

Platforms, the new online gatekeepers of public value in media?

How Dutch Public Service Media professionals strategically manage
public values in the platform era

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Master's Thesis

June 2022

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and give my warmest thanks to my supervisor Dr. Sven-Ove Horst for his sincere and selfless support and guidance throughout all stages of my writing process. This thesis could not have been completed without his motivating encouragements, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, I would like to express my greatest gratitude to the participants of this study, who selflessly made time for me to interview them. They intrigued me with their stories and made me appreciate the democratic media system we have in the Netherlands even more.

In addition, I could not have completed this journey without the loving support of my mother Annemieke, partner Max, and dear friends and family who were always there for me in the good times and in the bad. They always made an effort to cheer me up when things got tough and celebrated every little victory with me. Practically always – but especially throughout the last two turbulent years in my academic career.

Lastly, my proofreader and roommate Pim, who regularly knocked on my door to ask me ‘how things were going with the thesis’. After a year, I can finally tell him that I finished. In fact, he may read it himself.

Abstract

Over the past decade, the rise of platformization (Nieborg & Poell, 2018) has disrupted the media landscape in which public service media (PSM) operate and make an effort to pursue their core public values (Van Es & Poell, 2020). Growing online competition, in combination with technological developments and changing media use, has urged Dutch PSM organization NPO to reconsider their media strategies. This raises the question how NPO and its broadcasters cope with the strategic challenges brought by platformization while at the same time promoting their public values in a commercialized online media landscape. PSM managers and editorial employees play a key role in this strategic transition. This research seeks into the question how Dutch PSM employees strategically manage public values in an online environment in the platform era. To gain understanding of how PSM professionals perceive challenges brought by platformization and how they contribute to the strategy and overall success of their PSM organizations, thirteen in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with media professionals working in the Dutch PSM industry. The grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) provides the theoretical foundation for the analysis of the data. In total, three overarching themes have been found. PSM professionals are involved in managing transitions in the media landscape. Second, media professionals managed public values internally and externally and showed how awareness and internal communication contribute to the creation of an overarching media brand identity (Siegert et al., 2011) based on public values. Lastly, PSM professionals appeared to struggle in managing dilemmas in online public value distribution. Overall, strategic management of public values in the platform era poses a contradictory challenge for PSM professionals in their attempts to retain and their public values in the online landscape. While PSM professionals are trying to promote public values, they use platforms with commercial objectives that are at odds with PSMs core values of fostering independence, transparency, and pluriformity. PSMs legitimation rests on reaching their audience. Yet, paradoxically, by relying on commercial platforms to promote their public values, PSM is at risk of becoming too dependent external actors and, hence, compromising their own core values in the process. Furthermore, the findings of this study provide several implications for existing strategic media management theory in the context of public service media, as well as ramifications for other media organizations, public institutions and media managers. Based on the findings of this research, the a number of recommendations are for future research will be made.

KEYWORDS: Public service media, platformization, strategic media management, strategy as practice

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1. Introduction

"One should actually ask: are you moving fast enough to safeguard those public interests in a market that is becoming more international and moving faster and faster?" - (Van Dam, 2022)

April 2022, NPO, the Dutch public media organization, announced the expansion of their video on-demand platform NPO Start. Martijn van Dam, Member of the Board of Directors of NPO expressed that the Dutch public broadcasting institution was fully committed to new online service to express its public values online (NU, 2022). Thus far, the NPO Start platform has only provided the content that was formally broadcasted on linear television channels. However, with the new developments, NPO's online platform will increasingly become detached from linear television. A step in the right direction when it comes to positioning public values in the online media landscape.

Over the past decade, the emergence of online platforms has disrupted the media landscape in which public service media (PSM) operate and make an effort to pursue their core public values (van Es & Poell, 2020). The rise of Web 2.0 sparked new opportunities for user-participation and caused online platforms to rapidly take over the digital media landscape. This so-called platformization – the penetration of economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions of digital platforms into the web and app ecosystem (Nieborg & Poell, 2018) – has resulted in an era of turmoil for traditional media institutions, both public and private (Syvertsen et al., 2019). In general, online platforms can be described as technological, economic and social-cultural infrastructures that facilitate social and economic interchange between users and suppliers in an online environment (Van Dijck et al., 2016).

Within this digital landscape, public media are increasingly competing over the attention of the user with social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube and Facebook, as well as video and audio streaming platforms including Netflix, Amazon Prime and Spotify (Goyanes, 2020). Paradoxically, PSM are progressively using these commercial platforms as digital channels through which to distribute their public content (Sehl et al., 2016). This new competition, in combination with technological developments, has urged traditional PSM organizations in the last decade to reconsider their media strategies (Donders, 2019; van Dijck et al., 2018; Bennett & Livingstone, 2018). This raises the question: how do PSM cope with the challenges brought by platformization while at the same time promoting their public values?

1.1 Disruption in the media landscape

The disruption caused by the rise of online platforms has fundamentally changed the media landscape PSM operate in (Syvertsen et al., 2019). Academics as well as media professionals have frequently paid attention to the changes and developments caused by platformization (Goyannes, 2021; Van Es & Poell, 2020). The four most significant developments in the media landscape to which PSM must respond are: 1) the growing competition for PSM, 2) the fragmentation of media use, 3) the decline of trust in media institutions and 4) the growing power of Big Tech corporations in the media landscape. These four changes drive the need for PSM to examine their current media strategies in order to retain their public values.

1.1.1 Growing competition for PSM

Arguably the greatest disruption for traditional media institutions caused by the rise of platformization for PSM is the growing number of commercial competitors (Syvertsen et al., 2019). Online platforms emerged quickly in the last decade. Especially social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, and Video On-Demand (VOD) platforms like Netflix, Videoland and Disney have shown to be competitors for NPO in the battle for user-attention of the Dutch audience. This increase in competition calls for a strong online distribution strategy for PSM to distribute their content (Donders, 2019). According to Prado (2015), PSM should reconsider their distribution strategies to be able to overcome the challenges posed by the increasing competition from commercial media.

1.1.2 Fragmentation of audience and content

Subsequently, the rapid growth of media channels and changing audience expectations have caused online content and the audience to disperse over a great amount of online platforms (Mierzejewska & Shaver, 2014). With the fragmentation of media use (Webster & Ksiazek, 2012) NPO now has to be present and active on a wide variety of platforms and channels to be able to be seen in all those personalized feeds and timelines. This causes new challenges for public service media worldwide. Several researchers (Spohr, 2017; Warner & Neville-Shepard, 2011) emphasize how platform mechanisms like algorithmic selection and personalization of content could lead to selective exposure and so-called 'filter bubbles' in which users are confirmed in their own views (Pariser, 2012). Additionally, the fragmentation makes it harder for public media to distinguish themselves from commercial media on online platforms like Facebook and Instagram, as both commercial and public media appear on user-feeds without the context of public linear programming. Therefore, one of NPO's ambitions for the next term (2022-2026) is to become more visible, accessible and

recognizable in the digital domain, especially among their younger audience between the ages of 13 and 35 (NPO, 2021, pp. 8-13). This accessibility is important for NPO, since they have the task to make publicly funded media for citizens in Dutch society. NPO will try to achieve this ambition by distributing their content through third party platforms YouTube and Instagram, since that is where their audiences are located.

1.1.3 Declining trust in media institutions

The third disruption is the declining trust in media institutions. Studies have shown that the trust in traditional media institutions is declining (Schranz et al., 2018). Picone & Donders (2020) describe four trends in the digital ecosystem that could have caused this decline. Firstly, the amount of misinformation is growing and this comes with lower trust in traditional media outlets (Fletcher & Park, 2017; Horowitz et al., 2021). Secondly, growing online competition has resulted in a decrease in the reach of public broadcasters' news services, especially among younger generations (Cola & Prario, 2012). Thirdly, the rise of populism in several EU countries has added pressure on public broadcasters through accusations of sharing only certain ideological frames of the news and thus propagating only progressive ideas. Lastly, public media institutions, including NPO, have been affected by budget cuts in recent years (European Broadcasting Union, 2018). Throughout history, public service media have aimed to create high-quality content for all citizens and, by doing so, promote public values and strengthen democratic society at large (Donders, 2019). Governments and societies demand PSM to maintain high levels of trustworthiness while retaining public values like universality, contributing to identity and social cohesion, and providing a combination of information, inspiration, and amusement (Lowe and Bardoel, 2007). According to Sørensen and Van den Bulck (2020), trust has always been an implicit and intrinsic property of PSM institutions. This changed around 1990, when PSM started to face competition from commercial media organizations and their relevance got called into question (Donders, 2012). From that moment onwards, the continuing significance of a public institution in an essentially commercial environment was recognized, as well as the need of trust as a fundamental legitimation factor (Sørensen & Van den Bulck, 2020). However, fulfilling this task has become much more challenging in the last decades with the rise of online platforms in the media landscape. During the global Covid-19 pandemic, a surge in misinformation took place and groups of people started looking for alternative media to satisfy their news consumption (Ball & Maxmen, 2020) The boundary between what is true and what is false appears to have blurred, making it difficult for public broadcasters to position themselves in a "post-truth" world (Gibson, 2018). Therefore, it is essential for PSM to strategically position themselves in the continuously changing media landscape and retain their values in the online environment.

1.1.4 Growing power of Big Tech in the media landscape

Lasly, in the academic world as well as in the media industry, there are growing concerns over the tension between commercial online platforms and public content distribution (van Dijck et al., 2018). The current media market has predominantly been led by the platforms of 'big tech' corporations like Google, Apple and YouTube. One of PSM's core public values is to operate independently from state and commercial influences, and therefore also from commercial platforms. Paradoxically, cultural and creative industries are increasingly dependent on big tech platforms like Google, Facebook and Apple to reach their audiences, as demonstrated by Nieborg and Poell (2018). Therefore, Sehl, et al. (2016) argue that a dilemma arises when PSM are increasingly distributing content through these digital platforms. Do media professionals perceive this tension as a dilemma or are they instead using online platforms to their advantage?

1.2 Academic relevance

The disruptions and transitions that PSM had to undergo in the last decades have been subject to previous research (Lowe et al., 2018; Lowe and Martin, 2014). More specifically, because of significant digital and organizational innovations, academic interest in PSM has exploded in recent years (D'Arma, 2018; Donders et al., 2019; Keinonen and Klein Shagrir, 2017; Värk and Kindsiko, 2019). Previous research has already identified that digitalization and convergence undermine the core values of public service media (Van Es & Poell, 2020, Goyanes, 2021; Enli, 2008). Yet, research on strategic media management in PSM, and PSM values in the Dutch context remain underrepresented. Benington and Moore (2011) already called for further development of the theory surrounding public value and its relationship to strategic management. However, even in recent years, research in this area has not seen any significant expansion. This research contributes to the academic field of transitioning public service media and strategic media management from a public value perspective, while taking in account the growing impact of platformization on the media market.

Platformization & Dutch PSM employees

This research builds further on the work on platformization in the context of the Dutch PSM by Van Es and Poell (2020). In their study, Van Es and Poell (2020) looked at how Dutch PSM employees perceive the notion of platform imaginaries: the ways social actors develop specific understandings of platforms and their audiences. In their study, they interviewed 15 employees from both the NPO and broadcasting associations, as well as SKO (audience measurement service), and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Van Es and Poell (2020) found that, although public broadcasters perceive platforms as techno-commercial intermediaries that sit in tension with their core public values, they simultaneously find it hard to look beyond their immediate strategic interests (Van Es &

Poell, 2020). This ambiguous approach is directly inspired by how they envision platform audiences and their own goals in an online setting. In line with the current research, Van Es and Poell (2020) aimed at how PSM employees are positioning themselves in relation to the development of platforms. However, their main focus was to understand how Dutch PSM employees and policy makers envision platforms. The current research, on the other hand, takes on a more pragmatic approach by asking Dutch PSM professionals about the strategies they use to manage public values in their daily work.

Strategic media management & PSM challenges

More recently, research on PSM has focused on challenges concerning funding difficulties, raising market competition, adapting to new technologies, digital platforms and business operations. In *Public Service Broadcasting and Democracy: Main Research Topics and Suggestions for the Future*, Manuel Goyanes (2021) suggests four lines of research that are important topics to delve into in further studies on PSM research. Two lines of suggested research will be highlighted here. Goyanes (2021) calls for more research into 1) providing possible strategies to face PSM challenges, and 2) providing new insights into the social media management in PSM from the perspective of multiple contexts. The current research responds to both of Goyanes' (2021) suggestions. Firstly, the current research aims to contribute to the suggested line of research by defining the challenges brought by platformization and asking PSM employees about the strategies they use to manage public values in their work. By doing so, it is envisioned that possible media management solutions can be discovered, which could benefit the field. Secondly, the current research aims to provide new insights into the strategic media management from a public value-based perspective in the context of Dutch public service media.

Public media & online distribution strategy

In her research on online distribution strategies in the platform era, Karen Donders (2019) analyzed how public broadcasters strategically position themselves as providers of public service media. For the study, she performed qualitative document analysis of public broadcasters' strategies in Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Ireland. Additionally, she carried out expert interviews. Donders found that PSM broadcasters are distributing more types of online content, but found that web-only content remains scarce and is mostly seen as complementary. Donders argues that in current literature on public media, there is too little focus on how strategy is actually implemented. She calls for more research on how "content production, aggregation and distribution strategies are being shaped, not only at management level, but also through the day-to-day practices of producers,

journalists and so on” (Donders, 2019, p. 1021). The current study will answer to this call by interviewing public media professionals from multiple layers of the organization on how they perceive strategy in their daily work. Altogether, the current research will contribute to the growing field of public media research by filling the crucial gaps that are mentioned here and above on strategic media management in the public sector and the relation between public media values and platformization.

1.3 Thesis objective and chapter overview

In a time where media use is fragmented and public media institutions are under pressure, academic scholars as well as media professionals try to make sense of the challenges and opportunities that online media bring for PSM. While a considerable amount of research has been done on the transition from PSB to PSM, the strategic management of public values among PSM professionals has been lagging behind (Goyannes, 2021). Additionally, research on strategic media management often involves only the macro perspective to media organizations (Chan-Olmsted, 2022). Yet, several scholars have called for inclusion of micro perspectives into strategic media research, because media managers and editorial employees are at the foundation of pursuing successful strategy (Donders, 2019; Golsorkhi et al., 2015). To fully understand how public values are managed in a strategic manner, an extensive exploration is needed of the way PSM professionals make decisions and strategy in value promotion is perceived and implemented by said professionals. Therefore, the objective of this research is to contribute to the academic field of PSM research in the Dutch context by gaining insight in the ways media professionals in the Dutch PSM industry perceive PSM values and how they strategically manage these values in times of rapid platformization. This research aims to answer the following research question: *How do public media professionals within the Dutch Public Service Media industry strategically manage public values in times of rapid platformization?* The following four sub-questions will be answered to come to a answer to the main research question:

- SQ1:** How do PSM professionals perceive PSM’s role in society in the platform era?
- SQ2:** What do PSM professionals perceive as the main challenges and opportunities for PSM brought by platformization?
- SQ3:** What strategic practices do PSM professionals use to manage public values?
- SQ4:** How do PSM professionals strategically manage dilemmas in public value distribution as a result of emerging platformization?

To address these questions, this research starts by laying out an overview of relevant literature in Chapter 2. This theoretical framework consists of a discussion of four of the main concepts that are addressed in the research question: the development of public service media with a focus on the Dutch context, public service values, platformization from a PSM-values based perspective and strategic media management of public values. A closer look at the development of PSM in the Netherlands allows for a more elaborate understanding of the perceptions of Dutch Public Service Media employees. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology that was used and why it is the best suitable approach to answer the research question. Chapter 4 discusses the results from the analysis. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a discussion including the evaluation of the meaning, importance and relevance of the research results and the overarching conclusion.

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter provides a theoretical framework of the most prominent academic discussions regarding the concepts of public service media (PSM), public (media) values, platformization, and strategic media management. First, the definition and evolution of PSM (2.1) will be discussed in the context of the Dutch PSM industry. Secondly, the importance of public media values in the digital age will be discussed (2.2) in relation to the Dutch PSM context. The third section of this chapter illustrates the relation between the phenomenon of platformization (2.3) and the variety of implications it poses on PSM. The last section will dive deeper in strategic media management theory (2.4) which is proposed as an angle through which to analyze the disruptions caused by platformization in relation to the public media landscape. This framework will serve as the foundation for the posed research questions that will be answered in this research.

