Public Values in the Social?:

An investigation into the public service orientation of public service media on social media platforms

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ABSTRACT

Ever since the 1980s, public service broadcasters, particularly in Western European countries, have increasingly seen the need to legitimize their existence. An added challenge for these now-called public service media is how to behave on commercially-orientated social media platforms. On the one hand, these commercial platforms can be considered a threat to the public service mission of these public service media, but on the other hand social media platforms have been heralded as providing opportunities to put long-cherished public values into practice, such as reaching demographics that are hard to reach with traditional broadcasting and engaging audiences. This research explores the ways in which people working for the Dutch public broadcaster the NPO create social media content for one or multiple television programs to explore in which ways this is influenced by the fact that they work for a public broadcaster rather than a commercial one. The research question of this research therefore is *In which ways do public service broadcasting programs employ social media in light of their adherence to a public service orientation?* In order to answer this research question, eleven in-depth interviews with fifteen people creating social media content for the Dutch public broadcaster have been conducted. A thematic analysis on the interview data revealed that generally speaking, specific public values were not at the foreground of the interviewees' minds when creating social media content and that instead practical considerations such as wanting to be successful with posting content were regarded as more important. However, interviewees all believed that the television program(s) they did social media activities for did adhere to a public service orientation to such an extent, that reaching people and getting them to engage with content related to the television program(s) on social media is so valuable that this outweighs the importance of the fact that social media platforms are commercial in nature. In addition, many interviewees expressed a dissatisfaction regarding the social media strategy of the overarching Dutch public broadcasting organization, hereby revealing that within the same public broadcaster, wide differences can exist regarding attitudes towards how to utilize new digital technologies. This in turn has implications for the way in which strategies for adapting to social media platforms can evolve in the future.

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KEYWORDS: *Public Service Media, Public Service Broadcasting, Social Media Platforms, Social Media Activities, Public Values*

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1. Introduction

Few topics have been debated by scholars as much as the legitimacy and future of public service broadcasting (PSB), especially in (Western) European countries. This debate heated up with the proliferation of TV channels due to the rise of cable and satellite television from the 1980s onwards (Leurdijk & Leendertse, 2010), which made people question the legitimacy of funding public service broadcasters amidst this abundance of choice in television content that was now available to the public (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008). With the arrival of convergence, in which operating on multiple (digital) platforms became a reality for broadcasters (Doyle, 2010), this debate continued in the form of questioning the presence of PSB on these digital platforms, on which new competitors have arisen that offer television content, once again increasing the number of options the audience has with regards to which television content to consume. Furthermore, considering the fact that PSB is funded for carrying out its broadcasting task, its presence on the Internet is questionable for some (Moe, 2008). However, as television content increasingly moved outside of the box (Creeber & Hills, 2007) onto multiple digital platforms, public and commercial broadcasters alike began moving onto these new digital platforms. This was firstly mostly done in the form of launching their own websites on which they provided information on their television programs and offered opportunities for audience feedback (Cadwell, 2006). In a later stage, broadcasters also started to directly offer content and episodes of their television programs in the online environment.

Partly in response to those people saying public service broadcasters did not belong in the online realm, public service broadcasters started to call themselves public service media (PSM) (Cola & Prario, 2012) to emphasize their point of view that their public service orientation was not bound to one specific platform (Bardoel & Lowe, 2007), in this way aiming to legitimize their presence on digital platforms. Furthermore, as audiences have become more and more fragmented (Creeber & Hills, 2007), this move to digital platforms has also been legitimized by public service media by saying that moving to these platforms has to be done in order to maintain a reasonable level of audience reach (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008). This strategy of PSM on digital platforms has also been called 'follow the audience' by Leurdijk & Leendertse (2010) as public service media are moving to those platforms where their audience members now increasingly spend time.

One component of the online environment in which public service media aims to follow the audience and that has received increased attention by scholars in recent years, is the realm of social media, which is an important component of the overall online environment. This presence of PSM on social media can potentially be called problematic as these social platforms

are almost always commercial entities (van Dijck, 2013), which seems at odds with the premises of most PSM that it should avoid serving commercial interests (van Dijck & Poell, 2015). Nevertheless, public service media were among the early adopters of social media as these social media platforms offer opportunities to be able to reach audiences where they are active in the online environment. Catering towards every person in society has been an important public value for public service media to adhere to in the 21st century (Nissen, 2006), and thus the public value of reach has also been used by public service media to legitimize their ´follow the audience strategy´ on commercial social media platforms. In addition, the opportunities for engaging audiences was also an important reason for public service media to become active on social media platforms (Enli, 2008). In this sense, the presence of PSM on social media can be considered a trade-off between having the opportunity of reaching and engaging audiences and doing so on a commercially-oriented platform.

Seeing reach and audience engagement as public values brings another interesting discussion into the debate of the future and legitimacy of PSM, which are public values in general. As noted by Moe, Poell & van Dijck (2016), a distinction between commercial and public broadcasters operating on social media platforms is useful precisely because public broadcasters adhere to certain public values such as that it should not create content that other commercial enterprises can benefit from. However, at the same time authors have heralded the Internet and particularly social media as an opportunity for PSM to serve some of the public values they were meant to fulfill within their public service orientation of which reach and engagement are two of the most mentioned values in combination with digital platforms. It remains to be seen however, if public values are really at the foreground of public broadcasters' minds when creating content specifically for social media platforms.

In addition, even though there has been a recent call for scholars to investigate when and in which ways the social media user and TV viewer intertwine (Moe et al., 2016), no studies as of yet have aimed to take an in-depth look into how television shows of public broadcasters go about creating content for social media platforms. In addition, a lot of research has focused on which public values are important for public broadcasters to adhere to (see for instance Blumer & Hoffmann-Riem, 1992; Cuilenburg & McQuail; 2003; Nissen, 2006; Steemers, 2001) but as of yet, no research has specifically explored if and how these public values play a role on social media for public service media. This study then, aims to investigate how broadcasters aim to employ social media for their television program. In addition, this study will focus specifically on how public service media employs social media in light of their public service mission to serve the public interest (Flew, 2006). What is exactly meant with this public interest, or public service

orientation, is highly dependent on the national and cultural context, which works through in the ways that certain public values are valued by national governments and the public (van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003). Thus by focusing on the role public values play in the creation of social media content, the importance of the public service orientation in producing social media content can be assessed. The research question for this study therefore is the following:

In which ways do public service broadcasting programs employ social media in light of their adherence to a public service orientation?

This study will aim to answer this question by analyzing the results of eleven in-depth interviews held with a total of fifteen people creating social media content for one or multiple television programs of the Dutch public broadcaster, the NPO. By interviewing people who are directly in charge of creating social media content, this study can assess the role public values and the overall public service orientation play in the day-to-day social media activities in order to see in which particular ways these values and this orientation get translated into these activities. Using in-depth interviews as this research's method makes is possible to get the perspective from the people performing these activities and if and how they perceive working for a public service broadcaster rather than a commercial broadcaster influences these activities.

In doing this, this study will aim to function as necessary further research as formulated by Moe et al. (2016) who state in the introduction of a special issue devoted to social media and broadcasters: 'We hope this preliminary exploration will inspire further research on the various cultural, institutional, and techno-commercial settings in which new forms of television audience engagement are instigated through social platforms' (p.106). By looking specifically at the Dutch case of how social media is used by individual public service broadcasting programs, this study both explores the notion of public service values for public service media as well as keeping a very specific setting in mind. This makes it possible to investigate this topic in-depth, which will contribute to the very current and scholarly debate on this topic, particularly by adding insights into the specific Dutch context on this topic. In addition, this research is taking a very bottom-up approach by looking at how people actually in charge of creating content for social media platforms regard the somewhat abstract notion that public service media ought to serve the public interest (Bardoel & Lowe, 2007; Flew, 2006). This approach is very different from that of for instance Bardoel and Brants (2003) who performed a content analysis of Dutch government's policy documents to see how the articulation of the public service mission of the Dutch public service broadcaster has changed over time. The approach this research takes, makes it possible

to see how people actually creating content for the Dutch public service broadcaster regard this public service mission and how this translates into their activities which can create valuable insights into how well strategic considerations such as emphasizing certain public values translate into day-to-day activities within an organization.

Furthermore, this research is socially relevant as well since the future of the Dutch public broadcaster is currently heavily being debated in Dutch society. This debate mostly centers around what the core tasks of the Dutch public service broadcaster, the NPO, should be and whether or not the current organizational structure should be simplified. This research then can provide insights that could help structure this societal debate, for instance by providing observations related to the way the organizational structure of the NPO currently influences the social media activities that are being performed by various television programs on the various platforms. In addition, this research is also relevant for other (public) broadcasters and organizations as this research deals with the various opportunities and barriers interviewees encounter when engaging in social media activities as well.

The rest of this research paper is structured as follows: firstly an attempt will be made in the theoretical framework to put the social media activities of television programs of public service media into the larger context by discussing the online environment and social media for broadcasters as a whole as well as elaborate on the distinction between commercial and public broadcasters for social media platforms by discussing the various public values that exist for public service media. In addition, the specific Dutch context will be explained in this section as well. Secondly, the method section will explain why the choice was made to employ in-depth interviews as the method and which analysis the interviewee data has been subjected to. Thirdly, the main results will be elaborated on and connections between the results and previously-done relevant academic literature will be made explicit. Finally, this research will provide a conclusion and identify interesting directions for future research into the subject of social media for public service media.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Introduction

In order to investigate the ways in which public service media programs use social media in light of their public service orientation, it is first necessary to clarify the relationship between various elements related to this social media activity such as the online realm, public service media, public values and social media platforms themselves. This theoretical framework will aim to shed a light on these elements as well as explaining several tensions, problems and issues that come up when discussing these elements and the relationships among them. Firstly, how and why broadcasters moved to the online realm will be discussed so that issues regarding social media that will be elaborated on later are grounded in this larger online context. Secondly, social media and its features will be discussed as well as how organizations such as broadcasting organizations are attempting to make use of them and why. Thirdly, the unique position public service media take up in providing content to audiences, regardless of the platform, will be explained in-depth using the concept of public values. This will be done by dividing public values according to three types of welfare, namely political, social and economic welfare. Fourthly, the discussion will focus on social media activity by public service media in light of their adherence to public values and a focus will be placed on the public value of engagement and reach specifically. Finally, the specifics of the Dutch context will be taken into account in order to explain the organizational structure of the Dutch public broadcaster and how social media is currently used by Dutch public service media.

2.2. The online realm for broadcasters

With the arrival of the Internet, it soon became clear that there was potential for the Internet and television to develop a mutually-beneficial relationship, for instance by coordinating advertising activities across the two different platforms, but also by building audience relationships on one platform (the Internet) so that they would seek out a television program more often on the other platform (television) (Chan-Olmsted & Ha, 2003). In fact, broadcasters actively seek out their audience in the online environment, not only to try and create relationships with them but also to generate feedback on their programs (Cadwell, 2006). Historically, different media have already attempted to make audiences engage with content (Moe et al., 2016) and it seemed that the Internet was a promising medium to do so to an even larger extent. However, already since the beginning of using the Internet for promoting television programs there was widespread recognition that often these electronic activities cost more money than they earn, but this did not stop broadcasters from investing heavily in the online (Doyle, 2010). The justification for these

types of online activity was often that these money-losing endeavors functioned as value-added entertainment which strengthened the overall value proposition of the television shows (Cadwell, 2006). Thus, a way in which the Internet is perceived as useful by broadcasters is its capability for cross-platform advertising and promotions as well as strengthening audience relationships.

