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Report prepared for the Council of Europe's Group of Specialists on Public Service Media in the Information Society (MC-S-PSM) by Gregory Ferrell Lowe

The opinions expressed in this publication should not be regarded as placing upon the legal instruments mentioned in it any official interpretation capable of binding the governments of member states, the Council of Europe's statutory organs or any other organ set up by virtue of the European Convention on Human Rights.

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I. Introduction to the report

"Democracy is increasingly being reconfigured in conceptual and rhetorical terms to make it compatible with a corporate view of societal development. Democratic will becomes increasingly reduced to market choice. In such circumstances to placidly continue with our previous notions of democracy – to not see and meet the challenge inherent in this development – is to abdicate responsibility for the future" (Dahlgren, 2007: viii).

This report has been prepared at the request of the Council of Europe's Group of Specialists on Public Service Media in the Information Society (MC–S–PSM). The terms of reference specify assessment of "the role of public service media [PSM] in promoting wider individual participation in democratic processes in contemporary Europe", as articulated in Recommendation CM/Rec (2007) 3 on the remit of public service media in the information society, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in January 2007. The Council of Europe demonstrates leadership in policy development that is pertinent for public service media in Europe, with emphasis on the democratic, social and cultural needs of European societies, as well as the need to preserve media pluralism, as agreed in the 1997 Protocol on Public Service Broadcasting annexed to the Treaty of Amsterdam.

In the Recommendation the Council underlines "the specific role of public service broadcasting, which is to promote the values of democratic societies", particularly by "promoting social cohesion, cultural diversity and pluralist communication accessible to everyone". The Council is convinced "that the public service remit is all the more relevant in the information society and that it can be discharged by public service organisations via diverse platforms". This grounds the importance of PSM both as a normative ideal and in concrete practice. The 2007 recommendation should be fully implemented by the European member states, and the Council should encourage that.

With regard to the present report, the Council agrees that PSM should promote broad democratic debate and participation and recognises that PSM have a vital role in providing adequate information about democracy in Europe and its member states. The Council strongly encourages opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making processes that impact the nature and quality of public life. PSM have an irreplaceable role in supporting democratic practice and, even more fundamentally, in nurturing democratisation. The Council understands that PSM must facilitate public scrutiny of national governments and international organisations to enhance transparency, ensure accountability to the public which grounds their legitimacy, help eliminate any democratic deficit, and contribute to the development of the European public sphere. PSM should therefore facilitate and mediate democratic discourse.

Substance of the report

The report is structured for consideration of the constituent elements of the terms of reference that frame this project. These elements are pictured in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Constituent elements of the report
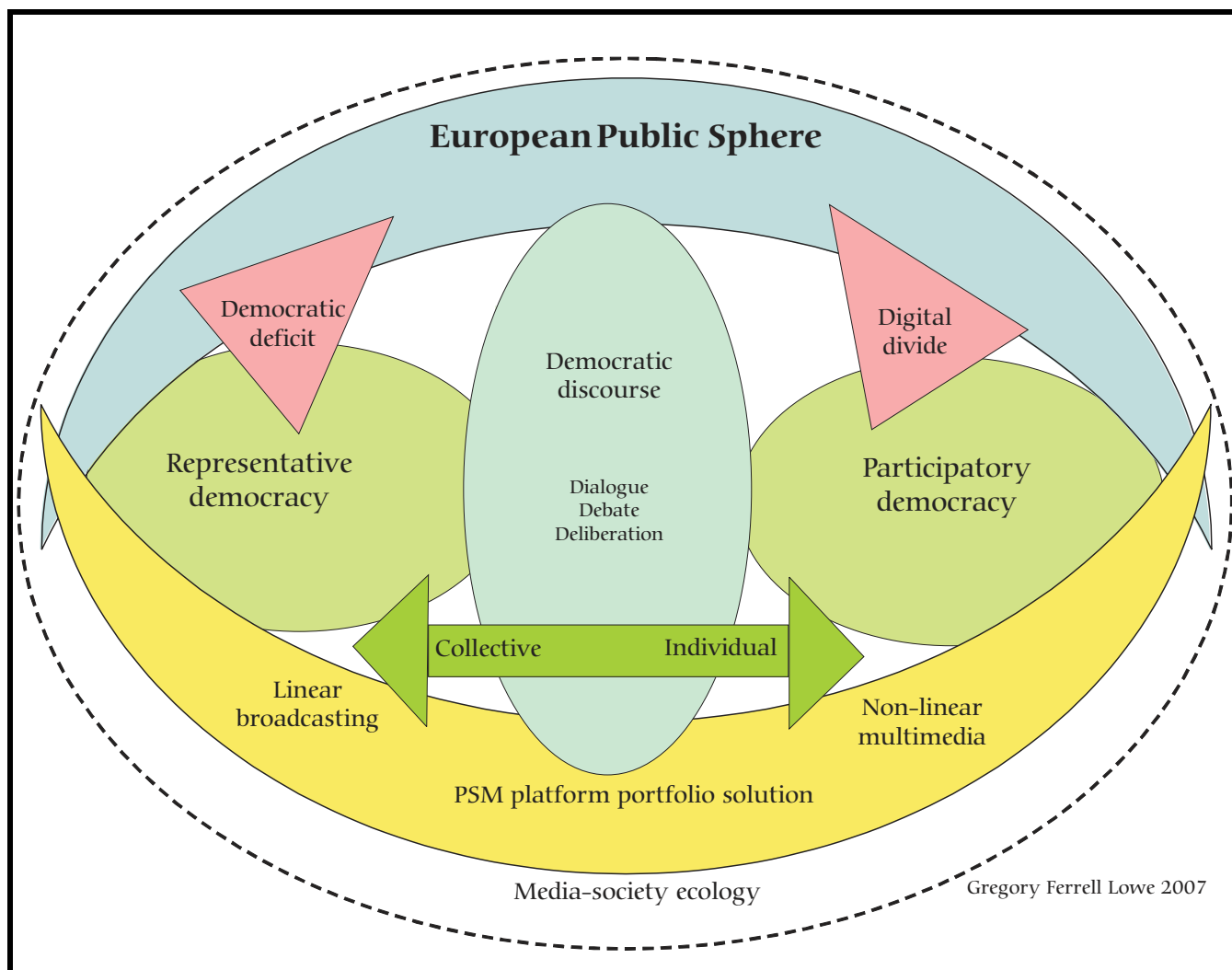
The context is conceived as a media-society ecology to highlight the reflexive character and systemic properties of co-determinant relationships. Changes in any node alter system dynamics.