2.1 PSM in the Digital age

2.1.1 *What are public service media?*

Public service media (PSM) are commonly defined as the provision of services by public broadcasters that, through multiple devices and across multiple technologies, contribute to the democratic, cultural, and social objectives of society (Donders, 2019, p.1011-1012). The foundation of PSM is built on the core mission to “Inform, Educate and Entertain”, a set of public principles that originated with the BBC in 1922, and is often referred to as the ‘Reithian Trinity’ (Enli, 2008; Public Media Alliance, n.d.). Moreover, the Public Media Alliance (PMA), a global network of public media organizations that focuses on providing advocacy and support for public media worldwide describes PSM as “a shared multi-platform media space that is relevant, credible and impartial. PSM is essential for an informed and effective democracy and should be accessible and accountable to all citizens.” (Public Media Alliance, n.d.). In practice, European Broadcasting Union (EBU) member organizations (EBU, 2012, 2014) have agreed and officially acknowledged six core values that should be shared and reinforced by all PSM: 1) universality, 2) independence, 3) excellence, 4) diversity, 5) accountability and 6) innovation.

Worldwide, there are more than 100 organizations that identify themselves as a public media service (Public Media Worldwide, 2022). Most of these media organizations share similarities, such as being publicly funded, impartial and universal (Lowe et al., 2018). However, each of them may vary in their operations, organizational structure, and the degree to which they emphasize different public values. PSM organizations may also differ based on the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts that are specific to the nation they are located in (Debrett, 2009). This study will focus on the context of the Dutch PSM industry. In most Western societies, public and commercial

media exist alongside each other (Bardoel & d’Haenens, 2008). Public service media distinguish themselves from commercial media through their values. Public broadcasters are less dependent on financial interests, and are thus independent from third-party influences (Bardoel & d’Haenens, 2008). This and other public values will be more extensively discussed in paragraph 2.2.

Although the historical developments of public service media have widely been researched (Lowe et al., 2018; Lowe and Martin, 2014), the development of PSM in the digital age is subject to continuous change. Many scholars have used the term ‘digital age’ to describe the current circumstances of PSM (Donders, 2012; Schweizer & Puppis, 2018). In general, the core challenge that has characterized PSM in the digital age comes down on PSM providers that must develop a mindset that prioritizes being effective public service communicators while expanding beyond their traditional transmission models and structures (Bonini & Mazzoli, 2022; Bardoel & Lowe, 2007). The term public service media was established in the last decades (Lowe et al., 2018), however, this was not always the leading term to describe media organizations with a public mission.

2.1.2 The evolution from PSB to PSM

Way before the term PSM was coined, ‘Public Service Broadcasting’ (PSB) was used to refer to public media institutions. UNESCO defines PSB as broadcasting that is “made, financed and controlled by the public, for the public. It is neither commercial nor state-owned, free from political interference and pressure from commercial forces.” (Banerjee, 2005). PSB has a long history and the evolution from public service broadcasting to PSM has been researched extensively throughout the years (Lowe & Bardoel, 2008; Lowe et al., 2018; Wilson, 2020; Larrondo et al., 2016). Every decade appears to call for a reorientation of public service broadcasting in order for the institutions to keep up with technological, sociological, and market changes (Enli, 2008). To gain a historical understanding of PSM of today, it is important to acknowledge that public service media originated from a monopoly position in the media landscape (Donders, 2019).

Historically, Public Service Broadcasters (PSB) solely used to distribute their content through linear TV- and radio programming (Lowe & Bardoel, 2008). However, in the last few decades, the availability and uses of new information and communication technology (ICT) have emerged rapidly. This development has disrupted legacy PSB institutions, causing them to adapt to the new media environment (Schweizer & Puppis, 2018). The possibilities of the internet with Web 2.0 and the rise of online platforms have provided the audience with possibilities to produce content themselves as well (Bird, 2011). Because of the variety of ways to broadcast media and the necessity to enter the digital era, PSB needed to reform and reinvent themselves (Donders, 2019). This is where the transition from PSB to PSM came into the picture. Thus, what distinguishes the PSM denotation from PSB? The difference is in the B, for broadcasting, which was traditionally focused on the broadcasting

of television and radio. The M, for media, on the other hand, is not limited to these distribution techniques. With PSM, different services, devices and means of distribution are of equal importance (Burri, 2015). However, these new possibilities bring challenges with them as well. Different distribution techniques make the distribution more of a complex strategic issue than two decades ago, when the linear transmission of television and radio signals was the main method of connecting PSM content to audiences (Doyle, 2010).

2.1.3 PSM in the Netherlands

The Dutch PSM system is fairly unique in the world and has experienced significant organizational changes since its foundation in 1949 (Hitters, 2018; Bardoel & Brants, 2003). In the Netherlands, PSM are organized within a decentralized system (Vanhaeght, 2019). The Dutch Public Broadcasting System consists of NPO, as the umbrella governing body, and eleven independent broadcasters with a broadcasting license (*Bestuur en organisatie*, n.d.): VPRO, BNNVARA, AVROTROS, KRO-NCRV, EO, WNL, Omroep MAX, HUMAN and PowNed. All broadcasters together make use of three television channels (NPO1, NPO2 and NPO3) and online services. In addition, NPO is in charge of six radio channels, five themed television channels. Additionally, in 2017, NPO introduced a streaming on-demand (SOD) service called NPO Start, on which it distributes its broadcasters' series, films and documentaries as well as live television. According to the Dutch Media Law (Dutch Media Authority, n.d.), the public service broadcasters within the NPO have the legal media task for the production- and distribution of content which is financed with public money that is distributed by the NPO organization. The NPO organization itself is responsible for the overall policy, coordination and programming of linear as well as digital channels and the distribution of the content made by the public broadcasters.

While all NPO broadcasters have different ideological and societal backgrounds, they share the same public values (Donders, 2019). In their concession policy plan for the period 2022-2026, NPO (2020) states that 'the creation of public value is essential', and that, in the years to come, they will continue to steer their policy on five main public values (table 2). These values form the basis in their vision, strategy and content.

Table 1*Public values NPO steers on in their 2022-2026 concession policy plan*

Value	Description
Trustworthy	NPO's content is made with integrity and the content can be trusted
Diversity	NPO's content reflects the Dutch population in terms of gender, age, education, ethnicity and geographic distribution
Heterogeneity	NPO's content is heterogeneous in its format, type and choice of subject
Independence	NPO's content is not affected by political or commercial influences
Pluriformity	NPO's content reflects all relevant political and social views and philosophical movements

Historically, Dutch public broadcasting had a monopoly on media distribution until the 1980s, and was operated by non-profit, publicly funded private associations that represented various social-religious groups in society: so called 'pillars' (Hitters, 2018). Each group was accredited its own broadcasting association, with its broadcasting time depending on its size (van Cuilenberg, 2007). The Dutch broadcasters gradually lost their monopoly from 1980 onwards, as new transmission technologies emerged (Baroel & Brants, 2003). The combination of satellite and cable opened up the floor for national private investors, who were not constrained by the requirements to adhere to national regulations. This resulted in the first commercial broadcasters to enter the Dutch broadcasting market in the late 1980s and early 1990s. From that moment on, a new dual order was established in which commercial broadcasters were admitted to the delicately balanced Dutch PSM-system. This disruption in the media market, in the light of the hardened competition with unregulated media, formed an incentive for the Dutch broadcasters to strategically redirect themselves (Syvertsen et al., 2019). Thus, they became more conscious about how they appealed to the public, how they met their public responsibilities and whether they delivered more value than private media organizations (Enli, 2008). Nowadays, the traditional distinguishing religious context has disappeared from the screen. However, the broadcasters have continued to carry out their differences of ideological and societal backgrounds within their programming up until this day (Donders, 2019).

2.2 Public values in PSM

The previous paragraph introduced the phenomenon of public service media and the Dutch PSM organization NPO, including the main public values that drive their policy and strategy. As Rosenbloom (2017) argues, public values are fundamental for public sector organizations. Yet, what exactly are public values? And what constitutes as a value to begin with? This subchapter will provide an overview of the definitions of (public) values, discuss why these values are important for PSM in the age of platformization and go in-depth on practices of the strategic management of public values in the PSM industry.

2.2.1. Defining values

To understand what public values are and why they are important for public service media, one must first set a definition for what values are. Values are commonly understood as a learned belief system that concerns preferred objects, modes of conduct, and existential end states (Horley, 1991). Individuals judge, make decisions, and behave according to their personal value system (Siegert & Hangartner, 2017). Values have been central units of research in sociology and philosophy (Catton, 1959; Werkmeister, 1970), but are also often used in media and business studies when discussing the moral principles that drive (media) organizations (Doyle, 2017). Schiebe (1970, p.42) denotes values as “what is wanted, what is best, what is desirable or preferable, what ought to be done.” Milton Rokeach (1973, p.12), who wrote the cornerstone book *The nature of human values* writes that values function as guidelines in (media) organizations when reflecting on ongoing activities, general plans, resolving conflicts and in decision-making. Values can be used as benchmarks of desirable standards or principles that guide decision-making and human behaviour. According to Nabatchi (2010, 2012, 2018) a distinction can be made between ‘values’ and ‘public values’, to which he refers as an assessment of what governmental institutions create and maintain on behalf of the public. These public values play an explicit role in public service media, therefore, the next sub-chapter will go in-depth on the definition of public values.

2.2.2. Defining public values

In the last decade, the creation of public value has become a critical approach for evaluating PSM activities, their significance and position in the new media landscape (Collins, 2007; Lowe & Maijanen, 2019; Brikše & Beitika, 2013). This focus on public values began after the BBC developed its public value framework as an instrumental approach in 2005, as a means to demonstrate its value for society (Lowe & Maijanen, 2019). Public management scholar Mark Moore (1995) provided an original formulation of public value theory. In his cornerstone work *Creating public value: Strategic*

Management in Government, Moore (1995) argues that public value is created when the needs and desires of citizens are met through their voice in an appointed and authorized representative government, while citizens are not perceived as customers. In a more specific notion, Bozeman (2007, p. 13) defines public values as “those providing normative consensus about (a) the rights, benefits, and prerogatives to which citizens should (and should not) be entitled; (b) the obligations of citizens to society, the state, and one another; and (c) the principles on which governments and policies should be based.” For the purpose of the present study, a simple, yet comprehensive definition of public values by Benington and Moore (2011, p.14) will be utilised: public values can be both that what the public ‘values’ and that what adds value to the public sphere in general.

Public values are embedded in specific cultures, societies, and polities, and may therefore not be the same for different groups of people (Fukumoto & Bozeman, 2019). Moreover, they are dynamic, and hence can change over time regarding changing social, cultural and political conditions (Rosenbloom, 2017). Research on public values has taken two primary movements. On the one hand, public value studies are focused on management issues and public employees’ values. On the other hand, studies emerged with a typical focus on identifying and enacting values that can be seen as public values (Fukumoto & Bozeman, 2019). Both streams, however, seek to define, identify, and classify public values and point out their boundaries and origins (De Graaf et al., 2016). The current research can be placed in the middle of these two movements, as employees and managers will be asked about what public values they find important within the Dutch PSM system, how they identify those values and how they strategically manage them in their day to day lives in a context of emerging platformization.

2.2.3. Promoting PSM’s public values in the platform era

For organizations and businesses, promoting values with which they want to be associated plays an important role in distinguishing themselves from competition and in their branding practices (Kärreman & Rylander, 2008). In the light of the growing competition in the digital landscape since the rise of online platforms, the idea of promoting public values is becoming more and more important for public media in the digital age (Syvertsen et al., 2019). In fact, the European Broadcasting Union has argued that upholding its public values and adhering to their public service responsibilities and regulatory obligations while staying relevant in the increasingly commercialized and competitive ecosystem is the core challenge for PSM organizations in the digital age (Bonini & Mazzoli, 2022; EBU, 2017b). By communicating and promoting public values, PSM are able to differentiate themselves from private media organizations that mainly produce commercial content. Governments as well as citizens trust PSM to contribute to social cohesion by bringing universal, trustworthy content in a mix of information and entertainment (Lowe & Bardoel, 2007). Promoting

cultural and educational content part of PSM's main values (Goyannes, 2021). Generally, public media can be seen as a supplement for that which the market does not supply (Jakubowicz, 2007). This could include content for niche audience segment; user segments that would otherwise not be met in their needs.

Moreover, Bettis and Prahalad (1995) state that every organization has a dominant conception that legitimates shared perceptions of its purpose, identity and values. For PSM, this is even more important, as they are mainly driven by their public values. For PSM, the traditional dedication to values of 'public service' – the provision of services to the public regardless of their appeal to advertisers (Garnham, 1990) – stands firm. This concept asserts that services must serve the pursuit of collective needs and socially beneficial goals (Trappel, 2017), such as cultural identity and diversity, social cohesion, media literacy, emancipation, and information citizenship. According to Saldana and Adarraga (2018), PSM in the digital age have five main obligations that foster public values. They must: (1) be a shared reference point for all citizens offering a universal service, (2) facilitate social cohesion, (3) be independent, (4) promote civil participation and public discussions, and (5) encourage media production and promote sharing cultural heritage in the digital sphere.

2.3 Platformization in the media landscape

Cultural and creative industries are increasingly dependent on big tech platforms like Google, Facebook and Apple (Nieborg & Poell, 2018). As a result, concerns in the academic world, as well as in the media industry, over the tension between online platforms and the distribution of public communication are rising (Van Dijck et al., 2016). This subchapter will provide a brief overview of the discussions regarding the definition of platforms and platformization and discuss the main challenges for PSM organizations that are caused by this phenomenon.

2.3.1 Defining platformization

Since the 2000s, when the term ‘platform’ first emerged and the notion of platformization started to become widely used, many different definitions have appeared in academic literature (Helmond, 2015). Here, several influential definitions of the platform phenomenon are discussed before actually going into platformization. Discussions on the definition of platforms and platformization can be best summarized by the proposition by Tarleton Gillespie (2010). He suggests that new media companies have cleared the path to a broader meaning of the term ‘platform’ than solely the technical definition, in which platforms are defined as infrastructures to build applications on. In Gillespie’s (2010) conceptual notion of ‘platform’ by outlining the four connotations that apply to platforms: computational, political, figurative, and architectural. Gillespie argues that this conceptual use enables platforms to bring multiple actors together: while the computational significance addresses developers, the other connotations speak to actors such as users, advertisers, and clients (Gillespie, 2010). This overarching view is convenient, as all actors play a role in the media ecosystem that PSM operate in. Evidently, it is possible to discuss platforms from a variety of different academic disciplines. We will now dive deeper into the media and business perspective of platforms.

Firstly, the European Commission (2015) contributes to the various definitions of platformization with their definition of platforms as “an undertaking operating in two (or multi)-sided markets, which uses the Internet to enable interactions between two or more distinct but interdependent groups of users so as to generate value for at least one of the groups.” The European Commission highlights an important characteristic of platforms: they provide value to the actors in multiple sides of the market they operate in. Thus, value is given as well as received by both the consumer/user and the provider of the service by interactions with and on the platform (Kim, 2016). For example, social network site Facebook operates in a two-sided market in which it offers value to the users of the network by providing them with a service to communicate online on the one hand, and on the other hand provides companies with the ability to reach consumers through advertising (Lodvdahl Gormsen & Llanos, 2021).

Moreover, Parker, Van Alstyne and Choudary (2017) built on this insight in their definition of online platforms as: “new business models that use technology to connect people, organizations and resources in an interactive ecosystem in which amazing amounts of value can be created and exchanged.” An important aspect of this definition is the focus on value creation in an ecosystem, which is relevant for the current study when PSM values are discussed in the context of the media landscape. A business ecosystem is a significant strategy for platform providers who have completed the two-sided market model (Rong, Lin, Shi, & Yu, 2013).

Finally, when taking into account the previous definitions, we arrive at a fitting definition of platformization that sparked the multiple developments that are influencing PSM in today’s media landscape. Nieborg & Poell (2018, p.4276) define platformization as “the penetration of economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions of digital platforms into the web and app ecosystems, fundamentally affecting the operations of the cultural industries.” Thus, platforms and their operators play a significant role in various aspects of the functioning of the media landscape PSM operate in. As of today, the process of platformization has been explored predominantly from three perspectives: business studies, political economy, and software studies. Research in the field of political economy tends to take on a critical perspective on platformization in which they consider a historical and normative approach on theorizing the platformization of cultural production (Nieborg & Mosco, 2009). Contributions to political economic theory include among others work on the commercialization of media and the decline of public media in Europe (Mansell, 2002; Sparks, 2007). The current study will take on a political economy perspective on platformization in order to analyze how professionals in the Dutch PSM industry manage their public values in a strategic manner.