The biggest consequence of the arrival of the Internet for television was not its add-on value for promoting television content or for building audience engagement, but the fact that actual television content could be distributed through the Internet. The arrival of the so-called era of convergence in which the Internet and multimedia devices are widely used (Doyle, 2010) means that television content is increasingly watched on other devices than the television and at other times than when it is aired live. In other words, television has moved 'outside the box and across multiple platforms' (Creeber & Hills, 2007, p.3). This raises issues for broadcasters, for instance the issue that increasingly more time is devoted to non-linear ways of watching, meaning that television content is accessed at a different point in time than when it was aired on television, and often on different types of devices (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008). This digitalization of television content thus means that audiences have more control when and how to watch television content (Leurdijk & Leendertse, 2010). This trend is especially noticeable under younger demographics. For instance, in 2014 already almost 30% of consumed television content among Dutch people aged 13-19 was done in a non-linear way (MediaTijd, 2014). Thus, broadcasters need to incorporate the trend that people increasingly watch television in a non-linear way in their strategies.

A problem tied to this non-linear way of online viewing is that the costs that broadcasters have to make to offer multi-platform content often exceed the revenues gained from distributing content online (Doyle, 2010). Even though broadcasters struggle to monetize the streaming of their online content, at the same time they feel it is necessary to be active in the online environment as they acknowledge that diversification of content and platforms is key for survival, especially with new competitors entering the online marketplace. The increase in competitors and with it the increase in the amount of television content is not a new development. Already in the 1980s more and more television channels became available for the public (Leurdijk & Leendertse, 2010), which made market shares of individual broadcasters decline due to this multiplicity of channels (Raboy, 2003). However, this new online environment has also given traditional broadcasters new competitors in the form of online-only distributors of television content such as *Hulu* and *Netflix*. Thus, both monetizing online offerings of television content as well as dealing with new competitors are challenges traditional broadcasters face in the online environment.

The increase in consumer choice has not only led to increased audience fragmentation, but video-on-demand (VOD) competitors like *Netflix* have altered audience expectations regarding when they can access content and how much of it at a given time (Jenner, 2016). Furthermore, such VOD-services often have personalized, tailor-made recommendations for its users regarding what television content to watch next, which is also a feature audiences increasingly grow accustomed to (Jenner, 2016). Traditional broadcasters then have to keep up with the often innovative ways in which new competitors bring their online offerings to audiences. In addition, traditional broadcasters both have to deal with regulations related to traditional ways of broadcasting as well as separate regulations for the online realm whereas new online-only competitors only have to deal with the latter. Regulations for traditional broadcasters are often stricter and more encompassing than regulations for companies operating only in the online realm (Just, Latzer & Saurwein, 2012), which arguably leads to a difference in competitive position between these two types of companies offering television content to audiences.

These developments in the online environment have as a consequence that broadcasters increasingly need be active on more platforms in order to reach the same amount of audience members. This adaptation of broadcasters into multi-platform forms of distribution of content is done in three distinct manners in order to create value according to Doyle (2010). Firstly, linear television content can be reused across different platforms, for instance by broadcasters offering live streams on their websites of what is currently airing. Secondly, existing content can be modified or extra layers can be added to this content in order to make the content more suitable for particular platforms. Finally, original online content can be distributed as well (Doyle, 2010). Thus, there seem to be different ways in which broadcasters can employ a multi-platform distribution strategy for their content, each of which has different implications for the cost structure and revenue stream of the strategy chosen. One of these platforms on which broadcasters can be active are social media platforms, which in recent years has received more attention both by broadcasters themselves but also by scholars.

2.3. Social media for broadcasters

An important notion for broadcasters that is connected to social media platforms and how people make use of it is the notion of the active audience. Whereas academics used to favor the idea of a passive audience that watched particular content without actively interpreting or negotiating its meaning, near the end of the twentieth century it became increasingly clear that audiences in fact actively seek out and engage with media content (Jenkins, 1992; Morley, 1993). Even though this idea of the active audience predates the arrival of the Internet, this notion has

increased in salience with the arrival of convergence. As Jenkins (2006) argues: 'By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want' (p.2). Especially the last part highlights the agency of the audience: they themselves seek out the type of content they want to watch and the type of platforms they want to consume this on. In addition, with a growing integration between culture and commerce, which is partly due to convergence, emphasis is placed upon the social networks through which consumption of entertainment occurs (Jenkins & Deuze, 2008). Thus, the widespread use of the Internet seems to have made notions of social networks of consumption and an audience that actively selects and interprets its own content more pronounced.

It is not hard to see how social media tie in with this notion of socialized networks of consumption in which individuals have a large degree of freedom what to consume and how to consume it. Studies have shown that social networks are used by its users for information and entertainment purposes, of which media content is a component (Karimi, Khodabandelou, Ehsani & Ahmad, 2014; Whiting & Williams, 2013) and social media are social by their very nature. Thus, as the demand for receiving information and entertainment on social media platforms exists, it opens the door for broadcasters to be active on these platforms to fulfill these demands. For broadcasters in turn, following the audience across platforms has been a widely used strategy (Leurdijk & Leenderste, 2010) and thus also across platforms onto social media networks. This match between what social media users want, namely information and entertainment, and what broadcasters can provide together with the fact that broadcasters follow the audience to social media platforms, means that broadcasters are increasingly integrating social media logic in their media logic and that this social media logic becomes increasingly important in the overall online strategy of broadcasters (van Dijck & Poell, 2015).

However, not only broadcasting companies have followed their audiences to these platforms. The importance of being present on social media platforms has been recognized by a wide variety of companies and consequently many organizations are now active on social media (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011), even though there often exists a generational divide within organizations with regards to if and how to utilize these platforms (Seger, 2011). In general, social media platforms are viewed as being an efficient way to come into closer contact with (potential) customers (Baird & Parasnis, 2011), something which broadcasting companies have also recognized by stating that social media activity can aid in creating audience relationships (Corcoran, 2015). Such relationships that are created on social

media then could also lead audiences back from these platforms to the channels of broadcasters as social media engagement can lead to channel loyalty (Lim, Hwang, Kim & Biocca, 2015). In addition, it is important to note that both broadcasting organizations as a whole as well as individual television programs of broadcasters aim to create customer relationships on social media platforms (McDonald, 2014), meaning that for instance both the *BBC* as a whole is active on social media platforms as well as individual programs of the *BBC*. The kind of content that these different organizations provide on these platforms can vary as the division made by Doyle (2010) for multi-platform distribution of content can also be applied to social media platforms in particular. This means that existing content can be re-used on social media, that added layers of content can be put on social media or that native, social-media only content can be featured.

So far, no distinction has been made between commercial broadcasters and public service broadcasters when it comes to their activities in the online environment and social media in particular. However, there is a distinct difference between commercial and public broadcasters in the sense that public service broadcasters are supposed to adhere to certain public values in their activities. This commitment to public values has not changed under developments such as the arrival of cable television and the Internet. If anything, public service media have become increasingly proficient in stating how and to which public values they adhere to in order to legitimize their ongoing existence (Bardoel & Brants, 2003). Furthermore, a way to legitimize the move into the online realm by public service broadcasters was by rebranding themselves from public service broadcasters (PSB) to public service media (PSM) (Bardoel & Lowe, 2007), hereby accentuating their adherence to a public service orientation and stressing that they believe that this public service orientation is not bound to a particular medium (i.e. broadcasting) which opens up the possibility of public service media to be active in the online environment. It can be argued then that the continued adherence of public values by public service broadcasters becomes an important element that is present in their various activities. This raises the question which role these public values play in the services and activities of public service broadcasters specifically on social media platforms. In order to answer this question, first the concept of public values needs to be further elaborated on.

2.4. Public values for public service media

In Europe, public service broadcasting traditionally has existed on television and radio in order to ensure that the general interest would be represented on these respective media (Hallin & Machini, 2004). This statement already raises the difficult question of what exactly is meant with 'the general interest' and historically, various countries and governments have had different

interpretations of what is meant with this concept (van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003). A way to make the very abstract notion of 'public interest' a bit more concrete, is by classifying different interpretations of this notion according to the sub-goal a particular interpretation serves. Van Cuilenburg & McQuail (2003) distinguish between three different types of sub-goals an interpretation of the concept of general public interest can serve: political welfare, social welfare and economic welfare. Depending on the historical context and developments, these three sub-goals have varied in importance for public service broadcasters. This section will aim to shed light on different values attached to these three sub-goals, how the interpretation of these goals have varied throughout the 20th and 21st century for Western European broadcasters and difficulties that are associated with adhering to these values for public service media, especially in the online environment and for social media platforms in particular.

2.4.1. Political welfare

As mentioned by van Cuilenburg & McQuail (2003), the emergence of broadcasting television was very much regulated by the state, whose main concern most often was providing its citizens with access to information through new emerging technologies of which television was an important component (Nissen, 2006). Furthermore, as broadcasting was seen as potentially having a large influence on society, it was mostly put under the control of governments in the form of public broadcasting, meaning that commercial broadcasting was introduced in Western European countries relatively late (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Even though broadcasting historically has been heavily regulated, at the same time broadcasting professionals were given large degrees of autonomy in order to preserve freedom of media institutions (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). This freedom for public broadcasters is twofold in the sense that it is both free from direct political control (de Haan & Bardoel, 2011) and from commercial influences (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008). Even though with the introduction of commercial broadcasters some people raised the concern that public broadcasters themselves would increasingly commercialize in order to compete with the commercial stations, it became clear that broadcasters were largely successful in remaining free from being influenced to a large extent by this commercial context (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008). In addition, editorial independence and autonomy from political forces for public broadcasters has remained an important value for public broadcasters in order to remain trusted institutions for citizens as sources for information (Nissen, 2006).

Another value associated with the notion of political welfare is that of accountability. Accountability can be defined as 'a social relationship in which an actor feels an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct to some significant other' (Bovens, 2007, p.184). Applying this concept to the domain of the media then, accountability mostly gets translated to

public accountability, which means 'justifying media performance to the public' (de Haan & Bardoel, 2011, p.232). As noted by Mulgan (2000) this notion of 'public' is especially salient for public broadcasters as public accountability tends to focus on public sector institutions such as public broadcasters. Add to this the fact that accountability has become increasingly important in recent years (de Haan & Bardoel, 2011) and particularly for public broadcasters (Bardoel & Brants, 2003) and it becomes clear that accountability is a very important public value for public broadcasters to adhere to in the 21st century. Important to note is that notions and mechanisms of accountability for public service broadcasters became increasingly tied with questions of legitimacy of public service broadcasters, particularly when they made the transition to being public service media rather than public service broadcasters. As argued by Lowe (2010): 'PSM must be legitimated more explicitly than PSB ever required in order to insure its development, its continuing distinctiveness and competitive fairness in media markets' (p.21). An important way for PSM to hold itself accountable, and by which PSM also tries to indirectly increase its legitimacy among the general public, is through interacting and engaging with audience members (Enli, 2008), with interaction and engagement being classified as public values falling directly under the second type of welfare, which is social welfare (van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003).

2.4.2. Social welfare
It is hard to overstate the importance of the potential of engagement and interaction on digital platforms as the reason for public broadcasters to move into the online realm and with this move, rebranding itself to public service media (Bardoel & Lowe, 2007). For some, these public values of engagement and interaction are even a reason for wanting to grant public service media a special role in the online environment by having them operate as separate platforms in the online world so that the public values they adhere to can make a socio-cultural difference and contribute to the creation of an inclusive online public sphere (Iosifidis, 2011). Others would not go as far but argue that the emphasis in the term 'public service broadcasters' should be on the 'public service' rather than on 'broadcasters' and should therefore be seen as delivering a particular kind of service that is grounded in their public service orientation which is not bounded by technology and is therefore allowed to move into the online realm (Trappel, 2008).