The object for development is the construction of a European public sphere [EPS] which is partly pan-European or supranational and partly domestic as grounded in the member states. Constructing an EPS is premised on the right to communicate, which prioritises democratic discourse. That is comprised of three ingredients. Dialogue is the comprehensive and cumulative communication of democratic practice. Debate is about clarification of contending views and accommodation that is characteristic of compromise. Deliberation is about democratic decision making.

Democratic discourse is conducive for two interdependent arenas of democracy in communicative action: representative and participatory. European governance is based on representative democracy while developments in mediation refresh potential for participatory democracy. Representative democracy is keyed to collective interests while participatory democracy is keyed to individual interests. In practice both arenas depend to an important degree, although not exclusively, on communication practice that must be facilitated by PSM, given that its ethos is rooted in the principles of public service broadcasting [PSB]. That ethos has featured high commitment to universalism, democracy and culture for about 80 years.

Of course, private commercial media also play an important role, which accounts for the qualification that relevant communication prac-

tice is "not exclusively" the role of PSM. This is especially evident in the long and important role of newspapers, and more recently in competition in news services in electronic media as well. Although relations between public service and private commercial media are competitive, and ought to be in market terms, in the interests of democratic citizenship the historic pattern of antagonism isn't really useful and should be discouraged. That is, however, a separate topic that is not treated explicitly in this report because it falls outside the mandate. It is nonetheless important to observe that both sectors of Europe's dual media system are equally vital to the development of contemporary democratic practice in the context of a European information and knowledge society.

This report argues that facilitating democratic discourse as part of

the continual maturation of democratisation requires PSM to integrate linear broadcast and non-linear multimedia platforms because a platform portfolio is a viable solution for simultaneously satisfying society's interdependent needs for cohesion and pluralism. The PSM platform portfolio solution is here treated with reference to four defining paradoxes, of which the service paradox has particular importance.

As we shall see, the sharpening of interest in individual participation is linked to concerns about a democratic deficit and digital divide in Europe. The role of PSM is anchored in the still comparatively distinctive relevance of the PSB legacy emphasising universalism in both access and services. Ensuring access in non-linear media is of decisive importance to avoid a digital divide, while service range and quality are of continuing importance to reduce any democratic deficit. Both aspects find traction in the right to communicate as a civil right, indeed as a human right.

The rights and opportunities for individual participation are strongly supported in this report. But one must also recognise that in a democracy the individual is always situated in a social context. There is risk in overemphasising individual participation because this can legitimate the fragmentation of civil society. Moreover, every individual's capacity to participate is affected by constraints and opportunities which are socially constructed. This must be remembered in order to formulate appropriate policy and effective strategy for meeting participatory objectives.

The keen emphasis on the individual is not only a matter of scale but also a question of values linked with neo-liberal philosophy which favours an individualism that is tightly associated with consumer identity. This is an insufficient foundation for the citizen identity and role which requires ensuring that the freedom of each is compatible with the freedom of all. This is important for deciding what kinds of participation should be encouraged 1) in the media and 2) through the media. It is also important for understanding what types of participation are appropriate to PSM in their institutional role in the media-society ecology.

II. Towards a European public sphere

Democracy has made terrific strides in recent decades. In the mid-1970s about two-thirds of the world's states were characterised by authoritarian rule, compared with only about one-third today. Although democracy is on the increase, it remains a highly contested notion (Held, 2006). Democratic development since the mid-19th century has largely been a struggle over who should have citizenship and the rights incumbent with that. This struggle continues today in debates over immigrants and immigration. Democracy is always vulnerable, as evident in threats to civil liberties in the post-9/11 context. Vigilance is required to maintain democracy. Considerable effort and investment is required to develop democratisation.

Political malaise and the hope of e-democracy

The decisive question is simple to formulate but complicated to answer: what should democracy mean today? Most agree that democratic practice in Europe needs renewing and that prioritising participation is an aspect of decisive importance. The quickening of interest is connected with concerns about political malaise. Nieminen (2007a) convincingly demonstrated that interest in widening (and deepening) citizen participation motivates politicians who are worried that media are failing to properly inform citizens. The "blame game" following the failed 2005 EU constitutional referenda in the Netherlands and France illustrates the dynamics.

"Reactions from both the European Union and national elites were illuminating. First, the ignorant voter was blamed: People were misinformed and based their votes on illuminate causes. Second, the European Union's PR work was blamed, and the European Union was expected to further improve its image among the Europeans. Third, the media and journalists were blamed: They put too much emphasis on the negative sides of politics in general and of the European Union in particular".

(Nieminen, 2007a: 176).

Thus, European citizens presumably don't trust political elites because the media distributes no information at best or misinformation at worst, and political elites don't trust citizens because they are in turn either uninformed or misinformed.

There is also a worrisome disconnect between citizens and political elites; a trend that is worsening. Voter turnout for European Parliament elections has been in continuous decline since the late 1970s (*European Parliament Elections*, 2004). The steep decline in recent years is symptomatic of waning support for EU membership across member states. Figures from 2006 indicate that only slightly more than half now believe their country's membership is a good thing, and that less than half view the EU positively (Eurobarometer, 2006). The European public is disenchanted.

This has stimulated effort to develop EU communication policy as evident, for example, in *Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate* (2005) and the *White Paper on a European Communication Policy* (2006). In the 2006 white paper the European Commission is "proposing a fundamentally new approach - a decisive move away from one-way communication to reinforced dialogue, from an institution-centred to a citizen-centred communication". A relevant 2007 speech by Margo Wallström, the vice president of the Commission, highlighted the importance of a "European public sphere" and suggested that the starting point must be "citizens and their communication rights". In the same period, the Commission announced a three-step approach to "media pluralism" (*Media Pluralism*, 2007) which recognises that pluralism is not only about diverse operators but must also include citizen access to varied information needed for constructing public opinion.

Europe is investing to find solutions. In recent years relevant projects especially include:

- CIDEL: Citizenship and Democratic Legitimacy in Europe

- EUROSPHERE: Diversity and the European Public Sphere – Towards a Citizen's Europe
- IDNET: Europeanisation, Collective Identities and Public Discourses
- RECON: Reconstituting Democracy in Europe
- CINEFOGO: Network of Excellence: Civil Society and New Forms of Governance in Europe – the Making of European Citizenship

Prescriptions are typically keen to harness information and communication technology [ICT] to facilitate "e-democracy" via computer-media communications [CMC]. The e-democracy notion was already treated by Keane in 1991 before the Internet was widespread or at all mature. The infrastructure has now advanced and e-democracy is technically possible. The extent to which it is also socially probable depends on how policy navigates the often contradictory pressures of contemporary capitalism, with its emphasis on consolidation, globalisation and marketisation, and democracy, with its emphasis on representation, differentiation and communication.

