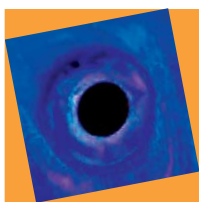


Making a Difference

Christian S. Nissen, Editor, Independant consultant



Public Service Broadcasting in the European Media Landscape

Making a Difference, a book destined for all those involved in policy and strategic decision-making in the media world, as well as journalists and academics, looks at the crucial issues facing public service broadcasters today and how they can fare and survive in today's increasingly competitive and cut-throat media world.

Is there still a need for public service broadcasters? Does public service broadcasting make a difference? What are the cultural obligations, political role and remit in the dual European media market? Which changes will new media, the Internet and digital technology bring, and what impact will they have on the media market? What is the role of governments and parliaments in relation to the public broadcasters,

and what are the implications of EU regulation on the media market? Do public media really make a difference, or are they dinosaurs threatened with extinction in the new and unfamiliar media landscape of modern Europe?

There are no easy answers, there is no all-embracing, easy-to-use formula to resolve these crucial issues. The mission and remit of public service broadcasters, and the discussion of their role can only be understood in the more general context of the fundamental debate on what kind of society we want to live in, and the values and societal norms we want to defend and develop.

A series of articles written by experts from a variety of different angles have

been used to enrich this ongoing debate, fiercely disputed today by politicians, commercial and public service broadcasters alike in a market that is more competitive and diverse than ever.

André Lange* analyses the evolution of the European television market from its emergence in the second half of the 20th century to the present day. He argues that the combination of financial difficulties facing the industry and the emergence of new digital media cast doubt on the long-term sustainability of the current dual media model in Europe.

From a social-political perspective Slavko Splichal* claims that public media is at the service of civil society and is, in particular, the guardian of modern democracy, enabling citizens to participate in public deliberation and decision-making.

Karol Jakubowicz* analyses the special cultural role and obligations of public media and how it's role has developed in terms of community, socially, politically and geographically.

Making a

Difference

Christian S. Nissen
Editor, Independent consultant





This theme is developed further by David Ward* who examines the traditional arguments for state intervention in broadcasting. Should public service radio and television be the sole providers of content that meets democratic and cultural obligations? Can the private sector not assure these provisions? Do the seemingly fixed arguments for public service broadcasting still stand up to scrutiny in a world of increasing multi-channel television and consumer flexibility?

One of the major strategic dilemmas confronting public service broadcasting is the provision of all content on all platforms to meet all obligations. This key issue and its ramifications are addressed by Christian S. Nissen, Claudio Cappon* and Peter Olaf Looms* in their three articles. Looms, in particular, argues that the strategic dilemmas facing public media companies in a digital age can be tackled with the aid of clear production and distribution strategies optimizing audience reach through cross-platform delivery and cross-media formats.

The rapid expansion of the Internet and on-demand access sets a number of copyright challenges for European public media companies. Damian Tambini* gives an overview of leading examples of public on-demand and

archive services providing audiovisual content in Europe and discusses various models for coping with this development.

The issue of the editorial independence and autonomy of public service broadcasters – so important to trustworthiness and credibility – when the broadcaster is owned or controlled in one way or the other by the state is the subject tackled by Carmen Caffarel* and Mario Garcia de Castro*. The authors provide a number of recent conflicts that have broken out in several European countries involving public broadcasters and their governments, conflicts that repeatedly expose the flaws of a model where a public broadcaster is dependent on its government.

From time to time radical solutions to this weakness in public service broadcasting governance and to a number of other issues often related to the dual media model surface in the ongoing media debate. Could not the public companies be privatized or turned into profit-making entities for the state? Can their public service obligations and content production be outsourced to the private media sector along with public funding? Margie Comrie* and Susan Fountaine* tell the story of radical media liberalization in New Zealand during the 1990s

reference

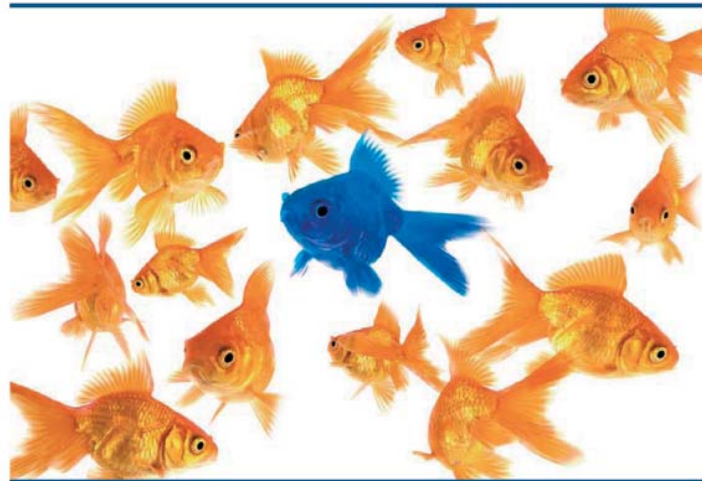
and the current attempt to re-invent public service television, taking into consideration previous experiments in broadcasting regulation and deregulation.

The regulatory debate, fuelled by the internationalization of the electronic media market, concerning the control of state aid in relation to the public funding of broadcasting is analysed by Thomas Kleist* and Alexander Scheuer*. The contributors examine the delicate balance between member states' autonomy and European regulation: while the funding and remit granted to public service broadcasters is left up to individual member states, those same corporations are nevertheless subject to complex EU competition legislation.

Robert G. Picard* takes a close look at the funding challenges faced by public service broadcasters by changes in the media market, by new technological features and even more by the general trend in user behaviour, making viewers and listeners act more as individual customers than as a collective audience.

To conclude this series of articles, Dominique Wolton* brings us back to the fundamental question of the role of media in European democracies and the need to reconsider and enhance the value of public service, its financing and political independence.

Making a Difference



Public Service Broadcasting in the European Media Landscape

Christian S. Nissen
Editor

*

André Lange, head of Information on Markets & Financing, European Audiovisual Observatory

Slavko Splichal, professor of Communication, University of Ljubljana

Karol Jakubowicz, director of Strategy and Analysis, National Broadcasting Council of Poland

David Ward, consultant for numerous government and non-governmental organizations

Claudio Cappon, professor of Economics, Rome University

Peter Olaf Looms, consultant, Danmarks Radio

Damian Tambini, head of the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy, Oxford University

Carmen Caffarel, professor of Audiovisual Communications, Rey Juan Carlos University

Mario Garcia de Castro, professor of Audiovisual Information, University Rey Juan Carlos (Spain)

Margie Comrie, associate professor in the Department of Communication & Journalism, Massey University (New Zealand)

Susan Fountaine, lecturer in the Department of Communication & Journalism, Massey University (New Zealand)

Thomas Kleist, president, Institute of European Media Law

Alexander Scheuer, general manager, Institute of European Media Law

Robert G. Picard, professor of Media Economics, Jönköping International Business School (Sweden)

Dominique Wolton, research director, CNRS

