concepts are often employed interchangeably in policy and strategy documents of the public broadcasters, positioning them both as means and as ends at the same time (BBC, 2007; NPO, 2010: 91; VRT and Vlaamse Regering,

2011: 13). For instance, VRT and the Flemish government claim that VRT should further participation through interactivity on relevant platforms on one page of the management contract 2012-2016, while on a different page stimulating participation is conceived as a means to enhance interactivity on various platforms (VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2011: 5, 13). Even when we neglect the goal-means relationship between these concepts, as we must be wary not to squeeze everything in the goal-means model, the assumed and unexplained interdependency between interactivity and participation is problematic with an eye on the clarity and effectiveness of these objectives.

2. Creativity: Encouraging co-creation

Regarding the encouragement of creative audience content, the BBC and FTV are leading the field. The BBC specifically targets this issue, going for social media and UGC to help reach one of its key public purposes, “stimulating creativity and cultural excellence” (BBC, 2014b: 55; BBC, 2007). FTV explicitly denotes to grant every member of its audience, and young people in particular, the autonomy and capacity to create personal content (FTV, 2015a; MCM, 2009: art 3). NPO (2010: 94) and VRT (VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2006: 3), on the other hand, speak about introducing UGC in cross-medial projects and on their websites more in general. Thereby, the underlying assumption of the four public broadcasters is that “viewers, listeners and users are increasingly moving towards a more active relationship with the media that they consume” (BBC Trust, 2007; FTV, 2013; NPO, 2010; VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2011).

Enabling audience content is also conceived as a means itself, namely to improve users’ creativity, cultural identity (BBC Trust, 2007), media literacy (MCM, 2009: art 15; VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2011: 30-31), innovation (FTV, 2013; MCM, 2009: art 3) and the inflow of new talent into the PSM organization (VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2011: 15-16). Besides that, the BBC also believes that allowing users to express their own creativity is a vital first step towards more active participation in cultural activities beyond the media (BBC Trust, 2007).



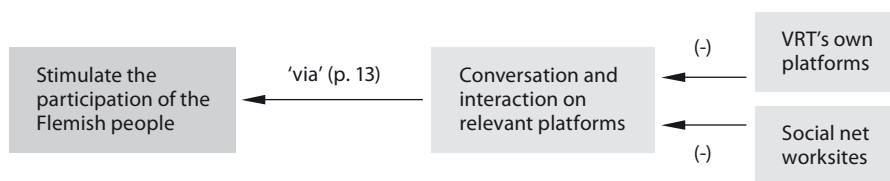
▲ Figure 3. the BBC (2007). BBC Public Purposes: Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence.

3. Diversity: Including all groups and opinions in society

Diversity, in terms of audience representation, is an objective all four public broadcasters strive for. Thereby, the BBC (2007), NPO (2014a: 21, 40) and VRT (2011: 15), with a notable exception of FTV (2009: 11, 2015), all mention online interactivity as a means to obtain a diversity of opinions. One of the BBC's six public purposes is exactly to represent "the UK, its nations, regions and communities" adequately. NPO and VRT aim after a balanced representation of society in their content (NPO, 2014b; VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2011: 10). VRT has an action plan to increase diversity in its content and organization in general, but specific means to advance a diversity of opinions are absent. For NPO, representation is one of the key objectives of its most recent strategy plan, reflected in projects of the urban radio channel *Fun X* (NPO, 2014a: 21, 40). Thus, there is definitely a link between objectives and means of diversity in policy and strategy documents concerning the BBC, NPO and VRT. But as we have said earlier, offering an online platform where all audience segments are able to voice an opinion does not ensure that all of them will. The BBC is the only public broadcaster that anticipates this problem by performing an equality impact assessment to ensure no audience sections are discriminated in its public consultations (BBC Trust, 2014).

4. Social cohesion: Facilitating dialogue and debate

Online dialogue is deemed important by the public broadcasters in order to stimulate rational debate about issues of societal and national concern (BBC, 2004: 65), which is in turn conceived as a way to encourage their audiences to become more active citizens (BBC, 2004: 66; VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2011: 13). VRT acknowledges the importance of facilitating conversation between members of the audience, whether on its own website or on social media pages managed by VRT (2011: 11).