Democracy, capitalism and EPS

The development of democracy has always required continual adjustment to the changing conditions which are associated with the increasing complexity of society. In contemporary Europe one driver of policy development is the abiding tension between the economic interests of transnational commerce, with emphasis on the European common market, and the political interests of citizenship, with diverse involvements encompassing local, national and European cultures (Bens, 2007). This tension is evident in the Amsterdam Protocol with its emphasis on the democratic, social and cultural role of PSB via "subsidiarity" on the one hand and its caveats about market competition on the other (Lowe & Hujanen, 2007). In political philosophy this tension is reflected in contrasts between liberal and progressive traditions.

In the liberal tradition the role of the state is to safeguard the rights and liberties of citizens. Thus, "the state is the burden individuals have to bear to secure their own ends… [and] must be restricted in scope and restrained in practice" (Held, 2006: 262). Progressive thought agrees about the role of safeguarding the rights and liberties of citizens but contends that ensuring democracy also requires economic actors to be "subject to procedures to ensure maximum accountability" (ibid). Here the role of the state is to secure "conditions whereby the free development of each is compatible with the free development of all" (ibid).

In the liberal tradition, democratic practice is keyed to elections. But neo-liberal ideology has increasingly framed voters as "consumers in a political marketplace". This can be problematic because "'citizen' implies active participation in civic affairs [while] 'consumer' implies the more private and passive role of material consumption. In democracies, citizens are in principle equal; in market economies, consumers are unequal, their access to commodities dependent on their purchasing power" (Hackett & Carroll, 2006: 70-71). Progressive thought privileges voters as citizens and supposes they not only have rights but also responsibilities, and that the two are interdependent. This doesn't always or necessarily follow in practice, however, and increasingly less so in a social context strongly emphasising the prerogatives of the individual (Harju, 2007).

The individualised and procedural view of democracy is familiar to the American tradition and was energised by Ronald Reagan in the 1980s with his faith in the "magic of the market". In contrast, the European progressive tradition, emphasising the public sphere and citizen identity (Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2007), is embedded in "communicative action" which requires equal positions among participants and depends on open access for citizens as the precondition for deliberative democracy (Habermas, 1987). Even critics (e.g. Dahlgren, 2003) agree that effort and investment are worthwhile because it isn't possible to build a European public sphere [EPS] without deliberative democracy. Nieminen's analysis (2006) insightfully identified four aspects of what EPS construction entails. Taken together these indicate that the public sphere today is a media-dependent and media-constructed space:

1. The EPS as an agora, a space open to every European citizen where critical debate takes place and public opinion is formed via established structures and procedures.

2. The EPS as the organisation of relationships between individuals and society which have been historically shaped and are socially conditioned.

3. The EPS as a supranational public sphere that is linked with but transcends national public spheres.

4. The EPS as all public representations that the European media produce.

In formative terms, the EPS has two dimensions (ibid). One dimension is "normative-prescriptive", which is mainly regulatory and whose key issues are about how best to create an institutional framework to guarantee inclusive participation in processes of public opinion formation. Public service media should be mandated to facilitate discourse that secures the diversity of opinion necessary for pluralistic representation in deliberations. The second dimension is "cultural-diagnostic", whose key issues are about constructing a shared European sensibility via discourse about what it means to be European. Here public service media also have a crucial role in capturing and circulating the stories people tell about who "we" are and what things mean, especially with regard to the interrogation of the national and the supranational.

Developing an EPS is especially challenging because the shared space available for public political process has sharply narrowed due to cumulative cutbacks in public resources as a product of neo-liberal policy. As public provision withers people have little choice but to rely on markets to satisfy their citizenship needs, no matter how imperfectly. In consequence, the progressive paradigm, with its emphasis on citizenship, was transformed in the latter part of the 20th century to feature what Giddens (1991) has usefully termed "life politics". Questions and issues that animate the practice of democracy by now accept little responsibility for either the design or tenor of public life. People define themselves more rarely and narrowly as citizens in a public sphere and most often and broadly as consumers in a marketplace. As Held (2006: 308) observed, "one of liberalism's central weaknesses is to… neglect the distorting nature of economic power in relation to democracy".

Two concerns of co-related importance are operative in considerations about the EPS – digital divide and democratic deficit. The right to communicate provides the ethical premise necessary for policy redressing these limitations in order to widen the individual participation needed to construct an EPS.

III. Digital divide, democratic deficit and the right to communicate

Any "digital divide" implicitly signals a neglect of universalism in the provision of access to new media. This especially impacts those who are already disadvantaged by economic or social status, and quite often both. The policy framework that established broadcasting as a system mandating universal access has not yet been as strongly or unequivocally embraced in the diffusion of non-linear media. Coinciding with this is critical concern about a democratic deficit wherever a government agency has not been 1) sufficiently accountable to the public and/or 2) citizen input has not been facilitated, or even especially welcome. These issues are pivotal to the future of democracy in Europe and find traction in the right to communicate.

Concerns about the digital divide feature three phases of research (Livingstone, 2005). In the late 1990s concern focused on Internet access with a nearly exclusive emphasis on technology. At the global level this concern was primarily keyed to economic implications, which was also predominant at the national level but more often also linked with social interest. A second phase began in the early 2000s when research found that gaps weren't only in infrastructure and that even with technological development they either did not narrow, or only narrowed slowly.

Further investigation focused on the attributes of access to reveal a greater complexity of gaps across platforms (e.g. not only the Internet per se, but also in access to computers, mobile phones, DTV, etc.), in quality as a function of capacity (dial-up, coaxial cable, broadband), and the variety and constancy of opportunities for access (from home, work, public libraries, etc.). The need for equality was thereby deepened with more nuanced understandings about equity. This stimulated a raft of community-based projects in efforts to reach the marginalised. "Frustratingly, however, the many and valiant attempts to collate and share best practices and lessons learned were undermined by the difficulties encountered. These initiatives proved highly resource intensive, uncertain as to their purpose, often underused, and difficult to sustain" (Livingstone, 2005: 9).

Frustration ushered in the third phase where the current emphasis is on "digital inclusion" with close focus on the social contexts of use, peoples' motivation and objectives, and issues related to "digital literacy" – typically referenced as "competencies". As Warschauer (2003: 201) concluded, there is growing agreement that "social context, social purpose and social organisation are critical in efforts to provide meaningful information and communication technology access".