What these two visions have in common is seeing the potential for engagement with members of society as such an important public value that public broadcasters need to have a strong presence on online platforms. Producing television content was already always a way to 'speak' with citizens for public service broadcasters (van Dijck & Poell, 2015), but it can be argued that the online realm has made opportunities for engagement more pronounced and

easier to utilize. Especially in light of increasing individualization in society and audience fragmentation (Nissen, 2006), the online realm can be used to better reach people with tailored efforts as these efforts can be undertaken specifically according to certain interests of individuals (Harrison & Wessel, 2005). This means that instead of demographics, audiences are reached based on specific interests, such as liking certain genres of television programs.

In addition, these online platforms enable broadcasters to treat audience members as participating citizens instead of mere audience members (Cola & Prario, 2012; Enli, 2008) and the legitimacy of public service broadcasters is mostly, if not solely based on the participatory relation they (potentially) have with citizens (Scannell, 2005). This opportunity for public service media to generate feedback, interaction and participation from the public in the online realm is one of the biggest incentives for public service media to exist in these domains. In turn, public service media use these online mechanisms for interaction and feedback as evidence they take their public service mission seriously (Enli, 2008). All this makes engagement one of the most important public values for public service media in recent years.

Interaction and engagement are not the only social values associated with public service media however. Even though social welfare is highly dependent on national context (van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003), it has mostly been connected with values such as providing content of a high quality, supporting cultural and linguistic diversity (Blumer & Hoffmann-Riem, 1992), but also with simultaneously enhancing social and cultural cohesion (Nissen, 2006). Different public television programs then were supposed to serve values related to social welfare, such as fostering cultural cohesion. This means that with bringing certain types of content to audiences, public service broadcasting was meant to adhere to certain public values. Another public value tied to social welfare is the concept of diversity, of which already in the 20th century the concern was raised that when public service broadcasting start catering towards very niche groups in society with specific programming, this could have a negative effect on its potential to reach every member of society (Blumer & Hoffmann-Riem, 1992). With an increasing fragmenting audience due to commercialization and digitalization, this concern seems even more relevant in the 21st century. Certainly, there seems to be a tension between on the one hand reaching as many members in society as possible and on the other hand being able to in fact reach audience members by targeting very specific audience groups with certain types of programming that they wish to consume (Nissen, 2006).

A concern especially seems to be that if too much emphasis is put on very outspoken qualitative programming, public service broadcasting turns into a channel solely for a country's elite (Blumer & Hoffman-Riem, 1992). Such a transition would severely undermine the task

public broadcasting has in most Western-European countries, which is being present for the entirety of society (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008), hereby undermining the public value of reach which entails that public service broadcasting is supposed to cater towards everyone (Nissen, 2006). An additional problem for public service broadcasters is the fact that they increasingly need to define their mission statement more narrowly in order to legitimize their existence in a multi-channel and digital environment (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008). This means that the fact that public service broadcasters partly are able to reach a large audience through entertainment-based programs is increasingly casted in problematic terms as the argument is that they are not differentiating themselves enough from commercial broadcasters (Enli, 2008; Levy, 1999). Instead, public broadcasters should focus on producing certain types of genres such as educational and informative genres and leave the entertainment genre to the commercial broadcasters. A sort of solution to these tensions has been put forth by Doyle (2010) and Nissen (2006) who argue that public service broadcasters should not aim to reach all members of society all the time but all members of society some of the time. However, the fact that at the same time a renewed focus has been placed upon public service media as having to be distinctive from commercial parties, which is often done by seeing entertainment content as belonging to commercial broadcasters rather than public ones (Enli, 2008), complicates this mission as it can be argued that entertaining content is in fact the most important way to attract a larger audience in the first place.

2.4.3. Economic welfare

This tension between public and commercial broadcasters is also visible when talking about economic welfare as a type of welfare public service media should keep in mind (van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003). It has been noted that commercial broadcasters use two conflicting arguments when arguing against the existence of public service media: on the one hand they claim that public service media are inefficient media institutions that only cater to the tastes of the elite, but on the other hand they claim that public service media are too successful and have an unfair competitive advantage (Nissen, 2006). With these two arguments, commercial broadcasters cast the problematic existence of public service media mostly in terms related to economic welfare.

There is no doubt that economic values have become increasingly important for European public service media (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008; van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003) and public service media increasingly have to operate according to free market values (Bardoel & Brants, 2003). This importance of economic values is also present in the online realm, although social values such as having a non-commercial voice present on online platforms in the

form of public service media also seem to be valued by some in Europe (Harrison & Wessels, 2005). This is sometimes even valued to such an extent that public service media can invest a lot of money in the online environment even though such investments might not be very profitable economically speaking (Doyle, 2010). The reason that such investments are allowed and even necessary for public service media is closely related to the concept of reach, or how well public service media cater towards every member in society (Nissen, 2006). Successfully catering towards every member in society is an important public value to adhere to as mentioned previously and in turn becomes an important way in which public service media legitimize their ongoing existence. The concept of reach is one of the biggest reasons why public service media followed the audience into the online realm (Leurdijk & Leendertse, 2010) as they need to reach as many members of society as possible. A concern for these public service media when they moved into the online realm is the fact that online platforms are often commercially-orientated, which is in tension with the non-profit goal of public service media (Schwarz, 2016; van Dijck & Poell, 2015), which is especially an issue when engaging in social media activity, which will be elaborated on later. However, the fact remains that reach is an important public value for public service media to adhere to, particularly to legitimize activities in the online realm.

Thus, summing up it can be stated that political as well as social and economic welfare and the derived public values from these three different types of welfare as outlined by van Cuilenburg & McQuail (2003) are still very prominent for public service media today. Values associated with political welfare such as freedom and accountability seem well-established for Western-European broadcasters, but at the same time a trend can be noticed that articulating how public broadcasters adhere to other public values such as engagement and reach is closely tied with legitimizing the existence of these public broadcasters. The legitimacy of public service broadcasters has become a more troublesome issue than it was in the past, particularly due to the increase in options for audiences due to commercialization and digitalization. In response, public service broadcasters have rebranded themselves into public service media to emphasize their public service orientation is not bound to a specific platform. Finally, it has been noted that economic welfare has become more important for public service broadcasters in recent years.

2.5. Social media for public service media
One of the tensions that has arisen for public service media in the online realm is not just the tension of reach versus quality as discussed above, but also the fact that public service media, which are public and non-commercially orientated by their very nature, increasingly have to be active in a predominantly commercial online environment. This is especially the case on so-called social media platforms, which can be defined as being 'a group of Web 2.0 platforms that

allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content' (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010 as cited in van Dijck & Poell, 2015, p.150). Such social media platforms became increasingly commercially orientated at the beginning of the 21st century (van Dijck & Poell, 2015) until almost all social media platforms were completely commercial (Moe et al., 2016; van Dijck, 2013).

The commercial and fairly unregulated nature of such platforms is in stark contrast with the traditional broadcasting realm, which has been heavily regulated from the outset, especially in Western-European countries (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). However, as the Internet and the social networking platforms that have been developed on the Internet underwent its own transition into massive commercial enterprises (van Dijck, 2013) that quickly gained huge popularity (van Dijck & Poell, 2013), these commercial platforms became something that public service media had to integrate into their media logic (van Dijck & Poell, 2015), as this move logically followed from public broadcasters' strategy of following the audience (Leurdijk & Leendertse, 2010). This means that public service media never really truly managed to establish their own non-commercial social platforms through which citizens could be reached as some scholars had hoped for (e.g. Iosifidis, 2011). Instead, these commercial social media platforms became an important element within the online strategy of broadcasters, both commercial and public. The fact that public service media are active on international commercial platforms then, raises difficulties regarding regulations (Moe, 2013), which is an added concern for both public service media and regulatory bodies such as national governments and the European Union.

However, it is important to note that public service media were, and to a large degree still are, very enthusiastic about the opportunities social media brought with them and consequently, public service media were also some of the first media organizations to actively employ social media to come into contact with their audiences (van Dijck & Poell, 2015). As already touched upon, especially public service media saw the online realm and social networking sites in particular as a golden opportunity to put long cherished public values as engagement and two-way communication between broadcaster and citizen into practice (Enli, 2008). This indicates that these broadcasters saw social media platforms as particularly useful for achieving goals related to social welfare in the form of wanting to foster interaction and engagement as well as useful for achieving goals related to political welfare in the form of being accountable to the public through their presence on social media platforms (van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003). Especially the hard to reach audience groups such as young people seemed to be reachable by public service media through these social media platforms (van Dijck & Poell, 2015), making social media platforms and important way through which the public value of reach could be articulated by public service media. This public value of reach is appreciated to such an extent,

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that with regards to social media activities, economic welfare goals such as being cost-efficient are more likely to be regarded as less important than being able to reach a lot of people on social media platforms. In this sense, social welfare goals are put more at the foreground when designing social media activities done by public service media rather than economic considerations.

However, some scholars have emphasized that simply reaching audiences on social media platforms is not enough, rather this capturing of the audiences' attention needs to be continued by engaging audiences on these platforms (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011), again emphasizing the social welfare goals that can be achieved on social media platforms by broadcasters. So-called brand engagement on social media platforms has been stated as being very important not just for broadcasters, but for the brand of all types of organizations (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Hoffman & Fodor, 2010), but very little consensus exists on what engagement on social media is supposed to entail (Schober, Pasek, Guggenheim, Lampe, Conrad, 2016). Schivinski, Christodoulides & Dabrowski (2016) have made an attempt to define brand engagement by dividing it in three different types. Users can either be observers, meaning they watch videos or read posts of the brand on social media, they can be contributors, meaning that they comment, share or like content from the brand or they can be creators, meaning that they upload content related to the brand themselves. Especially getting audience members to go from observers to contributors has proven to be an important predictor of success in building customer relationships (Nelson-Field, Riebe & Sharp, 2012), which highlights the importance of getting audiences to actively react to social media content they come into contact with.

Other scholars also define engagement more along the lines of users of social media services actively engaging with content of the brand by commenting or sharing rather than just reading or watching it (Fisher, 2009; Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011; Lefebvre, 2007; Strekalova, 2016). In addition, Ashley & Tuten (2015) found that offering incentives for participating in social media content also leads to higher degrees of engagement. These scholars then seem to attribute more importance to engaging the audience that are reached, rather than simply trying to reach as many people as possible on social media platforms because they argue that engagement is key to build relationships with audience members (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). What is interesting is that the three different types of engagement as outlined by Schivinski, Christodoulides & Dabrowski (2016) are very similar to the way Doyle (2010) defined three different strategies for distributing content on multiple platforms in terms of the level of engagement present on the social media platform. Both observing and simply re-using content on social media platforms hint to very little levels of engagement on social media

platforms, whereas both creator and native social media content align very well in terms of their engagement potential on social media.

A related issue to these strategies of putting content of television programs of public service media on social media is what the position of public service media is regarding the public values that are supposed to be present in the content itself. As content from public service media is supposed to already adhere to certain public values (Nissen, 2006), for instance promoting linguistic diversity, the question is whether social media is simply used as a window for this content to be presented, which mostly aligns with the first strategy as outlined by Doyle (2010) of simply re-using content, or if added layers are put on this content, for instance by creating a contest related to the content of television programs on a social media platform, a strategy that has proven to create a lot of audience engagement (Ashley & Tuten, 2015), hereby attempting to have other public values such as engagement present on social media as well rather than simply the public values that are supposedly already present in the television content itself. The different types of content that are put on social media platforms then, tell us something about how the notion of public values is regarded by people who create social media content for public service media as some content for instance very explicitly tries to foster engagement, whereas other content does not.

It is important to realize that these concerns and tensions related to social media content work on more levels than just on the level of the people actually creating social media content. There is also the level of the institutions of public service media, most notably these of national public service broadcasters. Such institutions as a whole have struggled with designing strategies related to audience participation and how social media ought to be used to create audience engagement, and often had to come to terms with the fact that it is hard to correctly predict how audiences react and engage with social media content of public service media (Cola & Prario, 2012). This finding highlights the unpredictability of what constitutes a successful post on social media for organizations.