2.3.2 The impact of platforms

Platforms in the digital age have often emphasized their neutrality; they provide an infrastructure and, without editorial input, simply pass along the words of their users by offering them the tools to do so (Chander & Krishnamurthy, 2018). In this sense, these platforms appeared to be apolitical and in relation to the controversies that have flared up around them; it is the users who are good or bad, not the tools. However, it has become clear that platforms are far from neutral. Van Dijck, Poell and de Waal (2016) argue that platforms are guiding, or directing, in what users see and are consuming content online. They are, in essence, businesses that provide services in a multi-sided market that make profit through the production of user data and they create and impose ideas on what desirable interactions between users, as well as users and media technology, might look like (Gillepsie, 2010). Therefore, they are not neutral entities, but active agents that influence the online media landscape.

To understand how these platforms can affect the promotion of public interests, and with that, public values, Van Dijck et al. (2016) introduce three platform mechanics: *Datafication* is the tracing, quantifying and predicting social interaction through platforms. *Commodification*: this mechanism revolves around the online transformation of objects, acts and ideas into tradable goods. Platforms commodify user-data, for example, to sell to advertisers in a multi-sided market. And *selection*: structuring the selection of relevant subjects, objects and actors through automated algorithms, platforms can also steer communication and decide who gets to see what content (Van Dijck et al., 2016). Together, these platform mechanics influence the ways in which the technologies, business models, and user practices of platforms interact to guide social and economic exchange.

The rise of online platforms has caused disruptive, revolutionary developments (Parker, Van Alstyne & Choudary, 2016) such as a series of new products and services, new innovations, and it has improved economic efficiency in various industries and technology sectors (Kretschmer et al., 2020). However, on the other hand, aside from these positive contributions, platforms bring challenges with them as well. Therefore, Sehl, et al. (2016) argue that a dilemma arises when PSM are increasingly distributing content through these digital platforms. Do media professionals perceive this tension as a dilemma or are they instead using online platforms to their advantage? This study will explore how PSM professionals retain and strategically manage their public values in times of rapid platformization.

2.4 Strategic Media Management in PSM

Recent developments throughout the last decade have sparked a 'strategic turn' in the field of media management (Horst & Järventie-Thesleff, 2016). Because of this shift, media scholars have called for more refined concepts and approaches for understanding the constantly changing environment and providing strategic guidance (Horst & Järventie-Thesleff, 2016). However, studies that involve these challenges from a practice-based perspective on strategy are scarce (Horst & Moisander, 2015). Karen Donders (2019) calls for more research on how content production and distribution strategies are being shaped through daily practices of media professionals. The current research aims to provide new insights into the strategic media management of Dutch PSM from a strategy-as-practice approach on public value.

2.4.1 Defining strategy & strategic media management

Challenging times call for a strong strategy to keep up with challenges and achieve future goals (Boyne and Walker 2010). This is especially the case for legacy media organizations adapting to disruptions in the media landscape (Syvertsen et al., 2019). Strategic media management research aims at approaching and conceptualizing organizational challenges in order to better understand the performance of media organizations and their management strategies (Baumann, 2015; Horst & Moisander, 2015). Strategic media management research can be applied to a broad range of research topics, among which are branding practices, sensemaking, discursive aspects and roles and identities (Golsorkhi et al., 2015). However, before elaborating on strategic management, one must define strategy.

Strategy is used in the private as well as the public sector to improve performance (Boyne and Walker 2010) and has often been defined and redefined in academic literature. Johnson and Scholes (2002, p.9) define strategy as "the direction and scope of an organization over the long-term: which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfill stakeholder expectations." In uncertain times, strategy acts as an organizational compass that guides into the right direction for the organization's future. Kvint (2009) defines strategy as "a system of finding, formulating, and developing a doctrine that will ensure long-term success if followed faithfully". Strategy here is not categorical, but can be understood as a set of different basic stances that combine in different ways to create a range of strategy configurations that service providers pursue (Beynon, Andrews, and Boyne 2015). Strategic approaches and the development of new strategic thinking patterns come together in strategic management (Albarran & Moellinger, 2017).

Strategic management involves making decisions that are of strategic importance to the

organization (Fourie, 2008). Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2010) define strategic management as the management activity of an organisation which is used to set targets, allocate energy, and determine the use of resources which in the long and short term strengthen the operation process. Skivington and Daft (1991, p.150) focus their definition on decision-making. They define strategic management as “The set of decisions and actions used to formulate and implement strategies that will provide a competitively superior fit between the organizations and its environment so as to achieve organizational objectives”. Strategic management research includes various fields and study topics, of which strategic media management is most relevant in the PSM context.

2.4.2 Strategy-as-practise approach

In the context of fast-paced transitions in the Dutch media landscape, strategic management is key to cope with change (Järventie-Thesleff et al., 2014). One way to gain insight into the way PSM professionals use strategy to manage public values is to make use of the strategy-as-practice (SAP) approach. From early 2000 onwards, SAP has emerged as a distinct way to examine strategic management (Golsorkhi et al., 2015). Mainstream strategy research focuses predominantly on performance and strategic outcomes, the SAP-approach on the other hand provides an alternative to this method, by shifting the focus to a more sophisticated, in-depth exploration of what truly occurs in strategy development, decision-making, and implementation, as well as other activities that are concerned with strategic thinking and doing (Whittington 1996; Johnson, et al., 2003; Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl 2007). The SAP-approach zooms in on micro-level social activities, processes, and practices that characterize organizational strategy and developing strategies. Its objective is to contribute to theoretical understanding of specific contexts and providing practical relevance for organizations (Golsorkhi et al., 2015). The SAP-approach contributes with its rich understanding of situated phenomena, so also its criteria for outcomes are better suited to ideographic research which can explain underlying structures and patterns of action (Tsoukas 1989). Additionally, SAP contributes by exploring perspectives of individuals with different functions within the organization. Strategic practices are not exclusively reserved to people in a managerial position at the top of an organization. Johnson et al. (2003) argue that strategic activities include all actions that may be considered consequential for the strategic outcomes, directions, survival and competitive advantage of the organization. This means that activities could be considered strategic even when they are not intended to be or when they are not formally expressed as being strategic. Golsorkhi et al. (2015) suggest more attention must be paid to the linkage of the macro and micro perspective in strategy, agency in strategy and strategizing and issues in coping and resistance in strategy. Therefore, This study contributes to the field of media management by exploring the perspective and practises of

media professionals in the context of public media from a strategic perspective.

A suggested way to look at the strategic management of values is by looking at branding practises: branding practices may be understood as management of meaning, i.e. systematic efforts from top management to influence and shape frames of references, norms and values among organizational members to create a strong brand identity (Kärreman & Rylander, 2008). Brand identity can be defined as an unique set of brand associations and values that strategic media managers aspire to create and maintain from the perspective of the internal stakeholders (Baumann, 2015; Aaker, 2012; Siegert, 2011). Findings from a study by Lowe and Maijanen (2019) on PSM managers' perception of the changing media environment suggest that the construction of a strong identity for PSM should be a crucial mission for media managers, especially within a multiplatform environment (Lowe & Maijanen, 2019). Thus, to understand how Dutch PSM professionals strategically manage public values in a complex environment, it is necessary to explore how brand identity contributes to their understanding of- and decision-making processes regarding public value promotion in online environments.

2.4.3 Strategic media management from a public value-based perspective

The starting point for managing values and branding practices is the understanding that values function as “as standards that guide ongoing activities, and of value systems as general plans employed to resolve conflict and to make decisions” (Rokeach, 1973, p. 12). Individuals evaluate, make decisions and act according to their personal value set (Siegert & Hangartner, 2017). This value set comes into play in the daily work practices of individuals working in media organizations. When values are applied in larger social structures and organizations, one can speak of an organizational value set (Aust, 2004). Organizational values are co-created by corporate-level managers in cooperation with individuals throughout all levels of the organization (Rubino, 1998). Thus, it is important for public media organizations to align their brand identity with the personal values of their employees' personal values to foster strategic success (Fitzgerald & Desjardins, 2004). According to Siegert and Hangartner (2017), media branding can be used as a strategy to align individual- and organizational values and expectations. Media branding practices, including internal communication and HR-activities, form a framework that guides organizational decision-making and management processes (Siegert & Hangartner, 2017).

Furthermore, media brands play an important role in establishing and maintaining an organizational culture and brand identity by communicating on what is appropriate and expected from their employees (Baumann, 2015). Therefore, strategic media management of public values falls or stands with adequate communication of values and expectations (Siegert & Hangartner,

2017). For PSM organizations, emphasizing public values in their brand identity and organizational culture are key to establish value-based decision-making in employees and strategic choices (Lowe & Bardoel, 2007; Donders, 2019, Syvertsen et al., 2019).

Gabrielle Siegert et al. (2011) argued that decision-making is strongly driven by media companies’ brand identity. From an economical perspective, a strong brand identity helps to position PSM organizations in challenging a platformized environment. From a normative perspective, branding practices help to establish PSM organizations as independent public institutions in the increasingly commercialized online landscape (Lowe & Maijanen, 2019). This study will draw on the *media, brands, actors, and communication* (MBAC) model (Figure 1) by Gabrielle Siegert et al. (2011), a theoretical framework to conceptualize the role of media brands in the daily work of media editorial employees and managers in a dynamic environment. The model allows for a better understanding of the behavior of media professionals, the performance that results from this behavior, and the role of media brands in media organization’s brand strategy (Siegert et al., 2011). Yet, the focus of this study will be on how strategic decision-making, branding practices and organizational communication practices are used by PSM media professionals to retain public values.

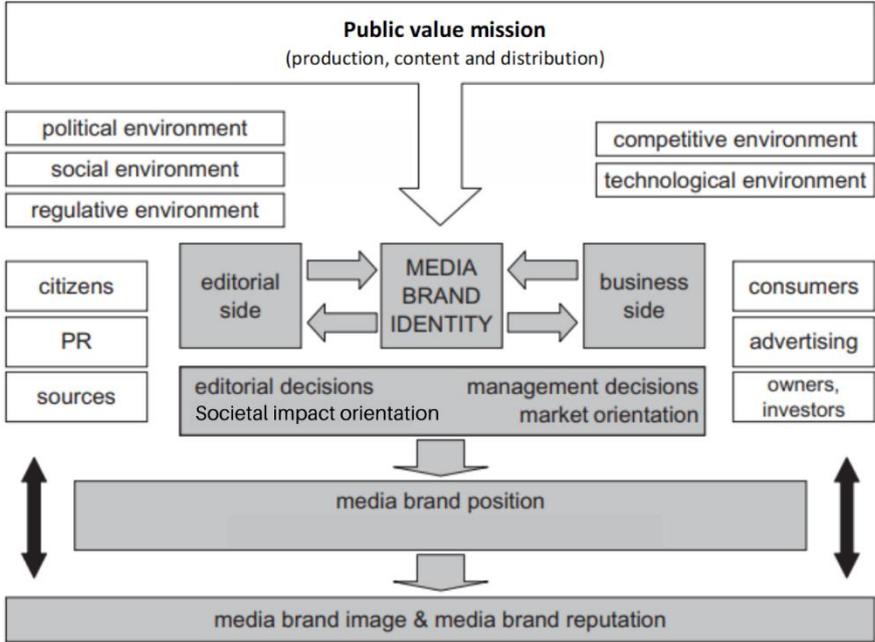


Figure 1. The (adapted) MBAC model following the example of (Siegert et al., 2011)

The MBAC model was developed as part of an explorative study on brand identity in journalism, but can be applied to the case of PSM brands by taking a focus on the public value mission instead. Central to the model is the media brand identity: what a media organization is and what it stands for. (Siegert et al., 2011). This is mutually influenced by decision-making and orientation by editorial employees and management, respectively the editorial- and business side. Furthermore, the model includes conceptual relationships with several relevant environments (e.g. competitive, regulative and technological) and actors (e.g. citizens, consumers) that may affect media brand identity. Altogether, they influence the position of the media firm in the media landscape, which then results in the brand's image and reputation. Compared to the well used structure conduct performance (SCP) model (Albarran, 2002), the MBAC approach explicitly links the editorial- with the business side of strategic branding practices. The MBAC model is especially useful in its consideration of the variety of perspectives of PSM professionals that are at the centre of this study, and the multiplicity of social, technological and competitive environments they operate in. Earlier models for strategic media research either unsatisfactorily considered these relationships (e.g., Tuchman, 1978), or focused only on the audience instead of the media professional (e.g. Cho et al., 2007).

3. Methodology

To gain insight into the way media professionals in the Dutch Public Service Media industry strategically manage public values in the platform era, qualitative research was deemed most compatible. This type of research allows the researcher to better understand the human perception of concepts, meaning and experiences of the target group (Brennen, 2017). This chapter discusses how non-purposive sampling has contributed to creating a diverse sample of PSM employees from different Dutch broadcasters, occupying different positions within these organizations. Furthermore, this chapter provides an overview of the data selection and preparation process and a description of the method of analysis used to answer the research question. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the reflexivity and ethical considerations made.

3.1 Research design

Previous studies by Benington and Moore (2011), Donders (2019), and Goyannes (2021) have addressed the need for more research on the strategic management of Public Service Media. Although the Dutch PSM system has been discussed in several studies on PSM, research on strategic management in relation to platformization in the Dutch context is well under-researched. Donders (2019) and Goyannes (2021) specifically suggested future research should focus on the perception and experiences of PSM employees on issues regarding platformization in PSM. These suggestions were considered in the research design of this study to properly contribute filling the gaps in the current academic field.

Data in this study was collected through the conducting thirteen in-depth semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews often consist of a series of predetermined questions that are linked to the relevant literature research in combination with multiple probes. Probes help to gain more detailed information from the interviewee and make sure the researcher understands the message the way it was intended by the participant (Bergman & Coxon, 2005). The semi-structured nature makes the method both flexible while providing a certain level of generalizability compared to structured and unstructured interviews (Rowley, 2012). The in-depth nature of the interviews provides insights into the way interviewees made meaning of specific phenomena (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Since it will be examined how employees in the Dutch public service media industry make meaning of the strategic challenges within their organizations, in-depth interviews will help to gain a deeper understanding of their perspective and experiences in the public media industry.

3.2 Sampling

3.2.1 Units of analysis

The focus of this research is on the perception and experiences of media professionals in the Dutch Public Service Media industry. Consequently, these professionals are considered the target group in the context of this research. The selection criterion all participants had to meet is that they had to be in some way involved with the online production, distribution, innovation, or management in a Dutch PSM broadcaster or administrator. Since focus of this thesis will be on the online environment of the public service media, employees who solely work on linear media products on TV are excluded from the target population. As the Dutch public media system includes NPO as its administrative umbrella organization, as well as eleven independent public broadcasters (Bestuur en organisatie, n.d.), it was chosen to select employees from multiple broadcasters, as well as the NPO itself to present a heterogenous sample of perspectives from media professionals working in the Dutch PSM.

Both the NPO and broadcasters have their own organizational structure, including a managerial board, advisory council and editors-in-chief and editorial employees. Johnson et al. (2003) have previously argued that performance of strategic practices are not exclusively reserved to people in managerial positions. Therefore, it was desirable to interview media professionals with different positions within the public media organizations. A distinction was made between three groups of employees: 1) editorial employees, 2) advisory employees, and 3) managerial employees. The first group could include Dutch PSM employees with job titles like: scenarist, camera journalist, researcher, editor, and producer. The second group could contain employees with an advisory role. The last group could contain editors-in-chief, managers, coordinators and Heads of broadcaster departments, Heads of NPO, and CEOs of individual broadcasters.

3.2.2 Sampling strategy

Participants were selected through purposive snowball sampling. This sampling technique enables the researcher to start with a small population of individuals in their network and by asking initial participants to name other potential participants from their own network (Given, 2008). This sampling technique proved to be useful since for finding participants from a specific and relatively small population that can be harder to locate (Etikan, 2016). As half of the participants holds a managerial position, in which individuals often do not have that much time, it was a good technique to be referred to new possible connections and potential interviewees. The recruiting process started by contacting former colleagues in the public media industry, who referred other possible participants from different PSM broadcasters. Additionally, other potential candidates were directly contacted through an invitation email (Appendix D). The final sample consisted of thirteen employees working in the Dutch PSM industry, of which five were female and eight male. While functions were equally divided between editorial employees and managers, only one advisor was included. The majority of the interviewees were in their 30s or over (Table 3). A complete overview

of the sample and their relevant characteristics can be found in Appendix A. The sample included employees from five of the eleven Dutch PSM broadcasters and from the administrative NPO organization. With over 30% of the employees, broadcaster VPRO was best represented in the sample.