As noted, these worries about the digital divide are supplemented by concerns about a "democratic deficit," which many hope e-democracy will help resolve. There is as yet no generally agreed definition of e-democracy. Kakabadse et al. (2003) identified four models (also discussed by Tuzzi et al., 2007). One model is essentially bureaucratic, as it focuses on service delivery and management practices. A second is technocratic, as it focuses on information management and the technical infrastructure. A third is populist, as it focuses on what citizens prefer and how they are enabled. The fourth model is civil because it focuses on openness in the conduct of political processes. The first two emphasise ICT (technology) while the latter two emphasise CMC (communication). The differences are mainly in whether participation is primarily focused on the delivery of services or the facilitation of dialogue. Both aspects are relevant because space can't be public without communication channels, processes and resources (Splichal, 2007). Democratic life depends on public spaces where citizens congregate to exercise their civic interests. Today this increasingly means meeting in virtual spaces to belong to actual communities (Fenton, 2007).

The concern of critics is that PSB companies have often been focused on transmission rather than communication, and that they have his-

torically been top-down in social orientation (see Jakubowicz, 2006 and also Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2007). Clearly, the historic PSB template must be updated for the PSM context. The private sector has also been criticised here for sacrificing the wider needs of democratic society to the profit-related needs of commercial enterprise and for prioritising groups that are attractive to advertisers while neglecting those that are not (McChesney, 2008; Moe, 2007; *Can the Market Deliver?*, 2005). The normative basis for European media policy is thus highly relevant to governing the dynamics of media-society ecology of this dual media system as a whole, and not only in respective parts or sectors.

The right to communicate

Nieminen (2007b) distinguishes three regulatory approaches in EU media policy.

Common market principle on the normative basis of competition law. This approach has been characteristic of the telecommunications sector. In this view, regulatory intervention is only legitimate in order to block a monopoly position.

Freedom of speech principle on the basis of *laissez-faire* philosophy. This approach has been characteristic of the print sector. All public intervention is considered negative because it is associated with censorship and it interferes with self-regulating free markets.

Public service principle on the basis of a universalism mandate. This approach has been characteristic of the broadcasting sector. Policy intervention is needed to redress "market failure", but must be constrained to ensure editorial autonomy.

The right to communicate is the normative basis for media policy supporting participation in democratic discourse and is a proper foundation for renewal of the public service mission in that role. Of the three approaches, the right to communicate rests comfortably in the second and third principles, and is arguably most complete in the public service principle, given the required emphasis on its public complexion there. In so far as the focus is squarely on citizenship and the potential for widening individual and collective participation in democratic practice, it is least emphasised in the common market principle – the approach for telecommunications policy which mainly involves newer and non-linear media.

The Council of Europe has taken the lead in efforts to extend the public service principle to new media in order to redress this potential imbalance. This is crucial in conceptualising the public service platform portfolio solution. The Council's position is in sync with broader trends among civil society organisations worldwide where consensus is emerging about the core principles of communication rights (Tuzzi et al., 2007) which have been summarised as:

- Freedom: of expression, of thought, of assembly.

- Inclusion/Access: to media, to information, to networks.

- Diversity/Pluralism: in culture, in language, in media.

- Participation: for cultural life, for media discourse, for political process.

Only participation can guarantee the other three. Participation is also the principle that most challenges the development of PSM. As Jakubowicz (2006) and Lowe (2008) argue, participation is necessary to develop the character of partnership that is essential for PSM in practice.

Democratic discourse and democratisation

Democratic discourse is comprised of three categories of public communication: dialogue, debate and deliberation. Collectively, they enact the continual construction of the public sphere, and thus are constituent requirements for an EPS. Dialogue is about discussing, debate is about arguing, and deliberation is about deciding. Citizens need robust opportunities for engaging in all three. The degree to which these are both facilitated and protected is one performance indicator for the maturity of any proclaimed democratic society. Where any of the three is limited, the public character of society is constrained and its democracy is correspondingly immature.

The important role that media have in democratic discourse, and especially public service media, was recognised in the MacBride Report, submitted to UNESCO in 1980. That group of experts declared that media have duties to ensure:

1. That the individual becomes an active partner rather than a mere object of communication.

2. That the variety of messages exchanged increases.

3. That the extent and quality of social representation and participation in communication are augmented.

The first duty implies, in particular, participation, while duties two and three are attuned with the principles of inclusion/access and diversity/pluralism. These duties are relevant to guarantee and develop democratic maturity in Europe.

Nieminen (2007b: 13) is encouraged by a growing consensus over a European policy framework with regard to four essential elements. These may be considered as principle dimensions of the right to communicate and serve to illustrate both the need for a PSM mandate in this regard, and challenges for development facing PSM as a consequence of such a mandate.

1. The right to information, which is related to the factuality and

accuracy of public representations.

2. The right to orientation, which is related to pluralism and diversity of publicly offered and available opinions.

3. The right to social and cultural community, which is related to the availability of rich variety in cultural representations, including those in art and entertainment.

4. The right to self-expression, which is related to guaranteed access for channels and platforms where people as citizens can be seen and heard, and will be listened to.

Public service broadcasting has demonstrated its crucial role in conditioning European social practice in the ongoing construction of democratisation as a cornerstone in this project, broadly construed, throughout the post-war period. Today this has obvious relevance in eastern Europe, but also right across Europe, given the erosion of tolerance and resistance to inclusiveness (Bilefsky, 2007; Jauert & Lowe, 2005). European society is grappling with a volatile mixture of individualism, fragmentation, consumerism, erosion of the public sphere and the marketisation of public institutions which are essential in order to concretise the public sphere principle in practice.

“Media organisations have a vital role to play not just in democracy as such but also in the much needed project of deepening or democratizing our democracies. This unavoidably requires a repositioning of the media organisations in their relation to their publics. Although much has been said (and rightly so) about the active audience, a lot of barriers between the media and the public persist, unnecessarily reducing the level of audience activity in terms of access and participation. Communication rights contribute to this new and more intense relation between media organisations and their pub-

lics, whereby these media can become democratic gate openers rather than gate-keepers”.

(Cammaerts and Carpentier, 2007: xv).

In its heritage, PSB have, by nearly every measure, done a commendable job in serving the societal needs for the first element (information) and also increasingly well, since the early to mid-1980s, with regard to the second (orientation). The keen challenges for developing PSM, especially with regard to its role in widening individual participation, lie in satisfying the needs for community and self-expression. The inherited institutional framework is ill-suited to achieving this, due to the tendency towards insularity, a character of self-absorption, and an attribute of source-centred arrogance. There is much to be done and a long road yet to travel in order to achieve PSM maturity. Arguably, in addition, PSB as PSM will not satisfy the comprehensive needs for society. In this regard it is useful to note the importance of community media because this has obvious relevance to any discussion about the right to communicate, democratisation, and public participation in and through media.