A related problem for public service media institutions is the fact that audience engagement and participation potentially have different meanings for the audience than for these institutions. This is for instance evident in the trend that audiences increasingly produce content themselves as well, which means that audiences took over some of the abilities that used to be reserved for media professionals only (Aslama, 2010; Lefebvre, 2007). There certainly seems to be reluctance on the side of broadcasters to engage in truly participatory forms of creating content on any type of platform, including social media (Jackson, 2009).

Another salient concern for public service media is that when they put content on social

media platforms such as YouTube, 'the platform tends to "re-brand" public audiovisual content on its own terms" (van Dijck & Poell, 2015, p.154), meaning that there ceases to be a direct link between the uploader of the content (in this case the public service broadcaster) and the actual content that is put on YouTube. As a result, many public service media put limited amount of content on such platforms and always try to bring audiences back to public channels (van Dijck & Poell, 2015), such as the website of the public service broadcasting company. Such decisions point to the fact that public service media are hesitant to create native social media content and more likely to re-use a small selection of existing content as outlined by Doyle (2010). However, such strategies not always work well and they potentially lead to a decrease in exposure of such content than if the entirety of the content or other types of content was put on these commercial platforms, again highlighting the problematic nature of the concept of reach. This example shows the fine line public service media walk on when it comes to reaching their audiences with their own public content and doing so on commercial social media platforms.

It is evident that such concerns need addressing at the institutional level in order to devise strategies how public institutions should behave on social media. However, as such strategies are still very much under development (Moe et al., 2016), this means that media professionals involved with social media activity at the level of individual programs do not have clear-cut guidelines on how to engage with social media. Even though some recently-produced television programs from public service broadcasters have clearly integrated a social media element into their format (van Dijck & Poell, 2015) many other television programs, both those that have been on the air for a long time already and newer programs, do not have a clear social media element in their format. This means that such television program makers need to think of how their existing content can be re-used on social media platforms, or how added layers of content can be created for such platforms. Together with the fact that there are no clear-cut social media strategies and guidelines, this means that it is likely that a great deal of experimentation takes place on the part of television program makers when it comes to placing television program-related content on social media platforms to see what works and what does not work on these platforms.

Furthermore, there is the added problem that potentially an ideological generational gap exists when it comes to if and how social media platforms should be employed by a particular organization as for instance found by (Seger, 2011). This is in line with the finding of Schwarz (2016) that often institutional heterogeneity exists on how to engage with new emerging digital platforms. This means that potentially a diverse array of opinions and practices exist when it comes to engaging in social media activity by media professionals working in public service

media. In addition, the newness of this topic of public values on social media platforms for television program makers means that there are few certainties that exist for creating social media content for public service media television programs. This newness of the topic and the notion of institutional heterogeneity are especially important in the Dutch public service media context due to the fact that the public broadcasting system in the Netherlands is divided in many different sub-organizations, or associations, which means there is more potential for institutional heterogeneity to exist, keeping in mind that at the same time Dutch public service media are very active on social media platforms (van Dijck & Poell, 2015).

2.6. Social media for PSM: the Dutch context

Public service broadcasting historically took up an important place in the Dutch media landscape and is still relatively popular nowadays with a market share of about 30% (MediaMonitor, 2015). However, the way the public broadcasting system is structured in the Netherlands is slightly complex. This is due to the fact that historically, Dutch society was very much organized in different social groups based on for instance religion or social class, which were called pillars. Public service broadcasting was organized according to these pillars as well, with separate public service associations creating television content for their 'own' pillar. Funding and the amount of time these different associations could broadcast were based on memberships, which were reflected by the number of subscriptions to their program guides (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). In this way, separate broadcasting associations represented different social pillars (Hoffman-Riem, 1996) and generally had very distinctive brands from one another as they made programs for different social groups.

These separate broadcasting associations still exist today, even though some have recently merged due to dwelling membership subscriptions which is due to trends such as secularization and individualization, which lessened the importance of these separate pillars (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). At the same time, the overarching organization of Dutch broadcasting, the NPO, is trying to create a more unified brand of public service broadcasting in the Netherlands (NPO, 2015). The present situation is that there is one overarching Dutch public service broadcasting institution, the NPO, which as of right now does not produce any content itself. This task is given to six separate broadcasting associations, who produce content for television as well as radio, that exist based on membership subscriptions as mentioned above and to two separate broadcasting associations devoted to a certain task: the organization NOS is tasked with broadcasting news, sport and events and the NTR is in charge of educational programs. Apart from this, there also exists an association that focuses on children's programming. Together these nine broadcasting associations produce content for three different

public television channels: NPO 1, NPO 2 and NPO 3 as well as for the online environment and fall directly under the NPO organization. Apart from this there are also thirteen regional broadcasting organizations that each produce content for their own channel in their own designated region.

Just as it is the case for most other European public service broadcasters, the Dutch public service broadcaster has had to make budget cuts and legitimize its ongoing existence in increasingly practical terms (Bardoel & Brants, 2003). This is also evident in a letter the Dutch secretary of Education, Culture and Science recently send to the Dutch House of Representatives in which he explains that he wants to create policies for further distinguishing the Dutch public broadcaster from commercial ones while praising the recent budget cuts that have been made to make the Dutch public broadcaster more efficient (Dekker, 2014). In addition, these policies are aimed at further reforming the Dutch public broadcasting institution by giving the overarching public service organization, the NPO, more authority over the nine separate broadcasting organizations as well as prohibiting these separate broadcasting organization from producing purely entertainment-based shows (NOS, 2016). The first reform is aimed at giving public service broadcasting a more unified image, which is increasingly important as public service broadcasters are active on multiple platforms (Cola & Prario, 2012). In addition, some argue that these separate associations are losing its legitimacy for existing as Dutch society is not organized according to different pillars anymore due to secularization and individualization. Following this argument, this means that these associations are struggling to maintain a distinctive brand from the other associations and thus become increasingly less relevant. The recent merger between several of these associations is an example of this line of reasoning gaining support.

The second reform of trying to ban entertainment from public service organizations stems from making the differentiation between commercial and public broadcasters more evident (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008). However, in the end both reforms did not obtain a majority vote in the Dutch Senate and both reforms had to be toned down which resulted in only slightly-increased authority of the NPO over the separate broadcasting institutions and in still having entertainment content aired on NPO channels as long as program makers can prove that these entertainment programs reach an audience that otherwise would not be reached by the Dutch public service broadcaster (NOS, 2016). In this latter reform the tension between quality versus reach is clearly present. In addition, a tension exists between the NPO and the separate associations with regards to the importance of the number of members of the associations. Organizations see these numbers as a tool to legitimate their ongoing influence and power when

it comes to public service broadcasting whereas the NPO would like them to attribute less importance to these numbers and work together more closely (Reijmer, 2014).

Tensions are also visible within the NPO when talking about social media. In their strategy guide, the NPO both expresses the wish to reach the public on social media to create a dialogue with them, but also emphasizes they wish to do so without squandering their non-commercial nature and the public values they adhere to (NPO, 2016). A practical example of how this policy is executed is for instance the fact that the NPO states that audiovisual content should only be put on social media platforms if it lasts less than five minutes and that a clear link to the own online environment in the form of their own websites should be clearly placed together with the content on such platforms (van Dijck & Poell, 2015). Thus, the NPO seems to still very much be in the business of trying to bring audiences from social media platforms to their own (non-commercial) environment, hereby again highlighting the salient issue of public service media trying to reach audiences on commercial platforms but also trying to bring those audiences back to their own non-commercial online environment. Important to realize is that the NPO does not produce content themselves and that they set forth these guidelines for the various broadcaster associations that do produce content.

However, at the same time it must be noted that the NPO recognizes the importance of social media and the opportunities it provides, especially in relation to the notion of engagement and being able to reach younger audience, which is why they express the wish to use social media more in the future (NPO, 2016). Thus, the public values of reach and engagement seem to be clearly present in the social media strategy of the NPO. In addition, it is important to emphasize the fact that the NPO recognizes that individual public broadcasting programs often have the most loyal and active audience and that therefore individual programs should also be present in the online realm and social media in particular as much as possible (NPO, 2016), hereby again underpinning the importance of taking a closer look at how social media activity is done by individual programs in light of their public service orientation and how media professionals that create social media content for individual television programs view this process, the importance of which is also acknowledged by Moe et al. (2016). Added to this is the fact that the topic of public values in the realm of social media is very new, and often public service media have no clear strategies and guidelines to deal with the various social media platforms, which draws attention to the importance of getting the viewpoint of the people actually involved in the creation of content for social media platforms to see how they make sense of being active in such a new and rapidly evolving field.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research method

In order to answer the research question '*In which ways do public service broadcasting programs employ social media in light of their adherence to a public service orientation?*', a qualitative inquiry consisting of in-depth qualitative expert interviews are conducted into the social media efforts of individuals working for television programs of the Dutch public service broadcaster the NPO. A qualitative approach to this research question seems more suitable than quantitative as qualitative deals with the performances and practices of human communication (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). In a similar fashion, this study aims to take an in-depth look into how human practices and decisions of public service media professionals lead to social media activity and the role public values play in this. In addition, a qualitative method is most suitable for discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships (Babbie, 2011), which is something this study also aims to do by looking into if and how notions of public values and the concept of public service orientation resonate on social media platforms for media professionals.

Furthermore, the method of in-depth expert interviews is used as this method is advantageous when the research question deals with a new or unknown field (van Audenhove, 2007). As this research is also quite exploratory in nature as it deals with the very new and unknown field of how public service media make use of social media, expert interviews is a suitable method to gain specific information into this new field. Using expert interviews as a method then, allows for the research to obtain specific information on which concepts and issues play a role for the interviewees, which helps in sensitizing and understanding topics related to public service media and social media more clearly. Added to this is the fact that interviews allow for keeping the context in which individuals operate in mind (Berg, 2009), which is important as the national and technological context in which public service media operate in have an influence on the ways in which media professionals (can) engage in social media activity (Moe et al., 2016). In addition, using interviews in order to investigate this topic is most suitable as interviews yield rich and in-depth data (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) and can be valuable for understanding why certain decisions are made within a certain industry or company. Briones, Kuch, Liu & Jin (2011) for instance used interviews as their method to see how the Red Cross used social media to build customer relationships and to see which barriers and issues arose when the interviewees engaged in social media activity. Raats (2012) and Schwarz (2016) also used interviews for the topic of public service media specifically to obtain in-depth information

how public service media professionals carry out their work and which issues and barriers they encounter. As this research also aims to obtain specific knowledge on how public service media professionals employ social media and the challenges they face, a similar method is employed as for the research examples mentioned above in order to obtain this information to answer the research question.

3.2. Sampling procedure

For this research, eleven interviews with in total fifteen public service media professionals involved with the creation of social media content for specific television programs were held. All interviewees were involved with television programs or projects of the Dutch public broadcaster NPO (Nederlandse Publieke Omroep), as the researcher is collaborating with this company for this research. As a sample, an attempt was made to select interviewees involved in television programs from each of the six core genres that belong to public service broadcasters as argued by the NPO itself which are journalism, Dutch scripted shows and movies, children's programming, documentaries, education and information, music and art (NPO, 2015). With the exception of Dutch scripted shows, the core genres are all included in the sample (see table 3.1.). In having interviewees from these five core genres represented in the sample, a large variety of different public service broadcasting programs are selected, that added together reach a very broad audience, which in turn makes it possible to research a wide array of notions of public values and how they translate to social media activity. In addition, broadcasting associations at which interviewees were employed include the associations: NTR, Zapp, VPRO, AVROTROS, KRO-NCRV, Omroep MAX and EO, meaning that out of the six broadcasting membership associations (Rijksoverheid.nl, n.d.), interviews were held with employees of five of the membership associations as well as one interview with the broadcasting organization established separate from the membership association in charge of educational content (NTR) as well as one with the association (Zapp) in charge of children's programming. This means that almost all membership-based associations that aim to represent a certain social group in the Netherlands (Hoffmann-Riem, 1996) are represented in the sample as well as two broadcasting organizations that have a specific task namely children's programming and educational programming.