▲ Figure 4.
VRT and Vlaamse Regering (2011). Beheersovereenkomst 2012-2016.

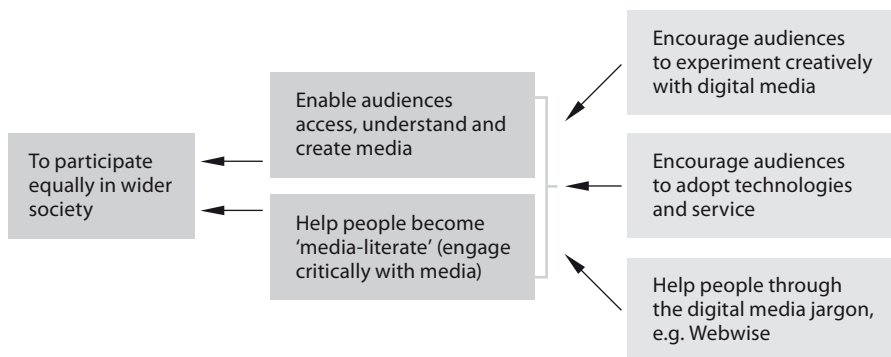
In a similar vein, NPO seems to assume that such online dialogues result in a public, democratic, cultural and educational value for Dutch society (NPO, 2010: 14, 39). This goal-means relationship (i.e., online dialogue as a means to achieve a more democratic society) is clearly based on the assumption that many members of the public are active participants and, hence, that a plurality of voices can be found on online forums and social media (BBC, 2004: 5, 65; NPO, 2010: 15). The latter is especially problematic as research has shown the opposite and none of the broadcasters seems to pro-actively act upon this.

5. Participation: Inviting the citizen in

A prerequisite for structural involvement of the audience in public broadcasters' production, concept design and strategy formulations, is to create a room for dialogue between the public broadcaster and that same audience first. For all four broadcasters, online communication has provided exactly this, a space to be in contact with their audience more than ever. Promises are made that 'a true creative dialogue' will replace the historic one-way traffic between broadcaster and audience (BBC, 2004: 5) and concepts such as 'two-way relationships' (NPO, 2010: 8) or in French *une logique d'échange* (FTV, 2013) are increasingly being emphasized. Enabling the audience to be involved in the production of PSM programs is already touched upon in objective 3 (cf. *supra*: creativity: encouraging co-creation). Yet, participation of the public in production goes even further than co-creation and implies that selected members of the public structurally have a say in different stages of the production process. NPO (2010: 50) and FTV (2013) speak in this regard of "not only leaving room for comments after dissemination," but to "gradually involve the public in different stages of television production, from the invention and experimentation with television pilots to the exploration of innovative ways of disseminating content". However, NPO and FTV do not mention 'how' to organize this type of involvement. In VRT's (2011: 31) most recent management contract no less than five participatory projects are promised each year: two for children, two for young people and one for elderly people with lower digital skills. Concrete means to guarantee effective participation of these target groups are not further specified, though. The BBC, on the other hand, worked out a specific editorial work stream in its Media Literacy Strategy to ensure that users effectively have the skills to create and participate in specific participatory projects (BBC, 2013: 4). A notable example is the *Britain in A Day* project where "anyone of the audience" could shoot a clip out of their day following concrete BBC guidelines and upload it via the BBC YouTube page. These are still, however, mostly one-off initiatives. Accordingly, a more structural approach towards audience involvement in production seems to be missing at the BBC as well.