This report was commissioned to investigate the role of public service media in promoting individual participation in democracy. The thrust of argumentation suggests the centrality of the extant PSB institutional framework as one guarantor of universal access, availability and comprehensive services via the development of PSM in order to directly serve the democratic, social and cultural needs of European society – as agreed in the Amsterdam Protocol (1997) and highlighted in the recent Council of Europe recommendations (2007). This report alludes to a second leg in referencing the importance of private commercial media because these sectors

(public and private) comprise the European dual media system.

But there is in fact a “third leg” that needs to be acknowledged, even though it is not a primary focus of the present report. Community media [CM] have recognised importance in facilitating citizen participation in media and through media, especially at the local level where political life has practical application. The role and importance of CM are recognised in policy deliberation, most recently in a study commissioned by the European Parliament concerning the condition of community media in the EU (cited as European Parliament, 2007). The importance of community media was also acknowledged (as “minority media”) at the European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy in 2005 (Council of Europe, 2005).

An insightful treatment of the complexion of community media as a viable third leg and for the democratic development of society was provided by Carpentier, Lie and Servaes (2003). Analyses reveal the often unnecessarily competitive stance that PSB have taken with CM. One should also review the recent discussion about media in relation to civil society by Hamelink and Nordensteng (2007). We will not deal with community media explicitly in this report because they are outside the stipulated purview. But that is not to imply that community media are unimportant. One is inclined to suggest that PSM ought in fact to be highly co-operative because CM are a vibrant aspect of popular participation in media, and thus of practical importance in securing the public partnership and nurturing democratisation, as discussed throughout this report. Building alliances with community media is one important implication of Recommendation 6 at the conclusion of this report.

IV. PSM and the media–society ecology

Public service media are part of a complex media industry and situated today in a thoroughly market-driven context. Although these companies are non-profit organisations, they are held to high standards, frequently with stricter controls, and are increasingly expected to adapt the logic and practices of the wider market-driven media industry (Born, 2004; Lowe & Alm, 1997). We shall treat this in later discussion about paradoxes in public service media. PSM are increasingly the most indigenous domestic national actor in European electronic media, as a result of transnational consolidation where fewer and bigger commercial companies own the private media sector everywhere. That is crucial when thinking about what media in Europe can do because it implies that PSM matters to the development of electronic media for both the range of services and the character of objectives, and thus matters to the quality of democratic life.

Media–society relations are reflexive. This is evident in three traits: 1) media have a high capacity to impact other fields, 2) media are vulnerable to influence from political and economic fields, and 3) media boundaries are porous and contested (Hackett & Carroll, 2006: 38). Although much contemporary discussion about media and society is focused on technology and commerce, the media field is essentially social and increasingly systemic (Lowe & Bardoel, 2007; Lowe & Jauert, 2005).

Inside PSM the evidence of this reflexivity is seen in the development of on-demand services and customer-focused strategies, organisational restructuring to become content-based rather than media-centric, the prioritisation of branding, and the development of accountability mechanisms that include service contracts and performance indicators. All of this comes in response to changing competitive conditions and regulatory demands. The development of PSM similarly influences the private sector, as evident, for example, in the ways that PSB news continues to benchmark content standards (Jakubowicz, 2007) and the degree to which PSM online services are accessed in most markets (EBU, 2007). This condition of thorough reflexivity is also evident in blurring boundaries between media platforms: increasingly, broadcasting is done over the Internet via streaming while podcasts mimic radio and Flash software encourages the televisuality of websites.

Reflexive interdependence is equally evident in social influences. Radio and television remain the essential electronic mass media, even if the scale is changing as thematic channels and niche services proliferate. At the same time, non-linear channels and services cater to highly segmented groups. So while broadcasting continues to serve society in ways that ultimately benefit individuals, non-linear channels serve individuals in ways that benefit society. This illustrates the social grounding of today's media–society ecology and explains, by implication, why PSB must become PSM. The rationale is societal and developmental.

Figure 2: PSM in the media–society ecology

Based on YLE 2006 Strategy and Development
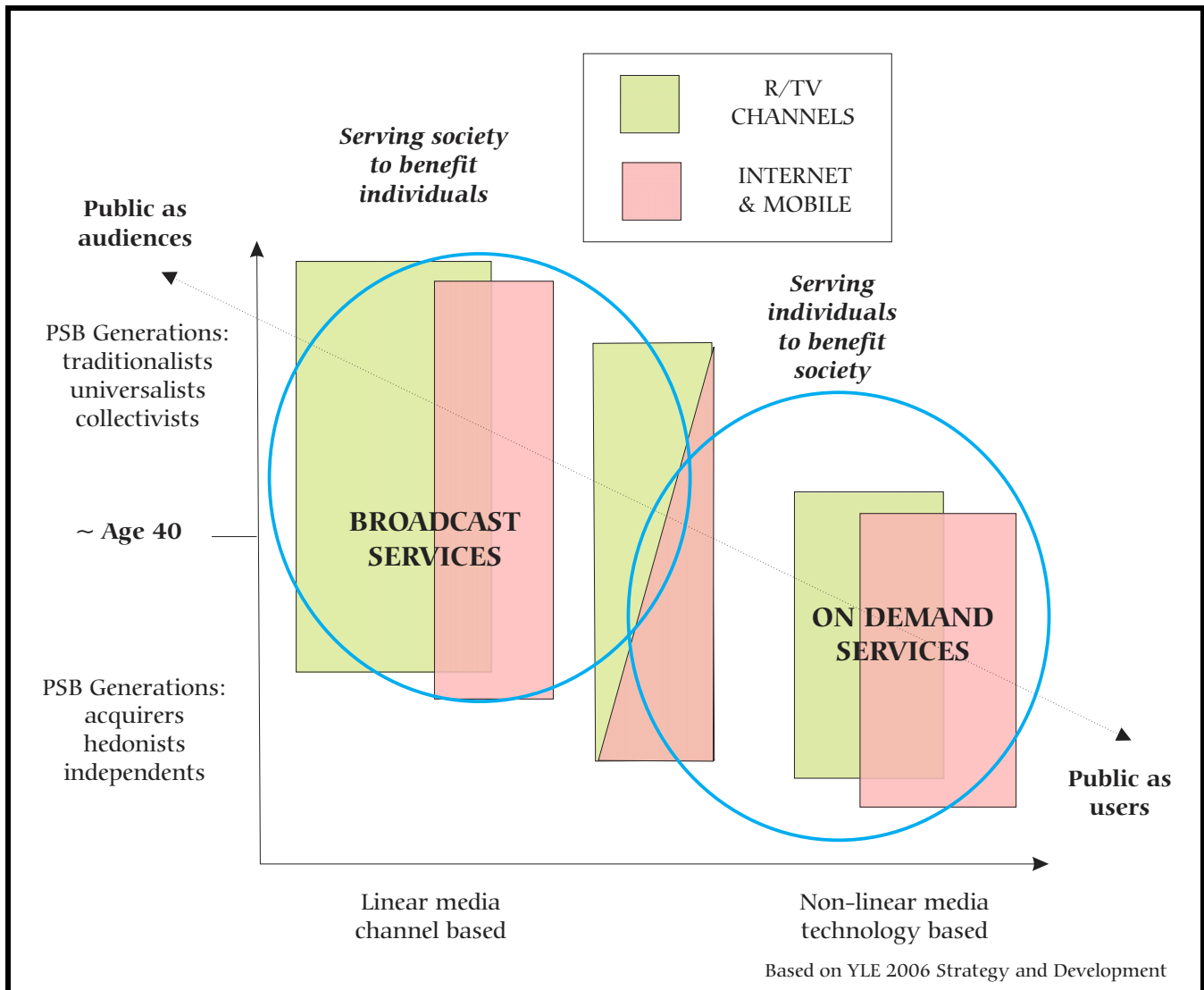
This encourages recognition that people use a mixture of media for a variety of needs and desires, as long recognised by research in "media systems dependency theory" (see Ball-Rokeach, 1985). Of course, the ingredients and proportions vary, but for example traditionalists (who tend to be aged 40+) use on-demand services for shopping, personal banking and to check investment performance while hedonists (who tend to be under 40) watch television and listen to the radio. Of course there are generational differences found in comparative proportions of use and also in gaps, especially related to gender and socioeconomic status. But recent research from EurActive (2005) and the Pew Center (Horrigan, 2007) indicate that such gaps are narrowing, even if slowly and with much further to go. The same appears to be happening with regard to earlier gaps in rural versus urban contexts, at least in the UK (Allen, 2008). The trends encourage the view that in the near future everyone will use everything, although of course to differing degrees, in flexible combinations, and only provided that universalism is guaranteed.