Interviewees were selected both by searching social media platforms for employees of the various public broadcasting associations as well as through e-mail contact with the separate heads of digital of the different associations who provided suggestions for suitable interview candidates. In the end this resulted in eleven interviews with fifteen people in total. Interviews were conducted between the 29th of April and the 20th of May 2016. All interviews were held in

the vicinity or at the headquarters of the separate associations. Table 3.1. shows the amount of people present during each interview as well as the genre of the program or programs for which the interviewee or interviewees are involved in the social media activity.

Table 3.1. List of interviewees and genre of program(s) they produce social media content for

Interviewee number, gender	Genre(s)
Interviewee 1, female	Daily talk show
Interviewee 2, female	Informative program
Interviewee 3, male	
Interviewee 4, male	Human interest program
Interviewee 5, male	Documentary program
Interviewee 6, female	Popular science programs, game shows
Interviewee 7, female	Classical music programs, game shows
Interviewee 8, female	Consumer program
Interviewee 9, male	
Interviewee 10, female	Informative program, cultural program, children's programs
Interviewee 11, male	Educational children's website
Interviewee 12, female	Children's programs
Interviewee 13, female	
Interviewee 14, male	Cultural-religions programs
Interviewee 15, female	

3.3. Operationalization and topic list

The eleven in-depth, semi-structured interviews were scheduled to last around little under an hour. Furthermore, they were structured around six topics that deal with twenty-four main questions and several sub-questions as can be derived from the topic list (see Appendix A), which is an appropriate amount of questions for one-hour in-depth and semi-structured interviews (Hermanowicz, 2002). Excluding the introduction and conclusion as topics, leaves four main topics that largely follow the structure of the theoretical framework, meaning that first questions related to the television program itself were asked, then question related to the online realm were put forth after which two topics related to social media specifically were introduced. The six topics are outlined below.

The first topic that guides the semi-structured interview is the introduction and deals with introductory questions related to the work experience of the interviewee and the organizational structure of the association he or she works for. Introductory questions such as these are important to establish a good rapport with the interviewee (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) and it is thus important to start the interviewee with such questions (Hermanowicz, 2002). Furthermore, getting information on the organizational structure is helpful to assess the importance of the concept of institutional heterogeneity as explained by Schwarz (2016).

The second topic deals with the specific television program the interviewee is involved with in order to better understand the type of program and how this program is regarded by the interviewee. Already in this second topic the notion of public values is being inquired about, first indirectly by asking the respondent whether he or she feels whether the program clearly belongs at a public service broadcaster and why. By asking the question like this without mentioning the notion of public values, a sense can be obtained whether public values are at the foreground of the mind of the interviewee at the first place, which is likely to lead to a more unbiased response than if the interviewee had been asked about public values directly (Bradburn, Sudman & Wansink, 2004). After this question, the interviewee is asked about public values directly in order to investigate if and which public values are important for the television program they work for, as the NPO itself indicates that public values are at the foreground when producing television content (NPO, 2015). Furthermore, the answer to this question can later be compared and contrasted to answers given related to public values in the online environment and social media in particular. The relationship between the television program, the broadcasting organization and the NPO is also being asked about to already contextualize the power dynamics that are present in the Dutch public service broadcasting system which is relevant for online activities of Dutch public service media television programs as well.

The third topic deals with the online environment as a whole and is important to put the answers given to questions related to social media in the larger online context. Here, the main focus lies on opportunities and barriers of the online realm and the importance of the online for the individual television program which is being assessed for instance by drawing on notions of public values such as reach, an important public value as outlined by Nissen (2006). Furthermore, barriers to utilizing the online environment are being asked about as well, for instance to be able to see if institutional heterogeneity and ideological differences within departments and organizations as discussed by Schwarz (2016) and Seger (2011) play a role for interviewees when talking about barriers as well.

The fourth topic deals with the social media activity in general of the television program that the interviewee works for. This topic investigates if and how social media logic is integrated into the online activities of broadcasters (van Dijck & Poell, 2015) by asking on which social media platforms the television program is active, and what the interviewees see as working well or working not as well on social media as well as by asking about different elements that influence what works well on social media. In addition, drawing on Doyle (2010), the type of content that is being posted on social media platforms is being assessed as well in order to gauge the perceived importance of posting additional or completely new content on social media platforms and the motivations behind posting certain types of content.

The fifth topic deals with the goals and barriers of social media specifically. The topic of goals is firstly being asked about by asking about the strategies that interviewees employ on social media platforms to reach certain goals. Through asking what they hope to achieve with their social media activities, the relative importance of public values can be assessed as well as being able to identify any other goals they might have. Secondly, the interviewees are asked whether they think social media activities from public broadcasters differ from those of commercial broadcasters in order to further investigate what the public service orientation of the programs means for the people producing social media content. Strategies for achieving said goals are being asked about by asking about concepts such as reach (Nissen, 2006) and engagement. For engagement, questions draw on the division made by Schivinski, Christodoulides & Dabrowski (2016) and on the importance of participatory elements as outlined by Ashley & Tuten (2015). Feedback mechanisms are also discussed in order to further investigate the relationship between media professionals and audience members, which has the potential to be a more equal relationship in the social media environment as mentioned by Jackson (2009) and is an important goal associated with political welfare (van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003). Then the topic of barriers is addressed by asking questions related to what the interviewee can or cannot do on social media as regulations and restrictions on social media platforms for public service broadcasters are a very current and important issue (Moe et al., 2016; van Dijck & Poell, 2015). With such questions, tensions that potentially influence the public service orientation of television programs on public service media can be identified.

Finally, the sixth and final topic provides a conclusion during which some more general questions related to the future of the television program and public service media in general are asked. In addition, the interviewee is being invited to share any remarks or comments that have not yet been outspoken, which is an important element in rounding-off the interview (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). With these six topics and twenty-three main questions, this interview covers the

specifics of the Dutch context in the form of questions related to regulations and institutional heterogeneity, the public nature of the television program for which social media content is created as well as the goals and strategies regarding social media. These three contexts are important to consider when talking about social media for broadcasters as argued by Moe et al. (2016). Furthermore, with keeping these contexts in mind, the question of how individuals involved in the social media activity of television programs of public service media make use of social media in light of their public service orientation can arguably be answered holistically and in-depth.

3.4. Data Analysis

The recorded interviews were firstly transcribed and then subjected to a thematic analysis, which is useful for interview-based data through which interesting themes and concepts can be identified as noted by Gavin (2008). As this research is interested in several themes related to public service media in combination with their use of social media platforms, and thematic analysis is suitable for identifying these themes through pattern recognition (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), using thematic analysis for this research was found to be most suitable. This thematic analysis was done according to each of the themes identified in the topic list, which are introduction, the television program, the online realm, social media activity, social media: goals and barriers and the concluding remarks. Segments of answers of the interviewees related to these six topic were coded by giving these segments 'a label that depicts the core topic of a segment' (Boeije, 2010, p.95), meaning that bits of data were coded according to the theme they alluded to. The next step involves analyzing whether any of these codes in their respective topics point to the same underlying concept (Boeije, 2010) and if these codes could thus be merged into sub-themes (Aronson, 1995). These sub-themes within the six topics were analyzed by employing a constant-comparative method (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) to uncover similarities and differences in opinion for each of the different themes. In a similar fashion, the different interviews were compared and contrasted with one another using a constant-comparative method as well. In the end this resulted in five main themes, as the concluding remarks did not reveal an interesting topic, following the structure of the topic list, of which the latter three topics have two subthemes each. Table 3.2. lists the main themes together with the sub-themes.

Table 3.2. Main themes and sub-themes

Main theme	Sub-theme
Introductory remarks: organizational structure	
The television program: public values	
The online environment	Opportunities
	Barriers
Social media activity	What works / does not work
	Social media content and the program
Social media goals and barriers	Goals and strategies to achieve them
	Barriers

4. Results

In this section, the results obtained from the qualitative interviews and the subsequent analysis will be discussed. This will be done according to the main themes identified in the method section, which are introduction, TV program, the online environment, social media activity and social media: goals and barriers. The latter three themes also each have two sub-themes that will be discussed as well.

4.1. Introductory remarks: organizational structure

Unexpectedly, already the introductory section provided some interesting findings, as the introductory questions featured questions related to the organizational structure that influence how activities for the online environment and social media platforms are organized. It was found that the organizational structure of the different departments in charge of online and social media activity for one or multiple programs differed heavily across and within the various associations. Broadly speaking, two types of organizational structures were found: either one person was solely in charge of the online environment and social media activity for one or multiple programs, or a person or people who were also involved in other activities for one program, were also in charge of the online and social media activity for that particular program. People belonging to either group that were interviewed identified advantages and disadvantages to the particular way social media was organized for their program(s). As one person explained who did social media for multiple children's programs when talking about how they do social media for so many different programs: *"You cannot really do episode-specific content on social media, unless you get this content straight from the producers of the program"* (female, children's programs). One interviewee who had experience with working in both settings explained it the following way:

> *"Back then, the online department was centralized and then you would sometimes go to a program to get a press release to put online. The advantage there is that you centralize and exchange a lot of knowledge related to the online, but you miss the content-specific sparks of the program. The advantage of the program I now work for is that you are very involved with the specifics and the content of the program, but sometimes you miss the exchange of knowledge about the online environment which is why within our association we are contemplating this, because now all the online editors are scattered across the place."* (male, documentary program)

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Thus, it seems that there exists a large degree of institutional heterogeneity within the Dutch public service broadcaster in terms of how activities for the online environment, such as for the website, and social media platforms, is organized, a finding that is line with that of Schwarz (2016) analysis of how Sweden's public broadcaster is adapting to a new digital environment. This internal heterogeneity can be said to be a logical result of a large organization trying to adapt to new digital technologies without very clear strategies as to how to go about adapting to these technologies, rather than institutional heterogeneity being a conscious strategy for adapting to these new technologies. In addition, it is important to realize that this difference in the way activities for the online environment are organized potentially leads to a difference in knowledge how to utilize the online environment for an individual program, something that also becomes evident later when the talk shifts to the online environment as a whole, of which social media is an important component within this environment.

4.2. The television program: public values

In order to properly assess the importance of public values in the online and social realm, interviewees were firstly asked about if and how they think their program fits in with the Dutch public broadcaster as a whole. Most interviewees quite firmly expressed that their program and the Dutch public broadcaster were a good fit, as one interviewee explained: "*Without the public broadcaster, this program wouldn't exist.*" (male, documentary program). However, when being asked more specifically about why they think their program fits well with the Dutch public broadcaster, it was interesting to see that most people could not explicitly state the grounds upon which they judged it to be a good fit:

> "*Uh…I think, I'm not sure, but you feel it and you understand it when you're watching it. It has to have…it has to have a certain degree of responsibility…everything that happens, has to have a reason*" (female, daily talk show)

The above quote illustrates that interviewees find it hard to associate specific public values to the program, although it can be argued that the term responsibility that the interviewee mentions, is connected to the concept of accountability, a public value tied to the notion of political welfare (van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003) that has become increasingly important in the 21st century in the Dutch context (Bardoel & Brants, 2003). Even though most interviewees had difficulty with identifying particular values their program adheres to, when asked the question whether their program could also be aired by a commercial broadcaster, interviewees were again quite firm in their belief that this could not be the case. Interestingly enough, the grounds

for this belief were not based on the genre of their show, but rather on the specific type of program that is being made within the genre as one interviewee explained: *"You have a lot of game shows that are being aired by a commercial broadcaster that we could never make."* (female, popular science programs, game shows). This type of program within a genre that makes it fit well with the public broadcaster was often defined by the particular way in which the program is being made:

> *"I think the way in which we produce it…I think it really is a public broadcaster program…the commercial broadcasters also make human interest programs, but I think that the way in which we make it, that we take so much time for people and their stories, I don't see that happening with commercial broadcasters"* (male, human interest program)

The quote above illustrates that the way in which the fit of the program with the public broadcaster is legitimized is not done on grounds of genre, which is argued by some as being a ground by which public broadcasters ought to be distinguished from commercial ones (Levy, 1999), but rather on a distinctive way of producing programs within said genre. As the next section demonstrates, the specific public value of reach plays a role in relation to utilizing the online environment for public broadcasting programs.