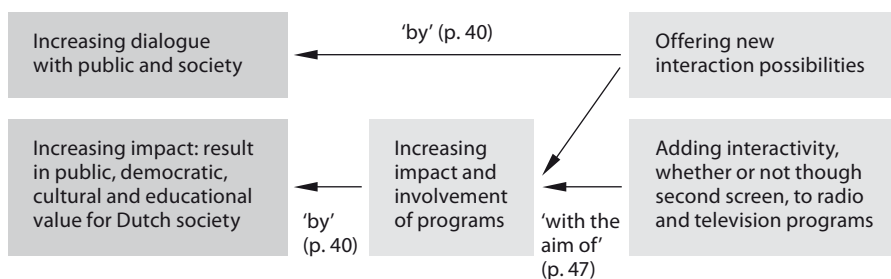
Public involvement in strategy formulations and in the organization itself remains even more confined. Traditionally, the BBC and FTV set up councils with their audiences, NPO stations organize meetings with their members every two months (BBC, 2004: 19; FTV, 2009: 29; BNN, 2010: 16), and VRT structurally meets with young people (VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2011: 15-16). But the explicit promise to place the audience as a central component in their institution (BBC, 2004: 19; FTV, 2013; NPO, 2014a: 41), seems only to be truly pondered upon by the BBC. The BBC's recent protocol on audience engagement works out the best ways "to listen to and seek the views of the public," resulting in seven methods of engagement (BBC Trust, 2014).

Although not sufficiently elaborated in terms of goal-means relationships in the public broadcasters' policy documents, this public involvement in both PSM production and organization is deemed very important by all public broadcasters as a means for the public to participate in wider society (BBC, 2013: 3; FTV, 2009: 15; NPO, 2010: 11; VRT and Vlaamse Regering, 2011: 13). The direct relation between enabling the audiences to access, understand and create media and citizenship is especially explicated in term of media literacy (see figure 5).



▲ Figure 5.
BBC (2007). BBC Public Purposes: Sustaining citizenship and civil society.

As we have seen with the first objective, the BBC and NPO also seem to make a causal link between adding interactivity to their programs and people taking part in civic society (BBC, 2004: 52, 60). NPO, literally regards “offering new possibilities to interact” as a means to improve public debate and “heighten [the public’s] impact on society” (NPO, 2010: 11, 40, 48). These goal-mean relationships are clearly based on the assumptions also found in theory, i.e., the theoretical assumption that participation in the media brings about participation in society through the media (*cf. supra*).



▲ Figure 6.
NPO (2010). Concessiebeleidsplan 2010-2016 / NPO (2011). Meerjarenbegroting 2012-2016.

Policy and strategy: a (mis)match?

Comparing the different policy and strategy documents concerning each public broadcaster, we do not find any explicit contradictions between government policy and public broadcasters’ strategy. However, only with one public broadcaster, not surprisingly with the BBC, policy and strategy are equally developed. Especially for NPO and FTV, the

policy guidelines on audience involvement are confined. This leaves plenty -some would argue too much- room for interpretation at the level of strategy. For instance, the criticism on the online expansion of NPO's activities at the level of policy is not mentioned in their strategy plans.

To sum up, the links between policy and strategy and thus also the goal-means relationships, are elaborated most at the BBC. Yet, the BBC's upper hand in policy and strategy documents does not necessarily say something about the realization of these objectives with regards to audience involvement in practice. Nevertheless, we can assume that comprehensive, well-thought-out goal-means relationships are a necessary starting-point and do increase the chance of successfully involving the audience.

CONCLUSION

We set out to evaluate policy makers' and public broadcasters' objectives and strategies regarding audience involvement in PSM. A clear match between the objectives in PSM theory and the objectives in policy and strategy documents of the BBC, FTV, NPO and VRT was found. Interestingly, some of the questionable, normative assumptions made in the theory concerning audience participation and PSM were also present in the PSM policy and strategy texts. Besides that, the lack of a clear definition of concepts such as interaction, co-creation and participation also causes a significant amount of overlap between some of the overarching objectives in the policy and strategy documents, for instance between objective two 'encouraging co-creation' and objective five of 'truly inviting the citizen in.' Between PSM policy and strategy, subsequently, there was no explicit mismatch, but a disconnect occurred as not all strategic objectives were found in the policy texts and vice versa.