Table 2. Sociodemographics of the sample

Sociodemographics	Sample (%)
Age	
18-29	39,4
30-49	46,2
50-65	
Gender	
Female	38,5
Male	61,5
Function in PSM	
Editorial	46,2
Manager	46,2
Advisor	7,6

3.3 Operationalization

To help guide the semi-structured in-depth interviews, a topic list was created. This list consisted of five topics, including: *background information, transitions in public service media, implications of platformization, and strategic media management*. These main topics were based on preliminary literature research on PSM platformization and strategic media practices (Table 3). Before the interview, the professional backgrounds of the participants were researched to make it easier to create common ground and understand the frame of reference of the interviewee. For the interview guide, see Appendix C.

Table 3. Concept overview

Theoretical concept	Concept definition	Focus within phenomenon
Public service media	Provision of services by public broadcasters that, through multiple devices and across multiple technologies, contribute to the democratic, cultural, and social objectives of society (Donders, 2019, p.1011-1012).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining public values, • Defining PSM goals, • PSM in the Dutch context, • Transitions in PSM
Platformization	The penetration of economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions of digital platforms into the web and app ecosystem (Nieborg & Poell, 2018, p.4276)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining platformization, • Platforms and society, • Opportunities of platformization, • Challenges of platformization
Strategic media management	Research topic in the field of media management which aims at approaching and conceptualizing organizational challenges in order to better understand the performance of media organizations and their management strategies (Baumann, 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining strategy, • Strategies in PSM, • Values in daily operations, • Strategic management of values, • Managing tensions in PSM, • Communication strategies

3.4 Data collection and processing

A total of thirteen interviews were conducted between May and June 2021. The interviews were conducted during the global COVID-19 pandemic, which affected the course of the data collection process both negatively as well as positively. Negatively, since online connection issues sometimes occurred where computer screens froze. This made it slightly harder to pick up (non-)verbal cues. Positively, as people who normally would not have the time to go anywhere for an interview now had the possibility to do the interview during their working-hours, they also had a longer time for the interview due to the limited travel time. Another positive factor was that the interviewees were sitting in their own living room or study. This home-environment made it easier to establish rapport and made the participants feel more comfortable which helped them to open up during the interview.

The interviews started off by informing the participants on the purpose of the interview. Subsequently, required precautions were taken to ensure voluntary participation and informed consent (further discussed in paragraph 3.6). Furthermore, an effort was made to build rapport with the interviewees by discussing their current projects and shared media interests. By discovering

common ground, a sense of trust and empathy is created with the participants. This relationship contributes to participants generally becoming more open to share their personal perspectives (Johnson, 2011). This is especially necessary when discussing sensitive topics. For example, one of the participants was wary at first to discuss the relationship between the public broadcaster and third party platforms. He explained how he asked his manager if he was allowed to discuss this topic:

I didn't know to what extent my manager would find it relaxed if I, as editor, would talk about that. (...) But that didn't cause any problems and I think that I also fully support how we deal with this but it was a bit more sensitive.

In the end, the participant was able to share his perspective and did not feel held back in discussing his opinion by external influences. Finally, the interviews were transcribed using Amberscript software and were anonymized. Relevant sections of the interviews were translated to be used as quotes.

3.5 Analysis

The data were analyzed in coding software Nvivo using the Grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to thematic analysis. Grounded Theory can be defined as a qualitative and constructivist method of analysis which assumes that meaning is constructed and context-dependent instead of fixed (Charmaz, 1996). This method of analysis makes it possible to collect, organize and analyze large amounts of data in an inductive and structural manner (Walker & Myrick, 2006). The objective of this approach is to create new forms of explanations and understanding about social phenomena based on observations in the data. This way, key elements are identified and categorized in the relationship with the context of the experiment. (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). Thus, Grounded Theory analysis offers insights into patterns of meaning across a data set. In their book *Basics of Qualitative Research*, Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe three levels of coding: open, axial, and selective coding. The first level, open coding, is the initial categorization of data. In grounded theory analysis, it is essential to derive information from the data, hence the transcriptions were initially coded in vivo: sections of the data will get a label based on the words or sentences that describe the section. Secondly, in the axial coding phase, labels from the first phase were refined and clustered. This was an iterative process in which the open codes were compared to each other to see the connections and differences between the initial codes. Boeije (2002), describes this method of constant comparison as a purpose-driven approach to increase the systematicity and traceability of the steps of analysis. For example, the initial codes 'competing for user attention' and 'competing with other online content' were merged together in the code 'Online competition'. The last phase of

grounded theory is selective coding. In this phase, the axial codes were systematically compared to find overarching concepts and relationships between the categories. These aggregate dimensions formed three selective codes.

3.6 Validity and reliability

The semi-structured nature of the interviews helped to ensure a certain level of consistency within the topics that were discussed. Yet, it must be stated that the conversational flow differed per interviewee. Not all participants provided the same density in their answers. Therefore, some interviewees were asked more probes to come to a rich answer to the question, which compromises the consistency of the interviews. To negotiate this, the interview guide was used as a guideline to provide more structure and consistency for the interviews, hence the semi-structured nature of the collection method. This improved the interview's flow and guaranteed that the responses were meaningful and provided new insights into the study subject. Above all, the guide serves as the foundation for conducting repeatable interviews (Flick, 2007).

3.7 Ethical considerations

Several ethical considerations were made during the course of this research. Because of the in-depth nature of the research process, ethical considerations regarding anonymity and data protection were specifically significant to ensure their rights as a participant (Roshaidai & Arifin, 2018). Participants were sent an email invitation for the interview describing how their anonymity would be guaranteed and how the data would be stored and used (see Appendix D). Before starting the interviews, all participants were explained the purpose of the interview and the possibility to withdraw from participation at any given moment. In addition, the participants were asked to give informed consent to participate in the research and for the recording of the interview for research purposes. Due to the risk of accidental public disclosure of personal information of the participants, consent was given verbally so no autographed document could connect them directly to their statements. The recordings and transcriptions have not been shared with anyone. Furthermore, data were anonymized by pseudonymizing participant names and stored securely on the protected Erasmus University server.

4. Results

The analysis of thirteen interviews with Dutch PSM professionals have resulted in three main themes that describe how public values are strategically managed in the Dutch PSM industry. These themes were created from nine axial codes, which were combined from 340 open codes (see figure 2). First, *Managing transitions in the media landscape* is discussed. Secondly, *These dilemmas showcase how PSM professionals perceive opportunities as well as challenges from the use of commercial platforms in their day-to-day work. While these challenges may seem easy to overcome from the short-term perspective of editorial employees, corporate employees maintained a more traditional foresighted view on the strategic media management of Dutch public service media.*

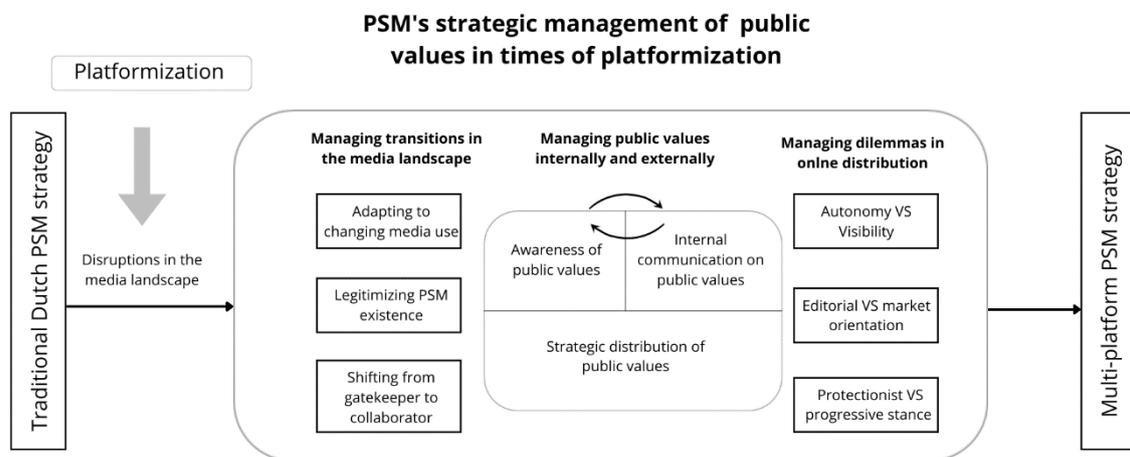


Figure 2. Schematic overview of selective- and axial codes

4.1 Managing transitions in the media landscape

The first theme that emerges from the analysis shows that Dutch media professionals in the PSM industry are well aware of the need to strategically adapt to the increasingly platformized media landscape. The process of platformization is generally understood as an online marketplace that brings together actors with different goals and that facilitates interaction and possibilities for distribution. The rise of online platforms in the last decade has sparked changes among which changing user needs, fragmentation of media-use and increased competition that PSM need to adapt to. PSM professionals stress the need to be where the audience is in order to legitimize their existence, which remains a cornerstone in their task as a publicly funded media institution. This need for visibility, in combination with the ever growing supply of online content has pressed the facts that they no longer have a monopoly position in which they would decide what the audience gets to see, but have shifted to more of a service provider that caters to the needs of the audience and operates on the platforms that their audience is at.

4.1.1 Adapting to changing media use

Transitions in the media landscape are clearly visible as a topic and challenge that PSM professionals described. Specifically, interviewees expressed being aware of the changing needs of the audience that came with platformization in the shift from linear to online media consumption. While PSM professionals pointed out the many opportunities of platforms for their industry, like fostering engagement and interaction with the audience, providing the opportunity to share cross-medial content, and promoting innovation in content form, they also pointed out a number of challenges. These included the transition from traditional to online media, reaching younger audiences, fragmentation of media use, and dealing with platform affordances.

Changes in the media landscape have posed the challenge for Dutch PSM of when, how and how fast to adapt to changing media use of the Dutch audience. While older generations continue to watch public media content through linear channels like television and radio, younger generations have moved to spend most of their time on online channels (NPO, 2020). This gives rise to a dichotomy in media use between traditional and new media. PSM professionals appeared to be aware of this media fragmentation. Yet, they indicate that, for a long time, digital media were not taken as seriously as they should by administrator NPO. For example, Gabriel, Head Online of one of the Dutch broadcasters expresses that the Dutch PSM industry has a wait-and-see attitude when it comes to adapting to changing media-use:

Now, everyone can reach the user and it's all about who all about who can get the attention of the Netherlands and the user. And at the same time we as Hilversum are like a frog in a pan, because there are also still a lot of people watching who are not online that much, and who just turn on the TV every day. (Gabriel, 10 June, 2021)

According to Gabriel, the dichotomy in media use between online and linear media slows down the transition process because continuous linear viewing behaviour indicates that the need to adapt to online programming is not yet urgent enough. In contrary to popular belief, linear television still plays an important role in media use and there is a strong indication that this will continue to be the case in the future (Dutch Media Authority, 2019). This is reaffirmed by Naomi, Head of Online media at NPO who is responsible for the overall online strategy for Dutch PSM. She acknowledges that currently, most of NPOs funding is still spent on linear programming such as television and radio shows. However, in the upcoming years, their money flow will shift more towards web-only and on-demand programming on their own VOD-platform NPO start. Naomi argues that the NPO will face difficult choices in this transition process:

That means that on television you will have to broadcast more repeats, or present slightly cheaper programs. You don't want to do that too rigorously, of course, because then you'll also have the entire Dutch audience against you. So that shift, of what you shift when and where, within the same pot, is actually the most important thing for the coming years. (Naomi, 9 June, 2021)

Naomi emphasized that it remains difficult to make trade-offs in the shift to online media: their budget remains the same, but now NPO must continue to serve both online and linear audiences. While she acknowledged the necessity to further develop a strong public platform in the online media landscape, NPO risks losing the appraisal of the linear audience when cutting back on television shows – and the same way around. Therefore, their ambition for the upcoming years (2022-2026) is to shift from network programming, in which their linear network channels were leading in distribution, to integral programming. Integral programming puts the viewing needs of the audience at the center instead of the distribution channel like they used to do before. With this new strategy, NPO uses program genres such as drama, journalism and human interest at the starting point and subsequently decides which television channel (NPO1, 2 or 3) or online channel (NPO Start) is the best fit for distribution. Their online channels on third-party platforms are complementarily used for promotion, interaction, participation and to provide more depth to their programs. This way, NPO tries to accommodate to changing media use while retaining its linear audience's needs. As the boundaries between types of media are blurring, it is becoming less and less relevant where

people came into contact with the content (Mediamonitor 2021). What does matter is that NPO responds to the changing media use by positioning its content under one recognizable brand.

Furthermore, now that it becomes clear that online media is here to stay, PSM professionals are searching for ways to compete for the attention of the user in the online media landscape. More specifically, they are concerned with the challenge of how to reach younger generations. Many interviewees saw a major challenge for PSM in reaching younger audiences. This is in line with a recent study conducted by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism which proved that “most PSMs struggle to reach younger audiences with news” (Schulz et al. 2019, p. 19). The media use of younger audiences is centred around third-party platforms like Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. In order to continue to familiarize young people with public values, PSM professionals see it as an essential task to be active and visible on these commercial platforms. Yet, they struggle to retain the attention of the younger audience. Interviewees notice how platformization has affected young people’s preferences in online media-use. They address how the growing competition in the media landscape in combination with new platform formats has affected the expectations of the younger public:

People are watching linear television and listening to linear radio less and less. Their attention spans have gotten lower, so you basically always have to start making other forms of content because otherwise it’s too dull. I think everything has changed. (...) Everything has to get to the point much faster nowadays otherwise there are a million other things you can go and watch because they might be more interesting. (Nick, 21 May, 2021)

Here, Nick addresses how the growing competition in the media landscape in combination with new platform formats has affected the expectations and attention span of the audience. Another interviewee illustrates this by describing a case of his talk show on YouTube in which 90 percent of people watching had dropped out after the first minute. Furthermore, another example that came up in multiple interviews is the BOOS YouTube show, aimed at a young audience, which uses the strategy to have a joke on screen every three seconds in order to retain user attention. Others also remark that besides tempo, expectations in content form have changed as well. Max, a 25-year old camera journalist at a Dutch broadcaster remarks that he is always concerned with whether the content he creates looks good in a squared format. With the wide array of content to choose from, PSM need to keep up with these competition and adapt their productions accordingly to stay relevant and share public value-based content.

In short, PSM is transitioning to the changing media landscape by adapting to changing media use. Yet, rather slow, due to the dichotomy in media use between older and younger generations. Online media use is increasing, and therefore PSM professionals perceived the need to better

position themselves online. They do this by shifting from a network programming strategy to integral programming which takes audience needs as a starting point. This is especially important to reach younger audiences who are increasingly spending time online. While PSM professionals are trying to accommodate to their needs, reaching them remains a challenge. Because of the large online competition on these platforms, PSM professionals see the need to stay relevant to retain public values in the online sphere.

4.1.2 Legitimizing PSM existence

The second challenge that PSM professionals mentioned in relation to the changing media landscape is the need for PSM to legitimize their existence. Media professionals stressed the importance of PSM as source of independent and trustworthy information. Especially, in times of uncertainty and doubt, like during the recent Covid-19 pandemic, interviewees see PSM as a beacon of unbiased information in the Dutch media landscape. When asked about the most important public values in PSM, trustworthiness, objectivity and independence appeared to be the most prominent among interviewees. These values are in line with a trend seen over the last couple of years, where legacy news media gain significance in times of crisis (van Aelst et al., 2021). With the growing saturation of online content, interviewees observed how the role of public media has become more significant:

I think public broadcasting in general and then especially the news brands have become very important to ensure quality and an independent sound. While of course, that is exactly what we're accused of not being. But I strongly believe that we are. So I think the public broadcasters have only become more important. (Paco, 31 May, 2021)

Not all think the same way regarding PSM's independence and trustworthiness. Research on digital news consumption by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in collaboration with the Dutch Media Authority (2021) suggests that just about half of the Dutch people trust the news. Trust in media among 18 to 24 year old's in the Netherlands has even declined (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2021). PSM professionals expressed their concerns about this issues. They ground their concerns on declining trust in several reasons related to the changing media landscape, like the rise of misinformation, the radicalization of conspiracy theories and the growing number of alternative media sources (Sphor, 2017). James, a senior digital innovation advisor at NPO with a 21-year career at the media organization recognizes this trend as well. When asked about the main challenges for NPO concerning platformization, he explained to observe a growing awareness among

public broadcasters about the risks of fake news, polarization and online radicalization for trust in public service media.