4.3. The online environment

4.3.1. Opportunities
In general, when being asked about the importance of the online environment, interviewees were fairly convinced that the online environment was important for their programs, especially in terms of reach. As one interviewee stated:

> *"You simply have to be present there, I think it is an outdated idea that you don't have to be present. There are people who purely watch television on the Internet and I think that you miss out on a lot of viewership if you are not online."* (female, popular science programs, game shows)

Thus it seems that the idea of Leurdijk & Leendertse (2010) that broadcasters follow their audiences to where they are active, in this case the online environment, holds very true. In addition, seeing the online environment as a way to reach more members of society, which has been stated as being an important task of public broadcasters (Nissen, 2006) means that the

online realm is being regarded as a good way to put the public value of reach into practice. However, interviewees also stated they encountered barriers when using the online environment for their programs.

4.3.2. Barriers

An important barrier that was encountered by some interviewees, was the fact that within their organization, Internet was not always regarded as being important. This television-first attitude seems to be very prevalent among some people working within the Dutch public broadcaster:

> *"With TV-people, to classify them as a type of animal, no matter how much you try to make them see otherwise, there is always a basic emotion of: we produce a TV show that we air and people should simply watch it."* (male, documentary program)

> "(…)*When you have a meeting with the board on how the company is doing it's always television first and then maybe Internet is two…"* (female, popular science programs, game shows)

The two quotes above are from people solely in charge of the online and social media activities of one or more programs and illustrate that among these people, the notion exists that the online environment is undervalued by some people within their own association. This finding is in line with Seger (2011) who states that when it comes to adopting social media platforms within an organization, there is often an ideological divide, which is mostly based on age, on how important these platforms are and how much use should be made of them. This in turn also has consequences for the online and social media activities that can be done by individual programs, as there are budget and manpower restraints:

> "(…) *We really look at what has potential for online, we make a cost-benefit analysis and look at the potential value we will get out of it, which programs help us distinguish our association from others and to which I will allocate manpower"* (female, informative program, cultural program, children's programs)

Thus, it seems that in terms of utilizing the online environment for programs there is a barrier of different people valuing the importance of the online differently which in turn leads to practical constraints related to time and money that influence what can and cannot be done in the online environment. These findings then add to the findings of Moe et al. (2016) who state that national

cultural differences and conscious techno-commercial strategies are important for how broadcasters behave in the online environment, as these findings show that the attitude towards these new technologies on a rather micro-level within different associations of the Dutch public broadcaster also have a large influence on the activities individual programs pursue in the online environment. This in turn has consequences for a specific component of the online environment as well, which are social media activities.

4.4. Social Media Activity

4.4.1. What works / does not work

Talking with interviewees about how they use social media platforms for their public broadcasting service programs first and foremost means talking in very practical terms about experimenting with what does and does not work. Interviewees offered various suggestions as to what works and does not work on social media and why, but most of it comes down to finding the right match between the type of program that is being made, the target audience of the program and the functionalities of the platform, as one person explained who coordinates social media activity for very different shows, namely a cooking show, a debate program and children's programs:

> "*Facebook is more of a social medium and so you try to engage your audience there, you ask questions. Facebook is also less time-bound than Twitter, that is a very current medium and for instance on YouTube we place cooking videos. But for our debate program, which is really about the debate and current affairs, you are more active on Twitter because you know that Twitter is a medium on which current affairs are being talked about. And well, for a children's program you go to Instagram because young people are on Instagram and that is how you go about that a little bit.*" (female, informative program, cultural program, children's programs)

As the quote above illustrates, multiple elements need consideration when being active on social media. Firstly, the concept of reach is once again important as you need to reach your audience on the platforms where they are active, which again highlights the importance of the strategy of following the audience (Leurdijk & Leendertse, 2010) for television programs. Secondly, at the same time, the functionalities of the platform also matter as the interviewee states that Facebook is less time-bound than Twitter, which emphasizes the importance of techno-commercial strategies as outlined by Moe et al. (2016). Thirdly however, it is also important that your type of

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content is suitable for certain platforms, as an interviewee explains who makes web-only content for an educative website aimed at children: "*Snapchat has potential for us, but we need to think about how you want to get content for that as we do not make the programs ourselves.*" (male, educational children's website). These three elements, target audience, functionalities of the platforms and type of program, were thus found as being at the foreground of interviewees when designing social media content for television programs.

Interviewees also stressed the importance of experimenting with new features and platforms. However, at the same time they also acknowledge that they could benefit from existing knowledge on social media platforms and how to best utilize them:

> Interviewee*: "Yeah, that's the thing, it's mostly experimenting a lot, I don't think there is a standard formula that you can apply to all programs"*
> Interviewer: *"So it really depends on the program?"*
> Interviewee: "*Yes, but it would be good if we exchange more knowledge here within our organization, because there are of course tips and tricks that we can all benefit from."*
> (female, cultural-religious programs)

Here, the importance of both being able to experiment with different types of content and platforms for television programs as well as having access to existing knowledge in the form of tips and tricks is being emphasized, meaning that in the absence of clear social media strategies (Moe et al., 2016), experimenting seems to be a big part in the daily activities of producing social media content but that some knowledge and expertise in this area is also valued. Thus, it is important to realize that when talking about how programs of public service broadcasters employ social media, the first concerns expressed by the interviewees are mostly practical concerns in trying to find a correct match between the program, the platforms and the target audience and that in trying to find this match, a high degree of experimenting is present. This also has implications for the relation between the content on social media platforms and the content of the program as the next section will demonstrate.

4.4.2. Social media content and the program

Drawing on Doyle (2010) who states that broadcasters in the online environment can either re-use content, create extra content or create new, web-only content, interviewees were asked about how they think their social media activities relate to the program they create the content for. Most interviewees stated that the content they place on social media platforms has a very clear link with the program: *"It always has to have a direct link with the program."* (male, human

interest program). When being asked about if interviewees had never tried to go beyond the program to create content that was further removed from the program, some interviewees stated that they had tried this, but that it is difficult. The following quotes illustrate why several interviewees regarded this as tricky:

> *"You have to be careful with that, because people come to your social media channels because of the television program and if you create a lot of extra content that is diverging from the television program, then they will lose interest." (*female, informative program, cultural program, children's programs*)*

> *'I think people would say: this is strange, this doesn't reflect the program at all, with regard to this I think that social media is still really in service of the television program." (*male, informative program*)*

It seems that some interviewees are concerned that if you make content that is increasingly divergent from the program that is hard to keep audiences interested and engaged. Another interviewee also added that it is very important that you capture the same tone on social media as your television program does: *"Especially important is that the tone of voice of social fits with the tone of voice of the program.*" (female, popular science programs, game shows). However, other interviewees expressed that they are in fact really trying to go beyond the program with their social media content as one interviewee working for a consumer program explained:

> *"We really do produce content for the Internet, we manage a lot of unique content, especially related to helping and tips and I think warnings, for instance for phishing e-mails, also fall into that category, and you do not see that reflected in the airings of the program…"* (female, consumer program)

The above quote demonstrates that there are in fact public broadcasting programs that go beyond the program, although it must be noted that the unique web-only content fits well with what the television program is about, namely about consumer-related themes. This shows the importance of aligning the tone of voice of the online activities, social media in particular, with that of the program. In addition, all interviewees were convinced their activities in the online environment and especially on social media could not exist without the television program, meaning that they mostly saw the content they produced as extra, additional content to talk in

the terminology as outlined by Doyle (2010). As the same person from whom the quote above comes, stated later in the interview: *"I think we will always be connected to the program, I do not think we could do without it."* (female, consumer program). Even though interviewees state that their social media content is always related to the television program they work for, the next section will show that the goals they have in mind for this content can be quite different.

4.5. Social Media goals and barriers

4.5.1. Goals and strategies to achieve them
As mentioned in the theoretical framework, there are many public values that public broadcasters can or should adhere to, with being able to reach and engage audiences as well as generating feedback being important public values that seem especially suitable to pursue on social media platforms by public service broadcasters (Enli, 2008). On the whole however, interviewees did not seem to have distinct public values in mind when talking about the goal of their social media activity, most of them casted the goal they have in very practical terms as one interviewee explained: *"It's really about connecting people with the television program* (female, daily talk show), highlighting that this interviewee saw social media first and foremost as a sort of marketing tool for the television program. In a similar fashion, most interviewees did not see very clear differences between commercial and public broadcasters in terms of how they perform social media activity:

> Interviewee: *"I don't think there is difference, the goal in principle is the same."*
> Interviewer: *"Which is?"*
> Interviewee: *"Two-fold, getting people to your website and getting as many people as possible to like you on Facebook and to follow you on Twitter so that you have the largest community as possible where you can drop your information and your video's so that as many people as possible watch the television program. I think that is as important for the public broadcaster as for a commercial one."* (female, classical music programs, game shows)

When differences were mentioned between the public and commercial broadcasters in terms of social media activity, it was mostly done in terms of practical considerations like budget:

> *"They obviously have a much bigger budget, when you look at SBS 6* [Dutch commercial broadcaster]*, at their daily entertainment and news show, of course we also look at other*

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broadcasters what they do on social media, well, they post throughout the day, all day.
But yeah, we cannot afford that" (female, daily talk show)

Even though public values do not seem to very explicitly guide social media activity for most interviewees, there were some interviewees who did express that they had other goals in mind as well when posting social media activity. Interestingly enough, this also differed among people working for the same programs:

Interviewer: "*When you talk about things like building a community on social media for children, is that purely to strengthen the brand, or is that a primary goal as well that you want children to feel connected with each other for instance?*"
Interviewee 1: *"Yes, I do think so, yes, right?"*
Interviewee 2: *"No, I don't think about that at all, haha. I just think oh that is a good post, it will probably get a lot of likes and so I post it." (*females, children's programs*)*

The quote above illustrates that two people who post social media content for the same programs, can feel differently about the goal of these activities, as one interviewee is also looking at public values such as engaging and building a community, whereas the other is more concerned with getting a high number of likes. In addition to this one person who found community building as a standalone goal worthwhile, two other interviewees explicitly stated that they use social media for achieving public values, which was related to getting people to discuss socially-relevant themes that the interviewees deemed important: "*We really want to achieve that people start talking about certain subjects*" (female, informative program, cultural program, children's programs*). Thus, there seems to be a disparity between people creating social media content with regards to how they view their public service orientation. Quite tellingly, this disparity even exists between two people working for the same programs.

Furthermore, as all interviewees agreed that the program they worked for fitted well with the Dutch public broadcaster, there was also a feeling shared by some interviewees that reaching people with social media activity related to the program and by getting people to watch the program, the 'publicness' inherent to the program was being spread through their social media channels as well and that there is value in spreading this 'publicness' on these social media platforms. They explained that because the content of the television program does adhere to certain values, it is important that it is watched by a lot of people. As one person explained: *"You have to make sure that your content is being watched on the platforms where*

the audience is." (male, educative children's website). Thus, it seemed that social media goals were mostly articulated in practical goals of getting people to feel attached to programs and to get as many people as possible to watch the content, as the content is felt as fitting very well with the Dutch public broadcaster. It can be stated then that most interviewees felt that the distinction between public and commercial broadcasters is not so much present in social media activity but that it works through in the difference in the type of programs these broadcasters make.