Next to this, an inconsistency in the use of concepts related to audience involvement became apparent in the PSM documents. The fact that concepts such as interactivity, co-creation and participation are positioned both as means and as ends not only proves that policy makers and public broadcasters are unclear about what they want to achieve with them, it also says a lot about the vagueness of the means advanced to attain audience involvement objectives. However, it can be argued that already in PSM theory there seems to be a lot of ambiguity on how to actually involve the public. Indeed, in the theoretical discussions about what PSM needs to achieve with regards to audience involvement, the actual motivations and thresholds for audience members to be involved in PSM are rarely taken into account.

It comes as no surprise then that also in the public broadcasters' strategy and policy documents concrete motivations of the public are not anticipated. However, as we have seen, this does not prevent the BBC, FTV, NPO and VRT from making claims about users' increasingly active relationship with media. Accordingly, rather than to take into consideration the motives of their actual audiences, public broadcasters also seem to be guilty of adopting the idea of an 'implied audience.' Therefore, the innovation policies

of public broadcasters with regards to audience involvement still seem to be mainly technologically, and not user, driven. An argument to bring in a more user-centered approach within PSM theory, policy and strategy can be advanced in this regard, which also opens up avenues for further research, raising empirical questions like: what are the motivations and thresholds for people to be involved in public service media programs?; does this involvement increase participation in society?; what are the media literacy levels of the users before, after and during their involvement?; in which cases may it be better to leave the audience alone with these new interactive features?; and is interactivity then really such an important feature of PSM?

Overall, more critical analyses of policy and strategy documents, making use of meticulous methods such as a goal-means tree analysis, are recommended, as in so doing the relationships between documents can be better comprehended. Thereby, a contextualized approach – complemented with, for example, expert interviews – could help to map out not only the motivations of the users, but also these of policy makers and public broadcasting people themselves, scrutinizing why they set forth particular means and objectives, and what they want to achieve with them. By doing so, PSM research could actually become useful in PSM policy practice, pointing out the ambiguity, overlap and lack of means with regards to policy objectives.

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INTERAKCIJA, SUKREACIJA I PARTICIPACIJA U LITERATURI O JAVNIM MEDIJSKIM SERVISIMA, POLITICI I STRATEGIJI: KOMPARATIVNA ANALIZA SLUČAJEVA FLAMANSKOG DIJELA BELGIJE, NIZOZEMSKJE, FRANCUSKE I UJEDINJENOG KRALJEVSTVA

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SAŽETAK Rad kritički evaluira postoji li (ne)podudaranje između teorije javnog medijskog servisa i njegove politike i strateških dokumenata kada je riječ o idejama uključivanja medijskih publika u javni medijski servis. Najprije se teorijski nastoji uokviriti ova rasprava, tako da se razmatra pet zadataka uključivanja medijskih publika u javni medijski servis. Potom se istražuje kako BBC (Ujedinjeno Kraljevstvo), France Télévisions (Francuska), VRT (Flandrija, Belgija) i NPO (Nizozemska) trebaju (politika) i namjeravaju (strategija) uključiti svoje medijske publike. Odabrani slučajevi daju uvid u bolje financirane (BBC, FTV) i manje javne medijske servise (VRT, NPO), kao i u različite medijske sustave. Upotrijebljena je metoda goal-means tree analiza, tip kvalitativne analize dokumenata kojoj je svrha otkrivanje odnosa između cilja i sredstava u politici i strateškim tekstovima. Glavni je argument da je ovdje prije riječ o nekim upitnim, normativnim pretpostavkama iz teorije o javnom medijskom servisu i uključenosti publike, koje su prenesene i u tekstove o politici i strategiji javnog medijskog servisa, a ne o nepodudaranju između teorije, politike i strategije javnog medijskog servisa.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

JAVNI MEDIJSKI SERVIS, UKLJUČIVANJE MEDIJSKIH PUBLIKA, PARTICIPACIJA,
GOAL-MEANS TREE ANALIZA, KOMPARATIVNE MEDIJSKE STUDIJE

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