Of course, what's the biggest problem of all is that a lot of people have become so distrustful that they don't see us as independent anymore. So they'd rather trust an obscure site with all kinds of corona conspiracy theories than trust our site. (James, May 31, 2021)

According to James, the changing media landscape has affected trust in the NPO as a media organization. He positions this loss of trust in the NPO in a larger context of loss of trust in social institutions (Jack, 2017; Kalsnes, 2018), which is in line with argumentation of Strömbäck (2020), who wrote that democratic media institutions stand or fall with the trust of the public. When people distrust the mainstream media, they become less influenced by it and are inclined to search for alternative news sources (Tsfati & Ariely, 2013). This has implications for the strategic success of the Dutch PSM broadcasters, since the Dutch PSM system is mainly depended on tax payers money (NPO, 2021). Therefore, several PSM professionals perceived trust as the foundation of the public broadcasting system and the loss of trust as a strategic risk for the promotion of public values. To overcome this strategic risk, several interviewees expressed that they feel the need to legitimize public service media to stay relevant and continue to receive funds for their productions: "Of course, as a public broadcaster, we must always legitimize ourselves. Because everyone pays tax money and you want to see something in return. (...) That legitimation is of course increasingly taking place in that online domain," (Naomi, 9 June, 2021).

According to Siegert and Hangartner (2017), media organizations can achieve societal legitimacy by addressing societal expectations and including these in their organization's core values. Media professionals were aware of their role in Dutch society and explained how society expects them to be independent and trustworthy – two of the six public values that are at the focus of NPO's 2022-2026 concession policy plan (NPO, 2021). Interviewees explained how several strategic practices contributed to the expression of public values and by doing so legitimizing PSM's position in the Dutch online media landscape:

A clear sender, that it's reliable, even if they don't believe it. That it's been well-proven. Well, in that way you have to win that back very slowly. A huge job. (Arthur, 8 July, 2021)

A CEO of one of the public broadcasters states how his broadcaster aims to recover audience trust by creating reliable content. He highlighted the practice of branding their content with their broadcaster's logo to ensure the audience would recognize the public sender. Several interviewees

expressed the growing need for public broadcasters to brand their content – especially when distributed through online platforms – to make sure audiences recognized it as being public content. In addition, a small percentage of the interviewees discussed other strategies to legitimize PSM in the online media landscape. These included focusing more on diversity in order to reach more niche audiences online, and the creation of online communities around their media productions and channels.

You create a clubhouse, actually, where people really want to come. And all those clubhouses together legitimize our task as a public broadcaster to be there for everyone. Everybody has their own unique interest, of course, and yes. All those interests we should actually satisfy. (Naomi, 9 June, 2021)

By creating a central community around a brand or show, the aim is to foster engagement and make the public online channels attractive for younger audiences to come back again next time. Especially in the fragmented media environment, communities are a way to reach the audience cross-platform with the same public brand. Literature on online social media communities has shown that communities help improve the relationship between the user and the brand (Wang et al., 2016) and foster high levels of engagement and involvement with the organization (Füller et al., 2013). Therefore, creating online communities around public content could help legitimize PSM online.

Thus, PSM professionals reported concerns about the surge in misinformation, alternative media and online radicalization as a result of rapid platformization. This sparked a growing need for PSM as an independent and trustworthy factor in the online media landscape – especially in times of uncertainty. PSM professionals emphasized the need to legitimize their role in society to continue to promote public values and receive public funding in the future. The main strategic practices used to legitimize PSM existence were branding reliable content, fostering diversity and building online communities.

4.1.3 Shifting from gatekeeper to collaborator

Another way PSM professionals are managing transitions in the changing media landscape is by shifting from traditional gatekeeper to the role of collaborator. NPO is moving away from its traditional programming model to taking audience needs as the starting point in their programming strategy. PSM professionals see this move towards user needs as a prerequisite in reaching audiences in a saturated media market and believe this shift was sparked by the rise of platformization. Gabriel, Head Online of a Dutch broadcaster with over 20 years of experience in the media world explains

how online platforms caused NPO to shift from their monopolist position to a competitive position in the media landscape.

There used to be scarcity on distribution and a monopoly on distribution as well, and everything after that was linked to each other. So content and revenue were all linked to distribution. And now that distribution is no longer scarce, anyone can distribute content. (Gabriel, 10 May, 2021)

Here, Gabriel described the process of democratization of media. Platformization has provided media users and smaller media businesses with the tools to produce their own content and has empowered them to distribute their own media on the internet (Ibrahim, 2019). Where NPO used to have means of distribution in hands, they now have to compete for user attention like all other commercial media. Interviewees found that legacy media institutions like NPO are therefore no longer gatekeepers in the media landscape. When asked how the rise of online platforms has changed the role of public media in the Netherlands, Naomi, Head Online of NPO and responsible for the overall Dutch PSM strategy, argues how the role of Dutch PSM has shifted from pushing content to pulling audience to their content: a shift from gatekeeper to collaborator.

Naturally, we used to just broadcasting. So we were really a push medium and we actually moved much more towards engagement and interaction with our audience. That was only possible with these online platforms, so actually we went from push to pull. This interaction with the target audience is of course very important and very unique for these online platforms, so we do that a lot as well. (Naomi, 9 mei, 2021)

With the shift from push to pull medium, strategic practices have shifted as well. As Naomi explains above, interacting with the audience has become a key strategy to promote public content in the online sphere. The affordances of online platforms have encouraged users to participate in online interaction and co-creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Thus, where broadcasters previously were mainly concerned with the quality of their content, today, interacting with the audience has become an important part of their job as well.

PSM professionals shared that interaction has proved to be fruitful in terms of audience feedback, deepening audience engagement and fostering innovation and co-creation. A senior advisor at NPO explained how direct audience feedback has affected the relationship between the audience and PSM:

I think you can't escape the fact that interaction is too important, and that communities and people no longer accept that there's a broadcaster or a newspaper, whatever medium that

slings its message into the world from an ivory tower. Now that there is more exchange between them [broadcaster and audience]. (James, 31 May, 2021)

The possibility for audience interaction has blurred the hierarchy between broadcasters as distributors and provided the audience with more agency in their media consumption. When the public sees NPO content they do not like, they have the power to directly share their critique and hold broadcasters accountable for their content. On the one hand, this contributes to public values by democratizing the media production process (Ibrahim, 2019): user-interaction has provided the possibility to collaborate and co-create content with audiences and let them decide what they would like to see less or more of. On the other hand, one could argue whether it is desired that audiences are gaining influence over what independent public media are producing. Several PSM employees stated that broadcasters should be wary of catering too much to the wish of the audience to retain their public character. Namely, public media have the task to address topics that commercial media would rather let slip for content that attracts the most views. Therefore, these interviewees expressed the need to continue to hold on to their gatekeeping function when it comes to the topics they produce content about:

I would describe it as bringing societal themes to the light, that what we think is urgent and the Dutch people should see or hear. (Jasper, 21 May, 2021)

Here, Jasper explains how the purpose of PSM is to produce content that they as public broadcasters deem important. He sees it as a goal for broadcasters to produce content that makes public impact, regardless of the views it generates. Otherwise, PSM risks becoming too commercially driven. Interviewees who shared this opinion contributed that some societally important topics might be confronting for the audience to see; documentaries about racism, for example. Yet, interviewees believe these productions should be made and they see it as their task as PSM broadcasters to do so.

In short, PSM professionals stated how they see the shift from gatekeeper to collaborator as a dimension of managing transitions in the media landscape. Platformization has fundamentally affected the position of public broadcasters in the Dutch media market and Dutch PSM organizations have moved being a push to a pull medium. User-interaction has become an important strategic practice to connect and collaborate with the audience. However, the interaction has blurred the hierarchical relationship between PSM as content distributor and the audience.

4.2 Managing public values internally and externally

The main theme of managing public values includes statements regarding the awareness of public values in daily operations, internal communication on public values and lastly, the corporate strategy on public value distribution. This theme relates to the previous main theme, transitioning in a changing media landscape, as it shows how the ideas, issues and perceived changes in the Dutch public media landscape are applied in practice. This brings important insights, as it contributes to how digital content production and distribution strategies are being shaped, not only at management level, but also through the eyes of producers and editors (Donders, 2019). The sub-themes will be discussed in ascending order from the individual perspective of awareness to the more overarching corporate-level strategy.

4.2.1 Awareness of public values in daily operations

The first sub-theme consists of a selection of statements where interviewees discussed how they individually are aware of public values in their day-to-day work. Media professionals discussed how they define public values, how public values play part in their decision making and production processes and how they use public values as a benchmark to assess whether their ideas, plans and productions match with their broadcasters' identity. In defining public values that are important for Dutch PSM, NPO brings the focus to six public values (trustworthy, diversity, variety, independence and pluriformity) in their 2022-2026 Concession Policy Plan (NPO, 2021). The interviewees, however, identified fifteen different public values in total when asked about what they see as key public values in PSM. The values pluriformity (92%), independence (69%), fostering journalism (69%), and representativity (62%) were most frequently mentioned. When asked about what public values are important to them, a difference could be distinguished between two ways in which interviewees ground their answer. Some media professionals based their answer on their personal frame of reference by using examples from their own experiences. These individuals aligned their personal values with the values of his organization. For example Paco, who works as an editor at the childrens department of NPO shares that he finds pluriformity and fostering education and culture important values in public media.

I think that is very good for your development if as a child you can come into contact with different cultures and museums and music of all kinds of genres. (Paco, 31 May, 2021)

Here, he aligns his values with the brand identity of his organization by expressing these values in his own work. Others grounded their answer on the values that are specifically important to the broadcaster that they work for. They often started their answers from the 'we' point of view, like they were talking on behalf of their broadcaster (Fitzgerald & Desjardins, 2004). For example, a

scenarist working at BNNVARA uses this kind of speech when asked about the importance of values in their work.

I think as a broadcaster we make sure that it matters what is shared. That it can move people or that it can make people think, that maybe it makes people feel understood. (...) That's what I'm working on, but that's also what we're working on as a broadcaster. I think that's also the importance of public media. (...) Yes, of course I now act as a billboard for BNNVARA, but it also stands for an open, equal and fair society, so obviously you think, yes, that is.... For me, at least, that's what I do in my life and I find it very beautiful that I can actually extend that in my work. (Rosa, 12 May, 2021)

The way Rosa uses the 'we'-perspective to discuss her awareness of public values in her daily work shows how broadcaster identity is used as a framework to observe public values. Therefore, she aligns her individual values to the values of her organization (Sieger & Hangartner, 2017). In line with this value-led strategy, were statements in which public values were perceived as the foundation of decision making for PSM employees.

Furthermore, awareness of public values in daily operations was discussed in statements that see public value as a foundation or guide to see how well ideas, productions and plans match with the core values of public media. James, senior digital innovation advisor at NPO, describes their departments' lean start-up method for innovative project management. According to James, when broadcasters come to them with a submission for new digital experiments, they have to send in an application form in which they have to describe to what extent their idea contributes to public values:

I truly believe that we should include those public values in everything. (...) We [NPO Innovation department] often do experiments, submitted to us by broadcasters. And one of the tests that we permanently perform is: 'is this something that we could do in accordance with public values, with which we can come to terms with and what also reinforces public values?' Sometimes, that's more of an auditing function and that has caused quite some discussion. (James, 31 May, 2021)

This way, public values are tested 'at the gate'. After the initial plan gets validated, before scaling up, these values are tested again to make sure that the output meets the public value-criteria. This is in line with Rokeach's (1973) view on values as standards that guide ongoing activities and decision-making. James emphasizes that there usually are no issues in validating public values in broadcasters' plans, as they usually are educational. However, occasionally discussions over public values might arise over projects that are in the entertaining-side of PSM, as even entertaining shows should add

public value to the audience.

To conclude, the awareness of public values in daily operations manifested itself in as a framework through which decisions are made, ideas are created and content is produced. At the same time, public values are used as a guide to measure how well ideas, content and strategies are fitting with the identity of the broadcaster as well as Dutch PSM as a whole. Thus, in Dutch PSM, public values function as guidelines for decision-making processes and form a framework in aligning those decisions with the organization's brand identity.

4.2.2 Internal communication on public values

Internal communication appeared to be an important dimension in the strategic management of public values for PSM professionals. When discussing management of public values in PSM, interviewees provided statements in which the dimensions awareness- and internal communication on public values were used simultaneously. The dimensions are therefore closely related and seemed to strengthen each other: awareness of public values caused more internal communication on them and by communicating more, the awareness of public values was raised. According to Siegert and Hangartner (2017), awareness and the internalization of brand values can be accomplished through internal communication initiatives. Awareness refers to the frame of reference of the individual, while internal communication contains an interpersonal communication process. Internal communication can be understood as the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels of the organization (Welch & Jackson, 2007). Therefore, both NPO managers as well as broadcaster editorial employees are involved in strategic management when they are communicating on public values. Internal communication on public values manifested in three ways in the interviews: by in-team discussions, through organizational communication channels and in onboarding processes.

First, interviewees experienced internal communication on public values through in-team conversations. Interestingly, when asked about how they experience communication strategies in their daily work, some editorial employees shared they were aware of strategic decisions, but did not feel involved in strategic processes related to public values: "I'm kind of aware of it but it's not my job." (Nick, 14 May, 2021) However, when asked how they experience public values in their daily operations, these media professionals disclosed that they did actually discuss these values with colleagues in editorial meetings. Additionally, PSM professionals explained how public values are used as a framework for decision making in an interactive communication process.

I'm also in the Management Board of *Broadcaster X* and in every MB meeting we have to make decisions, of course, but we also talk about how those decisions can be reconciled with that public value. (Noah, June 7, 2021)

Colleagues discussed public values with each other by transferring ideas and opinions on how their content could better comply to public values and assess whether or not a program fits their organization. Interestingly, interviewees mostly discussed those public values that are inherent to the organizational values of the broadcaster they were working for. Since public values are generally included in organizational values of PSM broadcasters, discussing these values can be seen as the act of doing strategy. PSM professionals explained that they perceive public values as inherent factors in their content and their organization. Everything they make and do must comply to these values. Thus, when colleagues are discussing whether an idea fits with their organization, they are indirectly talking about if the idea matches to their organization's values:

They [public values] are basically discussed with editorial meetings: 'does this fit with broadcaster X or not?' (...) It always comes first: does it fit with us? And if that's a no, then we skip it. So it is implemented right away, that identity. (Nick, 14 May, 2021)

When asked about how public values are discussed in their team, producer Nick immediately refers to the values of his broadcaster. This way, he connects and aligns public values in content ideas to the organization he works for (Siegert & Hangartner, 2017). Interestingly, while all interviewees were working under the umbrella of the Dutch PSM system – including all eleven broadcasters and the NPO as an administrative body – communication on public values mainly involved the values in own organization. This included the act of actively distinguishing their own organizations from other broadcasters.

Furthermore, media professionals shared that public values did not only come up in employee interactions, but were actively promoted inside the organizations as well. When asked about examples of internal strategies on promoting public values, several PSM professionals named their intranet and company emails as examples of communication strategies: “For example, we have an intranet and a villa journal. Now because we are at home that goes through the intranet.” (Nick, producer, 14 May 2021). These channels are used to communicate weekly updates about new shows that promote certain values and developments in the organization. Nick explained that especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, the intranet proved useful to continue to feel connected to the organization. Intranet-based organizational communication is frequently used to define organizational values and embed them into the foundation of individuals, teams and organizations (Bottazzo, 2005) and can therefore contribute to managing an organizational culture including company values.

Lastly, several media professionals discussed how public values were communicated in their onboarding processes. These processes – where new employees get to know their organization an

their role – often focus on communicating expectations and organizational culture (Serbin & Jensen, 2013). Several media professionals shared how public values are included in the brand identity of their broadcaster and promoted during their onboarding process. Several media professionals mentioned documents with brand value statements that described the organizational values that they as new employees are expected to commit to. One interviewee described remembered imprinting his broadcaster's core values in the first weeks on the job:

When I started at BNNVARA, one of the first things we received was the booklet. The red booklet with the three values. From there, it was immediately said: everything we make will be put alongside this and should comply with these things. (Max, 29 May, 2021)

Here, Max describes how the internal communication of brand values contributes to understanding the brand identity of his broadcaster. This understanding is crucial for making decisions that are in line with the organizational values of the broadcaster. According to Siegert & Hangartner (2017), decisions and actions made by media professionals are guided by organizational values. Internal communication on brand values is essential for media organizations to achieve positive performance outcomes (Siegert & Hangartner, 2017). Moreover, Burman and Zeplin (2004) found that generating brand awareness and understanding through internal communications foster brand commitment in new employees. Thus, communicating public values as part of the organization's identity contributes to aligned decision-making, brand commitment, and overall positive performance outcomes (Burman & Zeplin, 2004).