This is, as the last quote also illustrates, also why most interviewees find it so important to reach a lot of people on social media with their efforts: "*You are telling stories and you want as many people as possible to hear your stories because you find it important what the public broadcaster has to tell them."* (male, documentary program). In this regard, social media is especially important to reach younger demographics:

> *"These younger people, you cannot reach them with a commercial on NPO 1 and show that you are present there, because only people from NPO 1 watch NPO 1. You have to let people know through other channels that you are there and you make a television program that is also interesting for them to watch. And I think that social media is very important in this regard."* (male, human interest program)

In addition to reaching audiences on social media platforms, which is especially important with regards to younger demographics (van Dijck & Poell, 2015), most interviewees also stated that in order to connect audiences with the program, you need to engage them. In order to get people to engage with content, most interviewees stated that it is important to offer an incentive for people to engage with the content, as also highlighted by (Asley & Tuten, 2015): "*What used to happen, is that they put links to the program and that simply doesn't work on Facebook. (…). Obviously you need to do things that get people to react and to share…*" (male, educational children's website)

Reaching people and then getting reached people to engage with the content on various social media platforms according to many interviewees is the best way to achieve the goal of getting people to connect with the television program: "*On Facebook it is all about connecting with the audience. It is all about, and you will have heard this word before probably, engagement, engagement, engagement and engagement."* (male, consumer program). This view on engagement seems to fit well with the finding of Baird & Parasnis (2011) that engagement is key for connecting people with your brand. Interesting to note is that in terms of

the three levels of engagement as outlined by Schivinski, Christodoulides & Dabrowski (2016), none of the interviewees expressed that they aimed for users to become creators, instead settling for trying to get them to first be observers and then contributors. This is in line with the finding of Jackson (2009) who states that broadcasters seem reluctant to engage in pure participatory forms of content creation. All interviewees also mentioned one or multiple barriers that to some extent negatively influenced the way in which they could perform social media activities, which will be discussed below.

4.5.2. Barriers

One of the problems some interviewees encountered when engaging in social media activity is having to deal with multiple brands within the Dutch public broadcaster which is due to the fact that the Dutch public broadcasting system is divided into multiple associations that used to make television programs for the social group or pillar that they represented (Hoffmann-Riem, 1996). Many interviewees stated that they generally believe that the programs they work for are strong brands in the online environment, but that it is hard to simultaneously also connect people to the brand of the association that produces the program: "*Let's not fool ourselves, that doesn't get us anywhere. It is better to emphasize the strong brands of our program titles, of which we have a lot, and hope that through them they maybe get to learn the brand of our association a little bit…*" (female, popular science programs, game shows).

In addition, the organizational structure of the Dutch public broadcaster also has as a consequence that little knowledge and expertise related to social media is exchanged within, but especially across the separate public broadcasting associations:

> "*We just don't get to talk that much. We are all trying to do as much as possible with little money, so there is simply little room left to talk. Also there is not being much facilitated regarding this at the moment so yeah it is pretty tough.*" (male, documentary program).

Thus it seems that the institutional heterogeneity as explained by Schwarz (2016) not only leads to different programs employing social media differently, but also that this functions as a barrier to the exchange of knowledge regarding social media across different programs and associations. In addition, time and monetary constraints also seem to form a barrier as the quote above demonstrates, just like it acted as a barrier when the online environment as a whole was being talked about.

However, the barrier that interviewees mentioned the most by far was the strategy and guidelines of the overarching organization in the Dutch public broadcasting system, the NPO.

The core of the strategy of the NPO as explained by one interviewee is that currently "*We're locking away all our content*" (female, informative program, cultural program, children's programs). This locking away is done on the websites of the programs and on the own video player of the NPO. In addition, programs get money for the amount of people they reach with their website and not for the amount of people reached on social media platforms. This has direct implications for the amount of people that can be reached with the content, as becomes apparent from the following quote that reveals the tension between what the NPO wants, which is leading people from the social media platforms to the website, and what is beneficial for the brand of a program according to one interviewee:

> "*You can't dangle a treat in front of people all the time and saying: you want it? Come to our site. That is not how social media works. So every once in a while you have to give away your content, but because you give it away, you don't reach these people through your website. So actually we're being stupid because money-wise everything is based on the website, so you should do everything in your power to get people to the website. But that's impossible because you cannot build a brand that way. And that's really the thing, the NPO is so far behind with saying: everything needs to be directed to our own sites because then we can measure everything and attribute the right amount of money to it. But you need to look at the total reach of the brand.*" (male, consumer program)

This sentiment was echoed by another interviewee who simply stated: *"You can wonder whether people who find you on Facebook will also click on a link to your website."* (male, human interest program). In addition, interviewees were especially encountering barriers with regards to the use of YouTube, which is restricted to uploading videos of a maximum length of 5 minutes with the purpose of promoting the program of which content is used, a rule also noticed by van Dijck & Poell, 2015). However, even though this rule was known to almost all interviewees, this rule is not always being followed, as one interviewee states: "*Yeah the official rule is that you can upload one video for promoting the program with a maximum of five minutes, but we mostly just ignore it.*" (male, documentary program). Thus, it seems that the strategy of the NPO directly clashes with the intention of programs of following the audiences to commercial platforms, especially with regards to younger demographics:

> "*When I look at people younger than 25, then YouTube is the replacement of television which is why I find it horrible that the NPO has such a traditional view on social media.*

They think that they can compete with Netflix and YouTube, but we're way past that, we as a public broadcaster need to be there where our audience is." (female, informative program, cultural program, children's programs

At the same time there is a widespread recognition from interviewees that platforms such as YouTube and Facebook are commercial in nature, a concern which is also voiced by scholars such as Moe (2013) and van Dijck & Poell (2015). However, two interviewees explicitly stated that the strategy of the NPO to be wary of commercial platforms as arbitrary as one explained *"Following that line of reasoning you can also state that you aren't allowed to broadcast on televisions from Philips because those are commercial products"* (male, documentary program). More often, interviewees did express a concern that the platforms they placed content on are commercial in nature, but most often these concerns were outweighed by the idea that social media platform such as Facebook are a very potent tool for being able to reach many people with content related to their television programs, of which all interviewees believe there is a public element in them:

> *"It's just that, I do not really see Facebook as a commercial platform, it is a commercial platform of course and I do know that, but for the television program it is simply one of the very few ways through which you can get an audience to notice you and to not make use of that simply because it is an external party, that is just plain stupid because you cannot create your own Facebook, you can try but it will never work…"* (female, classical music programs, game shows)

> *"I still think that when you're spending the public's money, that it is important to make sure not only commercial parties benefit from it, but you do need to look at how you can use these parties to get your content noticed as best as possible."* (male, children's educational website).

In the end, the public value of reach, or reaching all members of society as best as possible (Nissen, 2006) seems to be the most salient for interviewees, especially because they believe the content the Dutch public broadcaster has to offer is so valuable. As one interviewee explained: *"It is about the content, never about the medium or how it reaches people*." (male, consumer program). This reaching of people is valued to such an extent that making extensive use of a commercial external party should be done carefully, but should be done nonetheless.

Almost all interviewees see the strategy of the NPO for the online environment as the biggest barrier in being able to reach these audiences, as one interviewee summarized his main concern: "*I think that if you are isolating yourself and start to say: here is the NPO, we are great, come to us, then you are going to lose them.*" (male, documentary program).

5. Conclusion

As becomes apparent from the results, some interesting findings were revealed in aiming to answer the research question '*In which ways do public service broadcasting programs employ social media in light of their adherence to a public service orientation?*' Firstly, interviewees in general did not really connect explicit notions of public values to the television programs they worked for nor for the social media activity they performed for these shows, even though authors such as Cuilenburg & McQuail (2003) and Bardoel & Brants (2003) have noticed an increased importance of translating such values in increasingly practical terms for Western-European broadcasters in the 21st century. This research has shown that this assumed increased importance of public values is not resonating with interviewees directly responsible for producing (online) content for the Dutch public broadcaster, at least not in the sense that they have very clear ideas of separate public values that they ought to directly translate into their daily activities. The idea that public broadcasting services increasingly, in fact, have been translating public values into practical terms, partly to legitimize their ongoing existence, has received recognition in the academic debate (Bardoel & Brants, 2003; Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008). However, quite counter-intuitively, it seems that this idea is first and foremost a strategic and abstract notion that, even though adhering to public values has been put down as a major future priority for the Dutch broadcaster (NPO, 2016), has not been integrated into the mindset of people performing daily social media activities for said broadcaster. In this regard it does not seem that very distinct notions of public values are an important element that make-up the public service orientation of people performing social media activities for the Dutch public broadcaster.

That being said, this does not mean that interviewees did not express a clear sense of awareness that they produced content for programs of the Dutch public broadcaster, rather than for programs of a commercial broadcaster. This awareness was mostly put into wording related to the specific ways the television programs for which interviewees produce social media content are made. It is not so much the genre of the specific television program that make the program public per se, hereby going against authors such as Levy (1999) who see different types of genre as belonging more to public broadcasters than others. Rather there is a sense that most interviewees expressed of there being a distinctive public way of producing television shows that make their television program in fact public. Consequently, they felt that the programs they worked for had value for the public, even though they often could not narrowly define this value.

It is because interviewees deem the content of the programs as being important for the public to see, that most often the goal for their social media activity is formulated along the lines of reach, which according to Nissen (2006) is an important public value as public service media

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ought to aim to reach all members in society with content. Thus, most interviewees stated that the extra content they make on social media platforms always should have a direct link to the television program, which makes their activities falling mostly in the second category as formulated by Doyle (2010) of making extra, additional content that is based on television program content, in the hope of reaching as many people as possible so that they get exposed to content related to the 'public' television program. It can be said then that most interviewees defined the goal they had with their social media activity in rather commercial terms of reaching as many people as possible and engaging them so that they get (even) more connected with the program all because they feel the program and its content is valuable. However, some differences were found among interviewees, even among those working for the same programs, when it came to the goals their social media content serves as some interviewees did formulate goals not directly tied to reach but rather in terms of fostering a community feeling between members of their target audience and fostering discussions on socially-relevant themes. The fact that even interviewees who worked for the same programs formulated different goals for their activities confirms the findings of Moe et al. (2016) who claim that no clear strategies regarding social media have been formulated by public service media. Thus, the goals that people working for public media aim to achieve with social media is still very much dependent on the own personal context.

In addition, practical considerations were at the front of the minds of most if not all interviewees when talking about how they utilize social media platforms. As the goal of most interviewees with their social media activity is reaching and engaging as many people as possible, a large degree of experimenting with regards to social media content takes place to see what works and what does not work on various platforms. Even though experimenting takes up a big part when doing social media activity, most interviewees also stated that there are certain tips and tricks that can be used, which are mostly related to finding the right match between the specific type of program you perform social media activities for, the capabilities of the social media platform and the platforms on which your target audience is active. This is in line with the findings of Leurdijk & Leendertse (2010) who state that broadcasters move to those platforms where their audience is as well as with the statement of Moe et al. (2016) who state that techno-commercial strategies are partly based on the capabilities of social media platforms and that of Schwarz (2016) who found that these platforms favor certain forms of content over others by the way their infrastructure is organized. This research has shown that next to audience and platform considerations, the specifics of the program are also very important to consider in producing social media content according to interviewees, which can also help with

understanding why experimenting is such a big part of social media activity as every program has unique characteristics that can influence what works and what does not work on social media.