However dazzling the glitter of new media, one should not get carried away. Radio and television still outstrip Internet use in populations as a whole by a factor of something like 20 to 1 (Chester & Larson, 2002) and many of the most visited Internet sites are provided by radio and television broadcasting companies – with PSM sites often among the top 10 in each domestic context (see EBU, 2007). In Britain and elsewhere PSM companies are the leading promoters of online democratic discourse in large part because doing so complements their historic mission and is still obligatory in their mandates (McNair & Hibberd, 2003). Right across Europe, PSB providers encourage viewers and listeners to go online for a variety of PSM participatory activities and services, typically without surcharge.

Internet growth and the public interest

Because it became pervasive so quickly it is easy to forget that the Internet is still quite new. Hypertext was only invented in 1989 and the first client browser was launched in 1991. It wasn't until Microsoft released Explorer in 1995 that the Internet became widely used by business, and it was only in the late 1990s that diffusion achieved mass scale. Despite its newness, the Internet, and especially the web, has enjoyed phenomenal growth. According to the European Broadcasting Union (EBU, 2007) the number of people logging on nearly doubled every year in the late 1990s and the volume of worldwide users today is approaching 1.2 billion. Europe is the second biggest market after the Asia-Pacific region.

The Internet is a diverse package of information and communication technologies which include the web, email, e-commerce, chat rooms, blogs, podcasts and P2P file sharing. It is by now an ubiquitous medium due to its centrality in complex systems of co-ordination, control and communication [3C] in banking, law enforcement, military defence, health care, credit transactions, etc. (Livingstone, 2005). It is vital that media policy acts decisively in the public's interest with emphasis on democracy and its essential practices now when a "dependency path" is being established (Winston, 1998). Early policy sets the path of dependencies by establishing precedents that are fundamental to the long-term social shaping of technology (see MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999).

This is especially urgent because ownership of the non-linear environment in both sites and services has narrowed as the medium has grown. Five to seven years ago the range and variety of operators was much wider than today. Now, the Internet is increasingly dominated by a few powerful and wealthy commercial companies – predominantly Fox, Viacom and Time-Warner (EBU, 2007). This mirrors broader trends investigated by Miller (2002) who found that the top 10 global media firms (which include Bertelsmann, News Corp, and Time-Warner) could be construed as "cartels" because they control the majority of media properties worldwide. In the past three years these international conglomerates have invested huge sums to develop their online presence as the centrepiece of corporate expansion strategies. The biggest firms are now growing their competitive success through the acquisition of popular and previously independent social networking services. For example, Fox Interactive Media grew by a stunning 277% in only one year on the back of their 2005 acquisition of MySpace for $770 million in cash.

This is an accelerating trend because ownership of popular Internet properties is now understood as crucial for growing brand valuation and extending market reach. The top 10 Internet sites now reach about 90% of users worldwide, with three properties dominating globally. Google, Microsoft and Yahoo! enjoy a monthly reach of about 60% of all Internet users worldwide. Google is the number one Internet property. Its recent growth has been fuelled by the 2006 acquisition of YouTube, purchased for $1.65 billion.

Clearly, Web 2.0 is only partly about social networking. This phenomenon is as much about commodity as community. In the absence of PSM there is a danger that the non-linear frontier will become an entirely commodified settlement, even in community-related services. That problem is already hinted in recent reports about user dissatisfaction with MySpace (Stone, 2007a & 2007b). Of course, commercial actors should be encouraged to invest and develop in non-linear media, and they should reap profits for doing so. Their involvement is crucial in both media development and service development. The scale of investment is good for consumers, media industries, and economies.

But it would be a mistake to neglect the equally legitimate and vital interests in wider public terms. These are democratic, social and cultural needs of people as citizens that can only be handled through the media, and these public interest needs may not be economically profitable; indeed they often cannot be done even at cost. Such services simply will not be fulfilled if the media-society ecology is exclusively – or even overwhelmingly – driven by the profit motive and focused mainly on competitive dynamics. Wise media policy will properly balance private enterprise and the public interest to guarantee next-generation development of this uniquely European dual media system. The great advance of the European media-society ecology is that competition here is not only between channels and across platforms, as is the case everywhere, but also between two sectors with different motives, objectives and priorities for media operation.

Facilitating public access to electronic media and securing high quality production of content have been fundamental to the PSB remit since the birth of public service radio in the 1920s. Access to new media is more variable for three reasons (McNair & Hibberd, 2003). First, the new media environment is market based and market driven without nearly the degree of emphasis on public interest that characterised the development of European broadcasting. This lag is, secondly, because new media development in access and availability depends on costly investment in building infrastructure which today requires a multisectoral approach together with the telecommunications industry. That is increasingly complicated due to competitive interest over content ownership and copyrights. Thirdly, development of new media is happening when the financial situation inside PSM is strained.