Altogether, communicating brand values and organizational culture appeared to be important features in the internal communication of public values in the experience of PSM professionals. Thus, the management of public values in internal communication occurred via in-team conversations and decision-making, though intranet channels and in onboarding processes.

4.2.3 Strategic distribution of public values

The final theme on the management of public values considers statements that directly discuss NPO's online strategy for the distribution of public values. While some professionals in managerial positions are directly involved in strategy making, all PSM professionals are involved in doing strategy: all PSM professionals shared statements on how public values are distributed online. A distinction could be made between statements that show support- and statements that expressed criticism of NPO's current online distribution strategy. This sub-chapter discusses the main characteristics of NPO's distribution strategy and how this strategy is carried out. The statements voicing criticism are discussed in chapter 4.3 'Managing dilemmas in online public value distribution'. NPO's Head Online,

Naomi, is responsible for the creation and implementation of NPOs online distribution strategy. She explains NPO's strategic goal is to create a strong position for NPO in the online media landscape. To explain her strategy and focus for the upcoming years, she uses the city of Rome as a metaphor for the NPO platform - which includes all NPOs online channels, owned sites by NPO broadcasters and their channels on third-party platforms. Rome is a city that arose from various settlements and eventually became one powerful city that has different squares and sights, each attracting a different audience. To create a strong online public platform, her strategy is based on the optimization of two pillars to direct audiences from commercial platforms to their own public platform: cross-navigation and conversion. First, she discusses cross-navigation:

So you have all these different websites, apps, squares, attractions and the main focus for next year is that we want to cross-navigate much better, so we actually want to build the road network between those 'squares'. Because right now that actually almost doesn't exist. (Naomi, 9 June, 2021)

Here, Naomi explains how NPOs online websites and apps exist on their own, like public settlements in the online landscape without any connections between them: fragmented online public content. Naomi's strategic vision is to connect NPOs online content to each other and to their main VOD-platform NPO Start to centralize content and make sure audiences find more content that is interesting to them to make sure they spend more time on their public platform.

Second, Naomi and other NPO employees discussed the optimization of online conversion as a pillar of NPOs current online distribution strategy. Conversion is the process of transforming visits to a website to a specific conversion goal, often expressed as a percentage of site visitors who proceed to the conversion goal (Choe et al., 2016). For NPO, the conversion goal is to direct audiences from commercial platforms to their own public platforms and sites. Naomi distinguishes two types of conversion: 1) direct conversion, which is the conversion from commercial platforms to their own platform using hyperlinks, and 2) indirect conversion, which refers to the branding of public content by placing NPO and broadcasters' logos on all of their content. Naomi discusses an example of their direct conversion strategy with a new youth show on that was distributed through the NPO3 YouTube channel that is aimed at a younger audience:

We had a web series and it was called 'Donnie aan de kook', in which Donnie created a vegan dish with Dutch celebrities, and that recipe and the behind-the-scenes videos you could then find on NPO3.nl, for example, for depth, so direct conversion. (Naomi, 9 June, 2021)

This example shows how extra content, in combination with influencer marketing (de Veirman et al., 2019) are used to convert the audience that is interested in that particular content from YouTube to

the NPO platform NPO3.nl. Naomi explains how commercial platforms are used to reach new audiences, while the strategic goal is to bring them to their own platform.

We do use it [commercial platforms] to reach new audiences, but on the NPO platform, where we actually want to bring them - getting hungry outside, to eating inside - we do maintain independence from algorithms and filter bubbles. (...) On NPO Start, we serve refreshing content. We won't pull you into a bubble with only like-minded people, but we'll show you something new because we are a pluriform public broadcaster with eleven different broadcasters and eleven different perspectives. (Naomi, 9 June, 2021).

Here, Naomi explains how audiences are introduced and made excited about 'outside', on commercial platforms, with the goal of having audiences to consume media 'inside' of their own public platform, NPO Start, where they are not affected by the whims of those commercial platforms. This conversion strategy is important for NPO, because their own platform ensures public values: it is independent, pluralistic, transparent and diverse. In line with findings by Sørensen (2019), NPO Starts' recommendation system is transparent in its recommendations and serves a variety of different perspectives to the user to retain public values in the recommendation process. This is in contrast with third-party platforms that gain profit by selling user data, are opaque in their recommendation algorithms, and serve audiences more content that is already in line with their worldview. Naomi's statement touches upon the risk of audiences ending up in a filter bubble, where algorithms and recommendation systems cause people to have significantly less encounters with opposing viewpoints, resulting in intellectual isolation (Pariser, 2012). The forming of online filter bubbles is in contrast with NPOs public values like pluriformity, diversity and transparency. Thus, to face commercial competition and safeguard public values online, NPO needs to form a strong public online domain that is independent, relevant and visible in the online landscape. Moreover, Noah, Head online of one of the Dutch broadcasters and initiator of the PublicSpaces manifest emphasizes the need for an independent public space online:

The last thing you want is for those platforms to end up determining what content people in the Netherlands get to see. And if it's up to the algorithms of those platforms, that will be content that a lot of people click on, and that forces or urges people to click through and watch something new again. And that's actually at odds with the public interest of diversity and pluralism that we as a public broadcaster should be guaranteeing. And that's why it's important that we reduce this dependence, that we help to develop and use platforms that are much more in line with this public value. (Noah, June 7, 2021)

According to Noah, distributing content on commercial platforms is not in line with the public values Dutch PSM want to guarantee. His goal is to reduce the dependence of commercial platforms and ensure public values in NPOs public platform by joining forces with PublicSpaces. PublicSpaces (2021) has been established as an initiative that describes itself as “a coalition to design a new platform for social interaction, where users are not viewed as exploitable assets or data sources, but as equal partners that share a common public interest.” One way they contribute to ensuring public values for Dutch PSM is by the digital powerwash tool that evaluates to what extent software PSM uses is in line with their public values. The online NPO strategy that Naomi describes and especially the PublicSpaces initiative by Noah shares a lot of similarities to the notion of a ‘digital commons’ by Graham Murdoch (2005, 2018). In his work, Murdoch makes an argument for the development of a digital public sphere.

In conclusion, NPO focuses their online strategy for public value distribution on centralizing their content, directing their audiences from third-party platforms to their own VOD-platform and ensuring public values on their own platform. By doing so, NPO strenghtens their competitive position in the online media landscape and provides an independent public space led by public values where audiences can consume content.

4.3 Managing dilemmas in online public value distribution

Data has shown that PSM professionals experience three main dilemmas when it comes to distributing public values online. These dilemmas underlie both internal as well as external stakeholders. While PSM employees expressed to be content about the current distribution strategy the Dutch PSM system is conducting, others expressed to be critical of this online strategy. This tension was expressed by interviewees in the form of three dilemmas. First, PSM professionals experienced a dilemma with external stakeholders in balancing their own autonomy and online visibility on commercial platforms. Secondly, interviewees described an internal dilemma between broadcasters and the NPO organization when it comes to measuring success in public impact versus views. Lastly, the third dilemma is based on internal stakeholders as well and is caused by the tension between the traditional-heritage stance versus the progressive perspective of PSM on organizational change in the Dutch PSM system.

4.3.1 Balancing autonomy and visibility

The first dilemma PSM employees encountered in the management of online public value distribution is the tension between perceived autonomy and online visibility. This sub chapter discusses statements in which PSM employees talked about the growing power of Big Tech corporations and PSMs growing dependence on third-party platforms to distribute their public content. This sub theme is related to the previous sub theme on NPOs online distribution strategy since said strategy is focused on limiting dependence on commercial platforms. Yet, interviewees shared statements in which they expressed their concerns over the perceived 'Catch 22-situation' in commercial platform-use. This sub chapter goes in-depth on how PSM professionals give meaning to and strategically manage this dilemma.

On the one hand, interviewees perceive the need to be present on third-party platforms in order to 'be where the audience is'. Therefore, PSM broadcasters distribute their content via commercial platforms like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Interviewees found it crucial to be visible and active on these platforms in order to accomplish their media task to make public content for to the Dutch audience (Dutch Media Authority, n.d.) and to legitimize their existence as a publicly funded media institution. Additionally, interviewees discussed other opportunities media platforms have created for PSM, like the possibility to foster interaction with the audience, provide cross-medial content like extra content, and the possibility to bring their content to hard-to-reach audience segments like minorities and young people.

On the other hand, however, PSM employees discussed the down-side of third-party platforms: 1) the monetization of public content and user data, 2) imposed creative restrictions by platforms and 3) directing recommendation algorithms. While these platforms can help reach online

audiences, interviewees noticed that PSM is becoming more and more dependent on said platforms in order to distribute their public content. PSM professionals perceived this growing dependence as a threat to their autonomy and independence as a broadcaster. This dilemma between autonomy and visibility is well articulated by the statement of senior NPO advisor James:

They're international companies, making money off of our content (...). At the same time, we know that many audiences, especially young audiences, are right there. So it's a Catch-22 for public broadcasting. If you're not there then you're missing out on those target audiences. If you are there, yes, then you are actually giving away part of your content to a large international concern that is only getting more powerful as a result and that is also using your content to absorb people's data. So that's a very difficult contradiction that you're in. (James, 31 May, 2021)

This Catch-22 situation in public broadcasting has previously been discussed by Karen van Es (2019), who concluded that broadcasters showed critical awareness of the tension between platform algorithms and the value of independence. Similarly to van Es' (2019) findings, interviewees in this study seemed to be predominantly concerned by the impact of their audience reach. Interviewees mentioned four main risks where the use of third-party platforms as a distribution channel compromised their public values and their autonomy as a broadcaster. The first is mentioned here by James. He states that platforms are monetizing on public content and user data, a practice that is in contrast with the independence of the public sector. However, James explains that leaving those platforms at all would mean sacrificing the visibility of public values online. José van Dijck and Thomas Poell (2015) described this consideration years ago: "avoiding Twitter or YouTube entirely on account of their proprietary algorithms and business models would be disastrous because it would surely result in the loss of particularly a younger generation of viewers." This seems to be still relevant as of today. In addition to the monetization of public content and user data, imposed creative restrictions by platforms are another problem mentioned by PSM professionals.

Second, media professionals explained their concern regarding the restriction of creative freedom by platforms. One interviewee uses the case of a recent series that was distributed on YouTube called *We are fucked* – a short documentary series on how young people cope with their worries about climate change and engage in climate activism (VPRO, n.d.). According to him, in the initial stages of the production, needed to consider whether YouTube would approve of foul language in the title:

We think it's a very good title so we would really like to use it but then we are obviously thinking a lot about: how are all these platforms going to deal with this? Won't they just

block everything in advance? And I understand its the platforms' policy, but that's what I'm running up against. So these are restrictions that you have to deal with as a broadcaster.

(Jasper, 21 May, 2021)

This example shows how the policy of online commercial platforms poses creative restrictions on the work of Dutch public broadcasters. Therefore, the autonomy of Dutch PSM comes at risk when they use commercial platforms to distribute their public content online. This risk is strategically managed by engaging in dialogue with platforms like YouTube, however, these conversations remain difficult as platforms act from their own interests and public broadcasters are just 'one of the many' distributing their content through the platform. Another example of creative restrictions by platforms comes from NPO editor Paco, who experienced obstruction in sharing content on TikTok. In a series about sexuality and sex education, he noticed that TikTok sometimes blocks content because showing nudity, for example, is not in line with platform regulations in China or the United States. He expressed that he finds this problematic since, in the Netherlands, PSM actually want to share this type of content for its educational purposes. Therefore, Paco does not want to be dependent on platforms for content distribution.

Yeah so if, if something like that happens, that content is blocked, we always file objections and almost always they're approved so we're really on top of that. We also really try to make sure that the substance on those platforms is just as important and of added public value as on our own channels. (Paco, 31 May, 2021)

Here, Paco explains that he makes sure public values are retained by starting legal actions against platform decisions. This is a way to stand up against platform regulations. However, other interviewees remarked that big tech has gotten so powerful that Dutch broadcasters, and even the overarching NPO organization are no match to international tech giants. Therefore, some of them suggested that if they truly want to maintain their independence, the Dutch government and the European Union should increase pressure against commercial platforms.

Lastly, interviewees shared statements in which they expressed worries about how platform algorithms decide what audiences get to see. Platforms decide which target group gets to see what, based on their data (Zuboff, 2015), instead of what is 'right' or 'necessary' for the audience to see. Scenarist Rosa describes how broadcasters are at the mercy of the whims of the algorithms, instead of being assessed on the quality of their content:

You're inclined to think: I'll put it on the Internet and then everyone can see it. But that's not the case at all. I think that's the downside of social media, which is increasingly based on the

monetization model. That it's like: if you don't pay, I won't show it to anyone. (...) It's never a fair fight and it's never about quality. It's just about who pays. (Rosa, May 13, 2021)

Her broadcaster has thousands of followers on Facebook, but posts only rarely get to a thousand organic likes. She expresses frustration about the 'ratrace' of needing to score on social media. Rosa is not alone in this. Several interviewees expressed that it has become an obligation for broadcasters of today to score with their content. Yet, a little tweak in the algorithm could lead to far less likes, less interaction, less views and thus less generated public impact. Broadcasters have little say in this process. The only solution for them to overcome this problem is to 'go along' with the platform dynamics and have their marketing department boost certain content. Like Charlotte, coordinator of the Marketing-Communications Content Team of a broadcaster stated: "we even rearranged our whole department for that". Paid content helps to serve specific content to the right target audience. However, even paid content marketing remains a complex task.

In short, PSM professionals perceived a dilemma by safeguarding their autonomy while trying to reach their audience. They managed this dilemma by engaging in discussions with platforms, starting legal processes and converting audiences from commercial platforms to their own sites. While the compromise of public values like independence, pluriformity and transparency in commercial platform-use were considered problematic, interviewees seemed to be concerned most about sustaining their audience reach in the online media landscape. This is in line with findings from van Es (2019), and can be explained by the significance of audience reach in bringing public values to the audience to ensure the accessibility of public content.

4.3.2 Trade-off between the editorial and market orientation to strategic success

The second dilemma in the management of public values in online PSM distribution is focused on internal tension between the NPO organization and its independent broadcasters. There is a growing unrest amongst PSM employees working at Dutch broadcasters caused by the perceived trade-off between the editorial orientation (public values) and the market orientation (views) to strategic success. When asked about internal conflicts concerning public values in the Dutch media system, several broadcaster employees indicated that they felt like distributor NPO sometimes values KPIs like views and ratings over the creation of societal impact. This is surprising, since it would be expected that the expression of public value would be valued more in PSM plan evaluation than key performance indicators (KPIs) like views. Especially employees in editorial functions indicated to be agitated about this perceived trade-off. Scenarist Rosa describes how before creating a new broadcaster production, content plans must be submitted to the NPO organization. They evaluate the plan and subsequently decide whether the broadcaster will receive the funds to actually execute the plan.

Ofcourse, we want to get money from the NPO to be able to make beautiful series. You want to convince them with an important or a beautiful series, but you can mainly convince them with good ratings. (Rosa, 13 May, 2021)

According to Rosa and several other media professionals, expected and previous ratings play a serious role in NPOs decision to approve or disapprove the plan. Rosa describes that she would like to see the story sell itself. Yet whether a plan will be convincing for NPO, often depends on how well the content is performing online. According to NPOs Policy Concession Policy Plan 2022-2026 (NPO, 2021) NPO uses a dashboard to measure the success of show performance. This dashboard shows relationships between the shows, their performance, and the use of financial resources. Performance is measured by the shows' ratings, reach, appreciation and public values. The results from the dashboard are part of the decision whether or not a title is continued (NPO, 2021). In other words, while public values promotion is an indicator for the performance of a show, platform metrics like ratings and reach also contribute to NPOs decision to provide funding for broadcaster content or not.