Perhaps one of the most surprising findings of this research is the fact that many interviewees stated that they encountered multiple barriers when engaging in social media activities, of which next to a difference in appreciation and knowledge of the online environment within their own association, the regulations and restrictions coming from the overarching Dutch public broadcasting organization, the NPO, was the most important one. Many interviewees stated that they felt their potential reach was diminished by regulations of the NPO, particularly the regulation that people should be directed from social media channels of the television program to their own online environment in the form of programs' websites and the regulation that they cannot post more than five minutes of content on YouTube per video. Even though most interviewees were aware of the fact that social media platforms were commercial, a concern also voiced by van Dijck & Poell (2015) who give this as the reason why public service media try to direct people back to public channels as much as possible, multiple interviewees stated that they felt this strategy is outdated as you simply are unable to reach the same amount of people on public channels compared to commercial social media platforms. In addition, most interviewees did not see the fact that they produce content on a commercial platform as problematic as they feel that the value and 'publicness' of the content together with the fact that they can use these platforms to convince more people to watch the television program outweighs the importance of the fact that these platforms are commercial in nature. Thus, many interviewees actually state that the policies of the NPO make fulfilling their public service orientation on social media more difficult, as interviewees translate this orientation mostly in terms of reaching people on the platforms where they are active, particularly the younger demographics. This highlights the importance of also keeping in mind the specific organizational structure and context of a broadcaster engaging in social media activity and thus can be an interesting fourth dimension worthy of attention next to the three other dimensions as formulated by Moe et al. (2016) in their special issue of social media and television audience engagement.

The findings of this research also bring a larger implication to light, that mostly has to do with institutional heterogeneity. This difference in the way social media platforms are employed by individuals working for television programs of public service media already confirms the finding of Schwarz (2016) who found that within the Swedish public broadcaster there were many institutional differences in how social media platforms were used. However, this research has also shown that there exists a difference between how the overarching Dutch public

broadcaster views the notion of public values, namely as an important strategic pillar that can guide much of the activities that they as an organization undertake both now and in the future, and how the people who are actually responsible for producing content and carrying out these daily activities regard this notion, namely as not featuring at the foreground when making operational decisions. Thus, this research has demonstrated that the empirical reality of how things actually work, in this case on social media platforms for public service media, and the way it is framed in an academic or even strategic debate, can be far removed from one another. It can be argued that the reason why this was found to be especially the case for the Dutch public broadcaster in this research is due to the fact that the organizational structure is complex in which there is an overarching public organization, the NPO, separate associations that make television programs and people hired by associations to do social media either for the program they are employed with or for multiple programs. Thus, this research shows that scholars and organizations alike need to keep in mind that what they say is or ought to happen, does not automatically need to translate into what actually happens, which is something important to consider especially when organizational structures are complex as such a structure potentially gives rise to more institutional heterogeneity especially when it comes to adapting to new digital technologies.

Of course the fact that this research takes place in the specific context of the Dutch public broadcasting system is a limitation of this study. Research has shown that the way the Dutch broadcasting system is organized is quite unique in the world (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Hoffmann-Riem, 1996) and thus findings of this research cannot directly be translated to other contexts or countries. In addition, the sampling method of this research is also a limitation of this research as most interviewees were selected by having heads of departments of the various associations sending emails to various programs asking who was interested in participating in this research. It is likely that people who responded positively to this request already had a strong opinion on the subject of social media, particularly with the barriers they encounter during their work. Furthermore, it must be noted that people who were interviewed, were the people who mostly performed the daily activities regarding social media. This means that few people were interviewed who also deal with strategic and coordinating-related considerations related to social media activity. Therefore, it must be remembered that this research offers a very particular view on social media activity from a very particular group of people. Finally, and related to the previous limitation, it must be noted that the results represent the viewpoint of people working for the Dutch public broadcaster. This means that it is important to keep in mind that nothing can be

concluded regarding to how the audiences on social media platforms regard the public service orientation of the Dutch public broadcaster.

These limitations in turn also point to interesting directions for future research. It would be interesting to investigate the importance of the organizational structure as a potential fourth dimension next to those suggested by Moe et al. (2016) in other national contexts to see whether this dimension makes a valuable fourth dimension worth considering when investigating social media activity done by broadcasters in other countries. In addition, the findings of this research could be better contextualized within the specific Dutch national context when a future research focuses on how Dutch commercial broadcasters engage in social media activity as that way both the public and the commercial dimension within this national context will have been investigated. Likewise, the findings of this research could also be contextualized better if a future research chooses to focus on investigating specifically how the institutional heterogeneity with regard to using social media platforms within the Dutch public broadcaster manifests itself on different levels within the organization. Another potentially interesting direction for future research is using another type of method that thematic analysis for analyzing interview data. To illustrate, a discourse or semiotic analysis of how narratives surrounding public service orientation are constructed could provide a more detailed and in-depth look into how exactly people working for public service media frame the public service mission of their organization. Finally, future research could also focus more on the audiences' perception of how public service media manifests itself on social media platforms, to see how notions of public values resonate with this group. Such research could help aligning the perceptions and expectations of the public with that of public broadcasters. Especially as public broadcasters need to increasingly legitimize their existence, this could provide valuable insights for such organizations.

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Appendix A: Topic List (*English*)

Introduction

1. Can you tell me something about yourself?
    - *a) Age?*
    - *b) Education?*
    - *c) Previous work experience?*
2. Can you tell me something about what your work entails?
    - *a) Amount of colleagues?*
    - *b) Division of tasks?*
    - *c) What you like best / least about work?*

The television program

3. Can you tell me a bit about [name of television program / names of television programs you provide social media content for]?
    - *a) Genre?*
    - *b) Plot / format?*
    - *c) How long it has been on air?*
    - *d) Popularity? / Ratings?*
    - *e) Target audience?*
4. Do you think [name of television program] fits well with the NPO? Why (not)?
    - a) *Do you think it could also air on a commercial channel? Why (not)?*
    - b) *Which aspects of the show make it a good/bad fit with the NPO?*
    - c) *If applicable when multiple programs: differences between programs regarding fit?*
5. With regards to the idea of public values[1], do you think [name of television program] adheres to any or multiple public values?
    - a) *Which public values come to mind?* OR: *Why do no public values come to mind?*
        - ▪ *If no response: ask about specific public values such as diversity / engagement / feedback*
    - b) *In which specific ways do these public values manifest themselves with regards to* [name of television program] *if any?*

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[1] If needed: explanation of public values (with examples) is given by interviewer

d) *How conscious do you think is the attempt to integrate certain public values into* [name of television program]*?(If applicable when multiple programs: differences between attempts to integrate public values)?*

6. How do you see the relationship between the NPO and [name of separate broadcasting organization television program belongs to]?
    a) *Nature of relationship (good / bad / power distribution)*
    b) *Any concrete examples of how the relationship works?*
        i. *i.e. struggle to increase membership numbers / viewership?*

The online realm: opportunities & barriers

7. In which ways that you are aware of is the online realm important for [name of television program]?
    a) *Do you distribute the program in the online environment?*
    b) *On which platforms?*
    e) *How popular are these online offerings in terms of reach?*
    f) *If applicable when multiple programs: differences between programs regarding online environment?*

8. Do new competitors in the online environment influence the ways in which the online realm is employed for [name of television program]?
    a) *Do you think that for instance the arrival of Netflix in the Netherlands has changed the expectations the Dutch audience has regarding watching television content?*
    b) *Are there things in the online environment you would like to try in the future?*

9. To what degree do you have to adhere to certain rules and regulations for performing activities in the online realm?
    a) *Can you give examples of rules / regulations?*
    b) *Which institution plays the biggest role in what you can / can't do? (e.g. broadcasting organization, the NPO, own department?)*
    c) *Are there any informal / unspoken rules?*
    d) *If applicable when multiple programs: differences between programs regarding rules/regulations?*

10. How do you see the role of public values in the online environment?
    a) *What makes the online environment easier / more difficult for* [name of television program] *regarding these public values?*
    b) *Do you think you can reach a wider audience using online modes of distribution?*

c) Do you see opportunities for feedback/interaction/engagement in the online realm that are not present (as much) with traditional broadcasting?

11. How do you see the online realm developing in the future?
   a) Greatest opportunities / challenges for broadcasters in general?
   b) Greatest opportunities for public service media specifically?

Social media: television program & routines

12. Can you tell me something about your social media activity in general?
   a) On which platforms are you active?
   b) How often do you post content on those platforms?
   c) What do you see as the biggest differences between the platforms on which you are active?
   d) *If applicable when multiple programs: differences between programs regarding social media activity?*

13. To what extent is the content you post on social media based on the television program?
   a) Is it mostly posting bits of content from [name of television program] *on the respective platforms?*
      i. Is there a conscious thought that public values that exist in television content get distributed to social media platforms as well?
   b) Is any extra or additional content created for social media platforms specifically? Can you give an example?
   c) Do you create content specifically for social media platforms only?

14. Can you tell me something more about the specific content you post on social media?
   a) Can you give an example of a post?
   b) How do the different platforms on which you are active influence the type of content you post? Can you give an example?
   c) Are there any routines with regards to how you (and your colleagues if applicable) go about posting social media content?

15. To what extent would you say that there is a clear strategy regarding social media activity for [name of television program]?
   a) Is there a clear goal you pursue with all the social media activity?
   b) *Do you have different goals / purposes for the different platforms?*
   c) *If applicable when multiple programs: does it depend on the kind of program?*

Social media: opportunities & barriers

16. Do you think that the fact that [name of television program] is part of the NPO influences how you are active on social media platforms?

    a) *Do you think commercial broadcasters handle social media differently? Why (not)?*

    b) *Can you give an example of how being part of public service media impacts what you can or cannot do on social media?*

17. Are there clear rules and regulations regarding what you can and cannot do on social media?

    a) *Can you give an example of such a rule / regulation?*

    b) *Which institution plays the biggest role in what you can / can't do? (e.g. broadcasting organization, the NPO, own department?)*

    c) *Are you aware of the fact that there is a tension between the commercial nature of social media platforms and the public nature of* [name of television program]*?*

        i. *Do you experience this tension in your own work? Why (not)?*

    d) *To what extend is there room to experiment with social media activity with implementing new content forms?*

18. What are the biggest challenges / opportunities with regard to social media?

    a) *Are there any specific things you struggle with on social media*

    b) *Which platform(s) do you feel hold(s) the most potential for public service media?*

    c) *How do you see social media developing in the future?*

Social media: reach & engagement

19. How do you see the notion of reach with regards to social media activity?

    a) *How important is the amount of people you reach with social media activity for you?*

    b) *Are there certain targets that need to be met with regards to how many people you reach on social media? Certain demographics? If applicable when multiple programs: differences between programs regarding targets?*

20. How do you see the notion of engagement with regards to social media activity?

    a) *Is engaging people more important than reaching a lot of people?*

    b) *Do you try to incorporate participatory elements in your social media posts?*

        ii. *What works? What doesn't work with regards to engaging?*

    c) *What for you constitutes successful engagement on social media?*

        iii. *Viewing / reading posts, commenting , uploading. feedback?*

d) Are there mechanisms by which you take feedback on the television program or related content into account?

21. Are there any other public values that play a role in your work as well according to you?

   a) E.g. accountability, listening to the public, making room for diverse voices to be heard etc.

Conclusion

22. What is in store for the future of [name of television program] / [name of broadcasting organization]?

   a) With regards to how long the program will air / future of broadcasting organization

   b) With regards to developments in the online environment / social media activity for [name of television program] / [name of broadcasting organization]

   c) *If applicable when multiple programs: differences between programs regarding future?*

23. What do you think the future of public service media in the Netherlands will be?

   a) With regards to the organizational structure (budget cuts, power of the NPO over separate broadcasting organizations)

   b) With regards to type of content that PSM airs

   c) Will PSM be able to legitimize its ongoing existence in the future?

24. Any other remarks / comments etc.?