V. PSM services today

Despite the complexity, PSM companies are doing a lot to promote, facilitate and develop services that support citizens' democratic needs. Space does not permit detailed or exhaustive examination and there are dozens of possible examples at least as good as those offered. The examples serve to illustrate PSM's role in democracy, with emphasis on participation and PSM's broader role in nurturing democratisation. The summary importance of these examples informs the conceptual model reviewed in the next section of the report, as well as the platform portfolio solution. The examples are organised in five summary categories treated in turn:

1. Information;
2. Facilitation;
3. Collaboration;
4. Democratisation;
5. Mobilisation.

Information

Every PSM company provides news across platforms. News is a vital service to democracy that is of deep PSB heritage and broad continuing importance. Of course, news services are very familiar. But it is crucial to observe that PSM news is uniquely positioned to cast an equally critical eye on economic actors as well as political actors due to their non-profit status, in so far as public funding and editorial independence are secure. Where commercial media also exclusively dominate news provision there is evidence of neglect and avoidance of commercially sensitive issues (visit the websites for MediaLens, News-Watch and Project Censored, as cited in the references).

On-demand archives of previously broadcast material present an aspect of great importance in this category of PSM services. This is in development practically everywhere. YLE's Living Archives (Elävä Arkisto) in Finland, pictured below, is a good example (www.yle.fi/elavaarkisto). The company's editorial staff organises historic material in topical categories that users can review and explore as they wish. It is thus a knowledge-generating experience and not a purely informative one. Many PSM companies have the longest histories and deepest archives in their respective countries due to decades of monopoly operation before liberalisation beginning in the 1980s. Considerable investment has been under way for about 10 years to digitise the vast catalogues of archived material and this project will continue for years to come. Such services link radio and television programmes, and national cultural and social heritage, in both current and historic terms, with on-demand services via company websites.
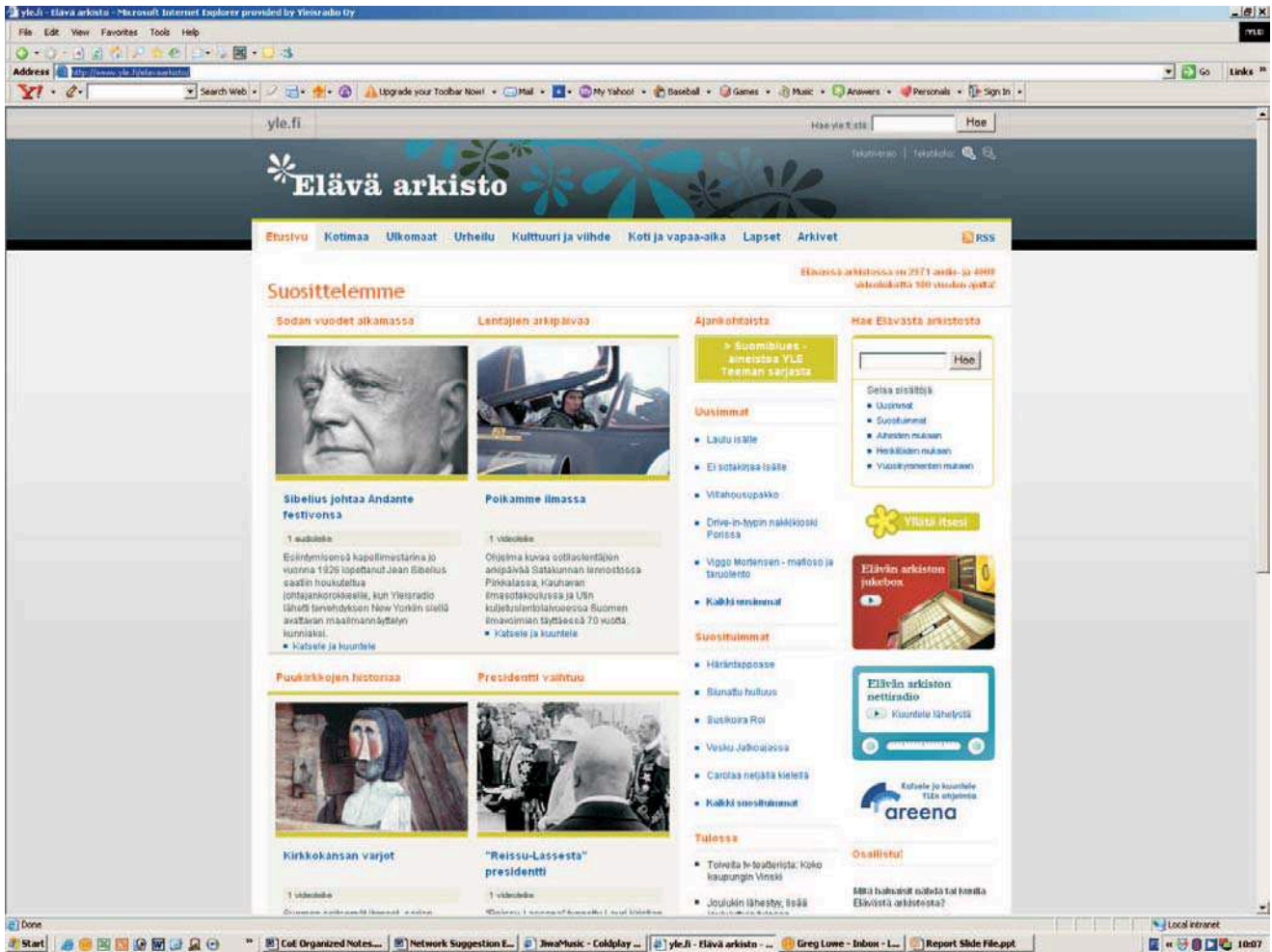
Full scale coverage and in-depth information is a third aspect in this category. The idea is to organise content that is currently in the news in combination with historic materials to give users robust opportunities to develop a deeper understanding beyond the transitory surface story. BBC 4, the radio talk and current affairs channel in the UK, produces the *Today* programme which is a good example, in this case linking radio and the Internet (www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today). The *Today* website is the legacy of an earlier popular programme strand called *The Great Debate* (1999-2003) which provided dialogue about news items especially focused on civic issues. The *Today* version features an issue of the day, typically related to national or international political concerns that affect Britain. The online site includes an archive of past issues and an overview of the issue currently under debate. This is a typical PSM service. Also increasingly typical, *Today* offers participants an opportunity to influence the radio programme's substance and approach via their questions and input, and by suggesting issues for future programmes. Such examples could also be treated under the Collaboration category. This is important to observe because much that PSM are doing is multidimensional – it is explicitly cross-platform and cross genre. Although this example links PSM radio and the Internet, the case is also relevant to television programming where similar formats are common.