For us, views are secondary. Though important, we are judged by them, but I see it much more like gasoline in a tank. If you've made it, at least you can keep going. But for us it is much more important that we have made a difference in people's lives. That it has done something, that it has added something. (Gabriel, 9 June, 2021)

Here, Gabriel, Head online and strategist at a broadcaster explains how he sees views as a necessary checkmark to be able to continue his work. However, it is significant that to him personally, creating public impact and adding something in peoples lives is more important. This touches on the core values of NPO to “Inform, Educate and Entertain” the audience (Enli, 2008). According to camera journalist Max, these core values come at play when ratings are taken into account as a measurement for performance in public media production:

It's harmful because if you're always going to make things based on ratings, then you're always going to make what the audience wants and you shouldn't always make what the audience wants, but you should also make what the audience needs. And and it just lacks.... It just lacks diversity, inclusiveness.... That then that doesn't come into play. If I had children and I would ask them: what do you want to eat? Then I'm going to eat fries every night, but if I'm going to eat fries every night, then you don't have a diverse diet at all, do you? (Max, 29 May, 2021)

He refers to the gap between what the dominant majority of the audience *wants* to see versus what they *should* see. This is in line with the gap between the commercial market and public perspective on media production (Goyannes, 2021). The task for public broadcasters is to close this gap by serving pluriform content for all groups of society that introduces audiences to content that might differ from their own world view. Thus, creating more understanding of other peoples perspectives and fostering social cohesion. In his rationale, taking views as an indicator for performance could lead to creating more content that is in demand of the mainstream audience, over content liked by minority groups. Thereby, putting at risk public values that are important for NPOs public values like diversity, heterogeneity and pluriformity (NPO, 2021). This internal conflict between values and views is best articulated by researcher and editor Lilly:

So I think that [commercial media] algorithm and scoring on social media does clash with what the NPO stands for, or should stand for. So that could still be a challenge because it means that you deviate somewhat from your public values and perhaps move more towards commercial values. Because you have to score with your story. (Lilly, 28 May, 2021)

Web editors and marketing specialists explained that creating public impact remains the most important factor in measuring online success. However, in practice, they often do pay a lot of attention to what scores well according to the preferences of the platform they use to distribute their content.

We try of course to respond as well as possible to what is called 'the algorithms' so we do look at what works well and what does not work well and that is I think always a correlation

of whether the children like it, that is the most important, but in addition, how much text you use in certain expressions that is then again related to the preferences that the platform has. (Paco, 31 May, 2021)

Paco, online editor at NPO, describes how platform preferences, like the amount of words in a copy above a video, are something he takes into account to achieve higher ratings. In this way, platforms contribute to whether programs are extended. Platforms are therefore not leading, but they do steer practice to some extent.

Summing up, PSM professionals often perceived a focus on ratings over views in the evaluation of public content. They perceived this as problematic, since according to them scoring on social platforms could clash with the public values NPO wants to retain. Namely, this means that content is aimed at the mainstream audience. Strikingly, all interviewees who discussed the trade-off between values and views noted that they value the creation of public impact higher than views, but none of them discussed how they made sure public values were leading in practice.

4.3.3 Conducting a protectionist versus progressive strategy on public value distribution

The last sub chapter discusses the internal tension in Dutch PSM between the traditional heritage distance and progressive view on online public content distribution. All interviewees agreed PSM need to adapt to in order to legitimize themselves and keep promoting their public values online. However, media professionals expressed different opinions on the best strategy to achieve this goal. Two main perspectives could be distinguished on NPO's public value distribution strategy: the protectionist and the progressive stance on distribution strategy. Interviewees observed an internal dilemma for the future of public value distribution in the online media landscape: should PSM conduct a protectionist distribution strategy that is in line with their core values with the risk of sacrificing audience reach, or should they focus on promoting public values to as many people as possible while possibly compromising on their own values? PSM professionals appeared to be well aware of the dilemma between the two perspectives and approached the dilemma from their position as a distributor (NPO) or producer (broadcasters). Both positions have their own objectives. Yet, it must be said that interviewees sometimes put themselves in the other position which contributed to ambivalent statements.

On the one hand, interviewees discussed the protectionist perspective on online distribution. They described the perspective as a heritage stance on online public value distribution which is often taken by managers in the NPO organization. Interviewees characterized this stance as old-fashioned, restrictive, and top-down. Supporters of this stance continue to work linearly with a focus on television and radio before online – which reflects in NPO's budgeting as well: “budgets are

gigantically smaller for web series than for TV series, because 'it's just online'." (Rosa, 13 May, 2021). Key to the protectionist view is a centralization strategy and cautious outlook on commercial online platforms. Several interviewees noticed how in online distribution, NPO uses the same distribution strategies as with their linear channels. They have set airtimes for content and centralize their online shows through their owned platform NPO Start and recognizable network channels on commercial platforms. For example, an editor at a broadcaster explained how distributor NPO centralizes broadcaster content by posting via NPO's network brand NPO3: "NPO's YouTube-channel is literally called NPO3, so technically, they are just doing the same thing as with linear television," (Max, 29 May 2021). The main vision to bundle different forms of content broadcaster's content online is to maintain control over the distribution of public content:

There's already so much competition online, you shouldn't fragment too much as a public broadcaster and you should really logically put things together so that you can become findable much faster. (...) If you give each content its own channel, and the series is on for eight weeks and then not for a year... Then at some point you will not pop up anymore either because of those algorithms and then you're gone (Naomi, 9 June, 2021)

Thus, by implementing a centralizing strategy, NPO prevents further fragmentation of PSM media on third-party platforms while at the same time increasing their findability and strengthening their online position. Moreover, media professionals described that the protectionist perspective on online distribution recognizes the need to use commercial platforms to reach the audience, however, they paid more attention to external risks of becoming too dependent on third-party platforms for their distribution. As Naomi puts it: "We need to be present there, but indeed in a reserved way so that we don't become too dependent on their selection models."

On the other hand, media professionals described the progressive stance on online public value distribution. Interviewees characterized this perspective as an online-first mindset that is more open to posting all PSM content on commercial platforms. Supporters of this perspective predominantly worked in editorial and marketing functions at independent broadcasters. They agreed with the protectionist view that PSM are becoming more dependent on third-party platforms and that the objectives of these platforms are threatening PSM's core values like independency. However, they placed user-needs and audience reach above the risk of commercial platform perils.

Furthermore, several supporters pointed out that platformization has caused marketing, content and distribution practices to become intertwined. As a result, they found that traditional distribution and top-down restrictions from administrator NPO on broadcaster are no longer fitting in an online environment. Platformization allowed everyone, including broadcasters, to distribute their own content. Yet, broadcasters know there is a clear distinction between their role as media

producers and the NPO as advisor and distributor. However, now that the distinction between these three has become more blurred, media professionals desire more creative freedom in the distribution process. New possibilities created by online platforms allow media professionals to look for the best combination of distribution, content and marketing to promote public values. Noah (7 June, 2021), Head of Innovation and Digital Media at a Dutch broadcaster introduces the example of Maandverbond to illustrate the fusion of content, marketing and distribution. The Telegram format enables women to interact and consume content about their period in a safe environment: “Central to that concept is the use of Telegram. It's a distribution channel, but it's also about content, about the conversation audiences can have with women about their menstrual cycle and that therefore also has marketing aspects.” Now that the distinction between these three has become more blurred, supporters of the progressive stance on distribution desire more creative freedom from NPO in the distribution process.

Additionally, supporters of the progressive stance were critical on NPOs strategy of converting audiences to their own VOD platform NPO Start, better known as ‘Rome’ (previously discussed in chapter 4.1.1). These media professionals called it “protectionistic” and “inward focused” of NPO to try to lead everyone to their own PSM platform. Especially, when there is a whole online landscape filled with other attractive content. Head Online of a broadcaster, Gabriel explained that he disagrees with this strategy because he believes the internet works fundamentally different.

What I mean is, it's very much about getting people to Rome. Getting into Rome, and when you're in Rome, then not going out. I don't believe that's how the internet works. I believe it's traffic passing through via Rome. (...) It's just that the policy is very focused on getting everybody in, but not about that constant inward and outward traffic. (Gabriel, 19 May, 2021)

He expresses criticism on the current, protectionist strategy of converting audiences to a closed-off environment. Moreover, CEO Arthur (8 June, 2021) is critical as well and describes the NPO Start platform as an island: isolated and far away from the audience. With him, several other interviewees used the metaphor of an ‘island’ to describe how NPO’s strategy is trying to create a platform for public value promotion. For them, it suffices to retain public values online by just including them in their content. It does not matter how the platform it is shared on complies to public values.

That's why I think that if you put it on an island, then you're isolating yourself more and more from the world and fewer and fewer people get the incentive [to watch public content]. So

I'd rather than have our programs be seen everywhere, in bits. I believe in that more than setting up a very educational island with a wall around it. (Arthur, 8 June 2021)

More importantly, supporters of the progressive perspective aim for their content to be seen by as many people as possible to promote public values. Therefore, these interviewees preferred a strategy of sharing snippets of their content through various platforms, which contributes to a better overall visibility. In contrast to this, supporters of the protectionist perspective agreed that Dutch PSM should continue to legitimate itself by having a great online presence. However, supporters of the protectionist perspective believed this media fragmentation and dependence on commercial platforms could be dependence could weaken PSM's position in the long run. As Naomi (9 June, 2021), Head Online of NPO's board concluded: "I understand what they are saying: it is an illusion to think that everyone will come to our own little island. At the same time, I think we have to do our very best to make that happen."

5. Discussion & conclusion

5.1 Discussion

The emergence of platformization over the last decade has disrupted the media landscape NPO and its broadcasters operate in. With the fragmentation of audience and content, and media use increasingly taking place on commercial platforms owned by commercial platforms, PSM are rethinking their strategies for managing public values (van Es & Poell, 2020). This raised the question of how Dutch PSM cope with the strategic challenges brought by platformization while at the same time making an effort to pursue their core public values in the commercialized online media landscape. The aim of this research has been to better understand how media professionals within the Dutch PSM industry perceive and strategically manage public values in times of platformization. This chapter will provide answers to the question: *how do public media professionals within the Dutch Public Service Media industry strategically manage public values in times of rapid platformization?* Starting from this research question, this chapter discusses theoretical, societal and practical implications for the future of PSM in line with the following sub-questions:

- SQ1:** How do PSM professionals perceive PSM's role in society in the platform era?
- SQ2:** What do PSM professionals perceive as the main challenges and opportunities for PSM brought by platformization?
- SQ3:** What strategic practices do PSM professionals use to manage public values?
- SQ4:** How do PSM professionals strategically manage dilemmas in public value distribution as a result of emerging platformization?

To answer these questions, a total of thirteen interviews were conducted with PSM professionals employed in the Dutch PSM industry. Grounded theory analysis provided a total of three overarching themes from the data: (1) *Managing transitions in the media landscape*, (2) *Managing public values internally and externally* and (3) *Managing dilemmas in public value distribution*. One central finding in this study is that retaining its public values and adhering to their public service responsibilities while staying visible relevant in an increasingly commercialized and competitive ecosystem is the core strategic challenge for PSM organizations in the platform era. This key finding is in line with a publication by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU, 2017b), which described how the rapid development of European media markets change the way PSM's public objectives are delivered and achieved. With commercial platforms forming the new infrastructure of the internet, Dutch PSM are at risk of becoming too dependent and compromising their independency as an institution. This central idea lays the foundation for the strategic management practices discussed in the following themes:

Managing transitions in the media landscape – PSM professionals were well aware of the need to strategically adapt to the increasingly platformized media landscape. They experienced changing media use, which posed the challenge of having to serve both online and linear audiences. However, the strategic focus of Dutch PSM will slowly shift from linear-first to an integrally programmed distribution strategy which puts the user needs first. This is a necessary move, since PSM needs to stay visible. Media professionals found that role of PSM as a trustworthy and independent institution (Saldana & Adarraga, 2018) has become more important due to commercialized and fragmented media landscape. At the same time, they perceived a growing distrust in media institutions, creating a strategic risk for publicly funded PSM. Media professionals strategically react to this risk by branding their content under one recognizable brand identity (Lowe & Maijanen, 2019) and fostering transparency in media production. Furthermore, PSM professionals indicated that their position in the Dutch media market has fundamentally changed by platformization, as PSM organizations have moved from being a push to a pull medium. Lastly, user-interaction has become an important strategic practice to connect and collaborate with the audience and has blurred the hierarchical relationship between PSM as content distributor and the audience. Hence, changing PSM's role from gatekeeper (Lowe & Bardeel, 2008) to collaborator (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004).

Managing public values internally and externally – Public values were retained through both internal as well as external strategic management practices. Internal strategic practices included aligning personal values with media brand identity (Siegert & Hangartner, 2017) and using public values as a framework in decision-making processes. This is in line with Rokeach's (1973) view on values as standards that guide ongoing activities and decision-making. Interestingly, however, was that several PSM professionals indicated that they felt like they were not involved in strategic processes, while they were actually engaging in strategic practices on public values by e.g. discussing public values in editorial meetings and using public values as a framework in their decision-making processes (Siegert & Hangartner, 2017). This validates results from Johnson et al. (2003) who found that individual activities could be considered strategic while not intending to do so. However, results of the current study showed partial validation of Rubino's (1998) conception that organizational values are co-created by corporate-level managers in cooperation with editorial employees. Editorial decision making reflects on broadcaster's brand identity (Siegert et al., 2011), which includes the organizational values of the organization (Siegert & Hangartner, 2017).

Managing dilemmas in public value distribution – Lastly, PSM professionals managed public values by addressing and managing internal and external dilemmas in their public value distribution. Three dilemmas arose. First, PSM professionals perceived a dilemma by retaining their autonomy while trying to reach their audience. PSM professionals managed this dilemma by engaging in

discussions with platforms, starting legal processes and converting audiences from commercial platforms to their own sites. What was interesting is that, while the compromise of public values like independence, pluriformity and transparency in commercial platform-use were considered problematic, media professionals seemed to be concerned most about sustaining their audience reach in the online media landscape. This is in line with findings from van Es (2019), and can be explained by the significance of audience reach in bringing public values to the audience to ensure the accessibility of public content. The second dilemma is posed by the tension between the editorial and market perspective to strategic success. They perceived this as problematic, since according to them scoring on social platforms could clash with the public values NPO wants to retain. Namely, this means that content is aimed at the mainstream audience. Yet, none of the professionals discussed how they made sure public values were leading in practice. This could be an interesting point for further research on strategic management research on PSM. Lastly, a dilemma between two perspectives on online distribution arose: the protectionist and progressive perspective. This dichotomy in strategic outlook creates an inconsistency in brand value alignment (Siegert & Hangartner, 2017) in the way strategic practices are executed and, therefore, has implications for the strategic outcomes of their organizations inconsistency in NPOs media brand identity (Siegert et al., 2011).

5.1.1 Theoretical implications

Applying a value-based approach to strategy-as-practice, this research contributes an additional perspective to the field of strategic media management. Conceptually, the value-based approach proved to be useful in better understanding how media professionals strategically manage brand values in the context of a public media organization (Siegert et al., 2011). However, in research on meta studies (Baumann, 2020; Jarazabkowski & Spee, 2009; Golsorkhi et al., 2015) on the strategy-as-practice approach, no other previously conceptualized framework came closer to the media, brands, actors, and communication (MBAC) model by Siegert et al. (2011). Therefore an effort was made to make an adaptation of the MBAC model in order to implement the framework to the PSM context. One central purpose of the model is to better understand how media professionals react to tension between editorial objectives and market orientation and how they can maintain the commitment of their brand identity to promoting public values. Results show that the editorial objective of measuring strategic success in public impact was often at stake because of top-down restrictions from NPO.

Furthermore, NPOs main strategy to steer on audience conversion from social media platforms to their own public platforms NPO Start, additional sites and apps proved to be an application of the ideas by Graham Murdock (2005; 2018) about the need for a creative 'digital

commons'. First in 2005 and again later in 2018, Murdock (2005; 2018) made an argument for the development of an online public space as a counter movement to the growing power of big tech corporations (van Dijck et al., 2018). In his manifest, he suggests that PSM institutions should join efforts with other cultural organisations like libraries, museums and schools. By joining forces with the PublicSpaces coalition, NPO commits to building on a future where they no longer are dependent on commercial media to promote their public values.

In addition, a central finding in this research that NPO and its broadcasters struggle to manage internal as well as external dilemma's posed to them by the emergence of platformization. Results show that the dilemma between values and views is not yet managed in line with NPO's media brand identity (Siegert et al., 2011). The dilemma between the editorial orientation on values and the market orientation on strategic success (Siegert et al., 2011) poses a risk for the strategic alignment of the public values that are inherent to NPOs media brand identity. PSM professionals perceived this as problematic, since they found that scoring on social platforms could clash with the public values NPO wants to retain. If NPO wants to strategically position itself in the Dutch online media market, they must adhere to their media brand identity by putting public values first.

Lastly, Donders (2019), in her research on PSM distribution strategies in the digital age, argued that wrote that "the competitive positioning of public broadcasters is unclear and in most cases also lacks focus," results of the current study can only partly reconfirm this finding. The current study found that on the one hand, PSM managers showed to have a clear strategic focus on audience conversion to their public platform NPO Start when it comes to distributing public values through commercial platforms. They want to be visible and interact with the audience on social media, but the goal is to lead audiences to their owned platform that fosters public values like independence of commercial influences and transparency in data use. This indicates a focus on strengthening the competitive position of NPO and its public values in the Dutch media market. On the other hand, there is internal resistance against this strategy as media professionals are fearful to end up isolated on the public 'island'. This way, the NPO organization tries to distribute their public values online from a protectionist point of view: centralized and in charge of its own resources. Something can be said for this protectionistic vision on online public value distribution as it fosters public values in their own platform. However, isolating public values may be counter productive as it contradicts with the legitimation of PSM as a media institution that is accessible for everyone.

5.1.2 Societal implications

Disruptions in the landscape caused by emerging platformization (Goyannes, 2021; Van Es & Poell, 2020) have not only consequences for public service media, but other organizations and individuals as well. This research provides implications for various actors concerned in with the (public) media

sector in the Netherlands. The results of this study have implications for public non-profit organizations like libraries, musea and other cultural institutions. Disclosing the current dependency of PSM in reaching their audiences may be a warning for other public organizations (Murdock, 2005). These organizations should start thinking about in what ways they depend or rely on commercial platforms for reaching their audience and spreading their message. For example, the Amsterdam Public Library Foundation (OBA) is a cultural institution, whose purpose is to promote the free movement of information in society (OBA, n.d.). To accomplish this mission, they regularly posts on all mainstream social media platforms. Would they reach their young customers this easy without using commercial platforms?

Furthermore, results of this study create implications for citizens and the public of PSM as well. Dutch citizens are the target audiences of PSM in the Netherlands. Therefore, they are directly affected by decision-making of PSM professionals in the promotion of public values. NPO has the task to contribute to the democratic, cultural, and social objectives of Dutch society (Donders, 2019). Hence, it makes a big difference whether PSM professionals are led by creating societal impact, or a market orientation that uses views and ratings as a measurement of strategic success. PSM have the possibility to foster social cohesion in Dutch society, thus, it is argued that creating societal impact with public values must come before anything else.

5.1.3 Implications for practice

As the boundaries between medium types are blurring and it is becoming less and less relevant where people came into contact with the brand. PSM professionals notice how their organizations are responding by positioning their media content under one recognizable brand identity (Mediamonitor 2021). NPO has successfully created a central, overarching brand through which it distributes content produced by their sub-brands and independent broadcasters. This branding strategy could be recommended for other media companies as well, since strong brands help audience to make choices, especially in the saturated online media landscape (Siegert et al., 2011). At the same time, it should be noted that media organizations must stay cautious not to isolate themselves online, as this could result in a deteriorating their position the market they are active in.

Furthermore, this research has shown that brand values (Siegert et al., 2011) and organizational culture appeared to be important features in the internal communication of PSM professionals. The management of public values in internal communication occurred via in-team conversations and decision-making, though intranet channels and in onboarding processes. However, the discrepancy in perspectives on strategic management of public values indicated a fundamental difference in the question how to transition to online media use. Especially in times of uncertainty and doubt, brought by disruptions in the media landscape, it is important for media organizations to

discuss these differences. A main factor in successful transitions in uncertain times is the increasing of communication within the organization in combination (Nadler, 1982). Therefore,

5.1.4 Limitations

This research was not without limitations. First, the respondents' sample did not include PSM professionals from all independent broadcasters in the Dutch public media system. Some broadcasters were more represented than others. For example, four interviewees worked at the same broadcaster. This is a result of the non-purposive snowball sampling method, as VPRO employees introduced others who were working at the same broadcaster. The results can therefore not be generalized over all media professionals in the Dutch PSM system. Nevertheless, this study provides important insights into how these specific media professionals managed public values in times of platformization.

Furthermore, the use of the grounded theory approach to qualitative analysis requires a level of analytical insight and creativity from the researcher in the formulation of codes (van Gorp, 2007). Due to the subjectivity in the interpretation process, a certain degree of researcher bias is inherent to the method of analysis (Chenail, 2011). Therefore, the researcher explicitly does not claim that the found themes are 'the truth'. Instead, results of this study are a constructed reflection of reality in a specific context (Charmaz, 1996). By iteration and systematic grouping of recurring elements, this limitation can be partially mitigated (van Gorp, 2007).

5.1.5 Future research

This research has focused on strategic management in the distribution of public content online in the specific context of the Dutch PSM industry. The study has resulted in new insights into strategic practices used by PSM professionals in public value management and contributed to a better understanding of the current internal and external dilemmas they are facing under pressure of disruptions in the media landscape. However, more research is ought to be done on how well public institutions apply public values like accountability and transparency in the affordances of their own websites, apps and software. While academic attention is paid to how well governments and municipalities safeguard these values in their platforms (Berlot et al., 2012), research on digital public values in cultural institutions and smaller public institutions lag behind.

5.2 Conclusion

The emergence of platformization has fundamentally changed the Dutch media landscape Dutch PSM professionals operate in and try to fulfill their public task of promoting public values. New opportunities and challenges posed by online platforms have urged NPO and its public broadcasters

to reconsider their strategic management of public values in the light of major disruptions. PSM professionals are strategically managing public values from two main perspectives on online distribution: the protectionist and progressive perspective. This dichotomy in strategic outlook creates an inconsistency in brand value alignment (Siegert & Hangartner, 2017) in the way strategic practices are executed and, therefore, has implications for the strategic outcomes of their organizations inconsistency in NPOs media brand identity (Siegert et al., 2011). On the one hand, PSM professionals struggle to align their organization's brand identity values with strategic management practices in their day-to-day work. At the same time, PSM professionals in management functions are creating a better strategic focus on the distribution of online public values. Overall, strategic management of public values in the platform era poses a contradictory challenge for PSM professionals in their attempts to retain and their public values in the online landscape. While PSM professionals are trying to promote public values, they use platforms with commercial objectives that are at odds with PSMs core values of fostering independence, transparency, and pluriformity. PSMs legitimation rests on reaching their audience. Yet, paradoxically, by relying on commercial platforms, to promote their public values, PSM is at risk of becoming too dependent external actors and, hence, compromising their own core values in the process.

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Appendix A – Sample description

Ref. Nr.	Pseudonym	Broadcaster	Function	Experience in PSM in years	Age	Gender	Interview date
1	Rosa	A	Scenarist	5	20s	Female	13-5-2021
2	Nick	B	Production Assistant	5	20s	Male	14-5-2021
3	Jasper	B	Online producer	17	30s	Male	21-5-2021
4	Lilly	A	Editor/Researcher	2	20s	Female	28-5-2021
5	Max	A	Camjo	4	20s	Male	29-5-2021
6	James	C	Senior digital innovation advisor	21	40s	Male	31-5-2021
7	Paco	C	Online editor	6	20s	Male	31-5-2021
8	Noah	B	Head of Digital Media	8	50s	Male	7-6-2021
9	Arthur	D	CEO	8	50s	Male	8-6-2021
10	Naomi	C	Head Online	20	40s	Female	9-6-2021
11	Gabriel	E	Head Digital	4	30s	Male	9-6-2021
12	Anna	B	Editor in Chief	8	40s	Female	10-6-2021
13	Charlotte	F	Coordinator Content Team	17	40s	Female	11-6-2021

Appendix B – Coding frame

Selective codes	Axial codes	Open codes
4.1 Managing transitions in the media landscape	4.1.1 Adapting to changing media-use	Changing user needs Online media consumption Online competition Fragmentation of media use Outdated media system Reduced user attention Transition to online platforms New distribution options New content forms User interaction Traditional distribution strategy
	4.1.2 Legitimizing PSM existence	Declining trust in media Difficulty reaching young people Reaching all audiences Representing all audiences Creating societal impact Countering polarization Transparency in media Building communities Be where the audience is
	4.1.3 Shifting from push to pull medium	Gatekeeper function Catering to user needs Balancing public values and audience needs Transition from push to pull medium
4.2 Managing public values in PSM internally and externally	4.2.1 Awareness of public values in daily operations	Public value definition Corporate identity Corporate image Corporate values Identification with corporate identity

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting public and personal values Public value-based decision making Public value as benchmark Public values in production processes Evaluation of public values
	4.2.2 Internal communication on public values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate communication Discussing public values Public values in onboarding Communicating broadcaster identity Defining strategy Awareness of organizational strategy
	4.2.3 Retaining public values in online distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution strategy Centralization of content Conversion Cross-navigation Branding Online public space Integral programming Strengthening owned platform
4.3 Managing dilemmas in online distribution	4.3.1 Balancing autonomy and visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing power of Big Tech Platform opportunities Strategic dependence of platforms Platform risks Platform policy Restrictions by platforms Difficulty leaving platforms Feelings of powerlessness
	4.3.2 Trade-off between the editorial and market perspective to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measuring strategic goals Bottom-up resistance Top-down policy Fostering visibility Creating public impact Insufficient funding

	4.3.3 Acting from a traditional versus progressive position	Restricted broadcaster freedom Critique towards NPO platform NPO as 'an island' Enabling co-creation Emphasizing mutual benefits Online first policy
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Appendix C – Interview guide

Concept	Focus within phenomenon	Example questions
Introduction	Personal background	<p>Could you introduce yourself?</p> <p>How long have you been working in this position?</p> <p>Could you tell me more about the work you do at your organization?</p> <p>Why have you chosen to pursue a career in the media sector?</p>
Public service media	PSM Values	<p>What are values according to you?</p> <p>What is public media according to you?</p> <p>What is the role of values within PSM?</p> <p>Are there PSM values that you think are specifically important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you think these values are important? - For who are these values important? <p>Are you aware of certain values within your organization?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are you aware of these values within your daily work? - Do these values ever come up in your daily work or meetings? - How does your daily work contribute to public values? <p>Do you feel there are values that are not addressed at this moment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you think they are not addressed? - Why would it be important for PSM to carry out these values? <p>Do you feel there are PSM values that are addressed too much?</p>
	PSM in Dutch society	<p>How do you perceive the role of PSM in today's society?</p> <p>Why are PSM important in today's society?</p> <p>In what way do you think your job makes an impact on society?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you need to make more impact? <p>Is the Dutch PSM system worthwhile?</p> <p>How do you think Dutch PSM will change or transform in the future?</p>
Platformization	Definition platformization	<p>What are social media platforms according to you?</p> <p>Do you/your team/organization use social media platforms for the job?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If so, what platforms do you use?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For what reason does your team/organization use these platforms? - Do you see this as a positive strategy? Why? - What could be done better in your opinion?
	Platforms and PSM	<p>How has the rise of social media platforms changed the role of public broadcasters according to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do platforms contribute to carrying out PSM values? - How do platforms harm the values PSM is striving for? <p>How has the use of platforms in public service media developed according to you?</p>
	Challenges and opportunities of platformization	<p>What are the opportunities for the use of social media platforms in PSM?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why and for whom would this be beneficial? <p>What are the challenges for the use of social media platforms in PSM?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why and for whom would this be negative?
	Platforms and society	How are social media platforms influencing society according to you?
Strategic media management	Defining Strategy	How would you describe strategy?
	PSM strategy	<p>Are you aware of certain strategies within your organization?</p> <p>In what way are you involved in your organization's strategy?</p> <p>How do you think your job contributes to the overall strategy of your organization?</p>
		<p>How do you think your job contributes to the overall success of your organization?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you think that could contribute more?
		<p>How is your organization's online strategy developing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When you look at your organization's social media output
	Managing tensions in PSM	<p>Where do you see your organization MESO – What are the most important challenges for your organization?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MACRO – Would you say this is the same for NPO or are there differences? <p>Are there any strategic challenges between your organization and the NPO as an umbrella organization?</p>

	<p>How do you feel these challenges can be best addressed?</p>
	<p>MICRO – And if you look at your job on a day-to-day level, how become these challenges visible there?</p> <p>Are there other challenges in your work?</p>
	<p>Do you talk about these challenges open in meetings with the board or in your team?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would you/your organization be more successful (in carrying out PSM values) if you would discuss this in open meetings?

Appendix D – Recruitment message

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Mila Bertens and I am currently writing my master thesis (MA Media & Business) at Erasmus University Rotterdam on how public media professionals experience the influence of platformization on Dutch public broadcasting.

By interviewing public media professionals, I hope to gain insight into 1) how they strategically address challenges and opportunities resulting from platformization and 2) whether and to what extent they experience friction in using commercial platforms for public purposes.

The interviews will take about 30 to 45 minutes. Would it possible to make an appointment for an interview?

I look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Mila Bertens (Contact: 579295mb@eur.nl)

As part of the interviews, your privacy will of course be handled with care:

- For the purpose of proper data processing, I will make recordings of the interviews. These recordings are for my own use only. I will ask permission for this in advance.
- The recordings are transcribed, anonymized (if desired) and securely stored on Erasmus University Rotterdam clouds.
- In principle, the thesis is made public after assessment by inclusion in the thesis archive of Erasmus University Rotterdam.
- The thesis is submitted to all interviewees prior to publication for checking for factual inaccuracies in the quotations.

Appendix E – Coding process

10:20 M: oke, ja

10:21 B: Maar ja daar hebben we het zeker over maar ik denk dat dat er zo ingebakken zit in eh de programma's en content dat we benoemen het niet zo van en hoe zit het nu met de publieke waarden maar we hebben het er wel over van op wat voor manier is dit leerzaam, hoe kunnen we dit het best neerzetten dat is automatisch denk ik.

10:47 M: Maar jullie zijn dus eigenlijk ook een soort van of zijn jullie ook een soort van gatekeepers in dat opzicht?

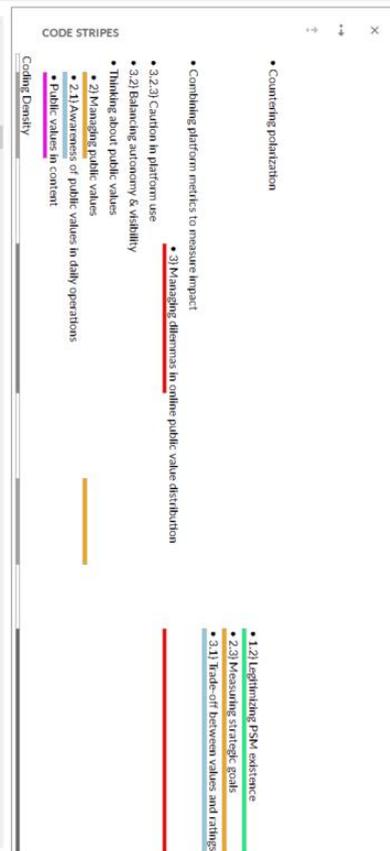
10:54 B: Ja zeker. Ja want wij zijn eh we mogen niet echt over de inhoud eh mee bepalen maar we kunnen wel eh kijken naar de kwaliteit van eh bepaalde producten en eh hoe dingen aangeleverd worden of wat de boodschap is zeg maar. Ja dus in een bepaalde manier wel en heel erg natuurlijk de rol in het plat gezegd in het verdelen van het geld en het toekennen van bepaalde titels en wat er voor die titels gemaakt gaat worden. Dus in dat opzicht wordt er ook uit resultaat van het verleden wel gekeken eh voor programma's in de toekomst, wat werkt goed, wat werkt niet goed, wat zijn de wensen dus ja op die manier wel.

11:38 M: oke en dit is dan iets meer een strategische vraag maar wanneer werkt het voor jou goed? Wanneer is het succesvol?

11:47 B: Ja dat kan meerdere eh meerder dingen zijn. eh op nummer 1 staat bij ons eigenlijk eh de eigen platformen het raakt een beetje aan wat je later wilt bespreken maar eigen platformen zijn heel erg belangrijk ook doordat dat dus van publiek geld wordt gemaakt.

12:12 M: Dus welke platformen bedoel je dan precies?

12:13 B: Zapp.nl, Zappelin.nl op onze apps en daar alle content die wij maken voor commerciële platforms moet ook op onze eigen kanalen te vinden zijn. Dus een project kan heel succesvol zijn door dat het heel veel kijkers trekt op onze eigen platformen. Het kan ook succesvol zijn doordat het een hele grote doelgroep bereikt op een commercieel platform maar het kan ook heel succesvol zijn als het geen heel groot publiek bereikt maar wel inhoudelijk iets is wat wij heel belangrijk vinden. Zoals die Zapp theaterprijs waar je het over had of eh wat is nog meer een mooi voorbeeld eh we hebben een programma waarin eh Tatum ??? met eh een kind van de ene gescheiden ouder naar de andere gescheiden ouder rijdt en dat is ook geen mega bereik maar dat is wel een programma waarin heel mooi wordt verteld hoe het is om gescheiden ouders te hebben. Dus ook dat kan iets



Appendix F – Interview transcripts

Due to privacy reasons, transcripts are saved separately.