Radio Slovenia offers a useful example to illustrate PSM efforts in providing a distinctive service within traditional broadcast media and not only in the new media context. In the *Europe in Person!* programme strand the producers search out people across Europe who give voice and personality to the rich variety and ordinariness of life in Europe today. The programme works to lower boundaries in perceptions by working across borders in representation. Much emphasis in the 12- to 15-minute features is placed on exploring individuals' views on Europe and ideas about different European societies.

Facilitation

A range of services offered by PSM companies enable individuals to learn new things of personal relevance. These services facilitate deepening of insight and securing enlightenment in ways that are educative rather than educational. An educational approach is the historic lecturing model or transmission

model, while an educative approach is interactive and communication-based (Lukács, 2007).

The election engine system is a common example in PSM. The election engine enables citizens to discover which candidates most closely represent their personal views and interests. Candidates fill out a questionnaire which users later fill out as well and then click on a dialogue button. The "machine", which is a software programme, compares the user's answers to each of the candidates standing for election and reveals the "distance" between the user and the candidates.

A different angle is evident in an online service offered by Slovenia's RTV – *Odprti kop* (www.rtvslo.si/odprtikop). Translated as "Datamining", the service enables each individual user to investigate topics of personal interest to learn about issues in the news or relevant to the public sphere. This is essentially a specialised search engine programme that functions on the basis of closed captioning subtitles and video streams.

Another example is provided by DR, the Danish public service media company, which has been developing online games with a distinctly public service character. In 2006 DR

hosted a competition and the top four winners are available at www.dr.dk/Spilkonkurencen (pictured below). *Værdikampen* ("The battle between values") is related to a controversial political issue in Denmark (the right-wing government declared war on progressive values). Players learn what the values are and where they personally stand in relation to them. Another game establishes a dilemma and two players work through the implications. Other games encourage users to analyse political spin in publicity clips and statements. DR is developing similar games for future parliamentary elections.
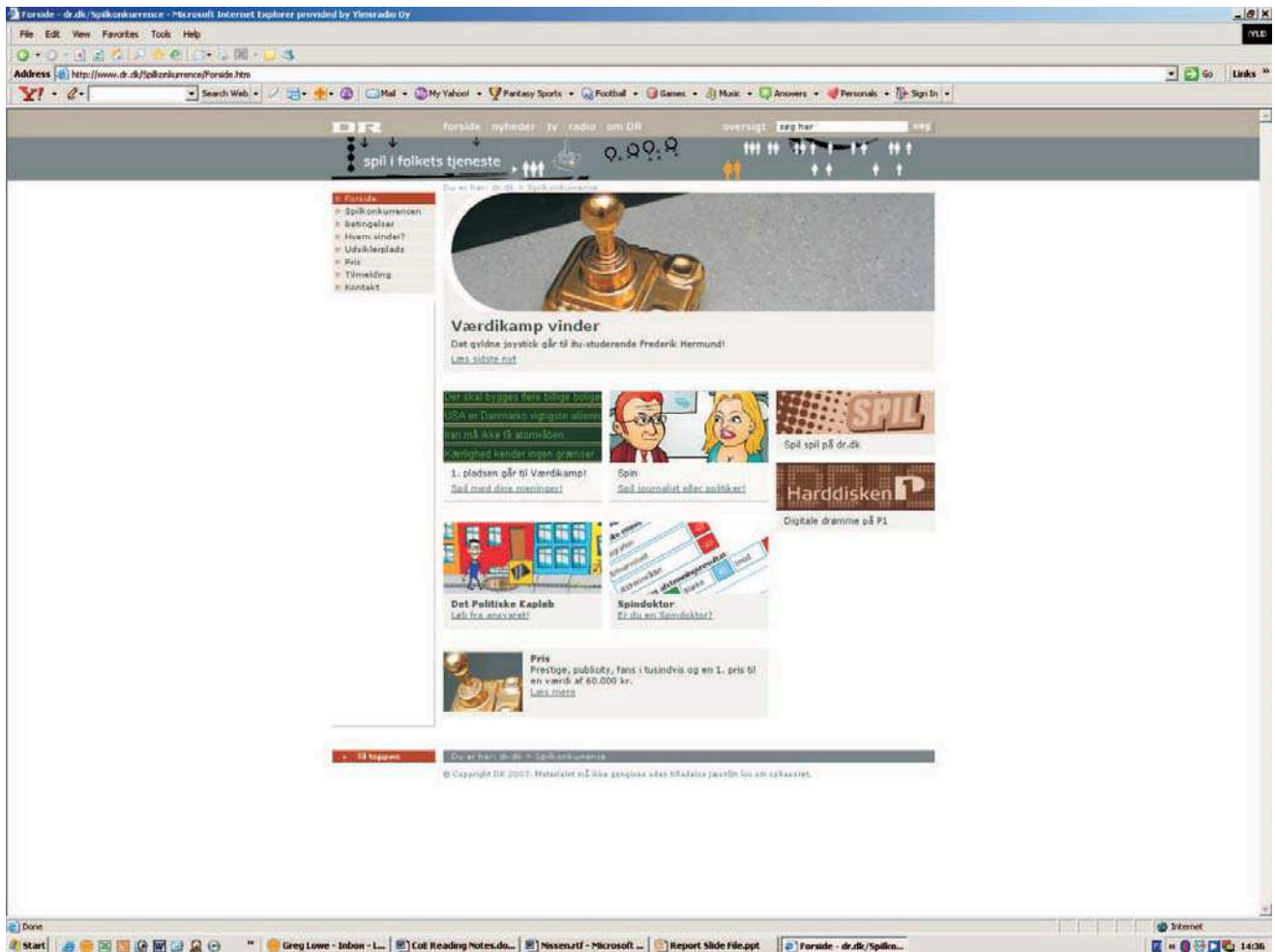
Another relevant example of game-orientated play in PSM efforts to facilitate insight is Latvia's "Latvijas Televizija" (www.ltv1.lv/lat/forums). Topical questions are posed online and people participate by offering answers. The results are assessed and provided as summary information. The answers open new opportunities for discovery. One recent topical question was "what kind of Latvia do you want to live in 25 years from now?"

A final example is the *Citizenship Assimilation Test* that was a national television show produced by Teleac/NOT, the educational public broadcasting foundation in the Netherlands. People participated at home via the Internet in taking the national test that immigrants must pass as a requirement for Dutch citizenship (www.nationaleinburgeringtest.nl). Dutch citizens got a clear idea of what the government has defined as essential to become a citizen, and with what necessary

understanding of Dutch values and culture. The test was so popular that more than a million visitors took it in 2005. The results raised so much reaction that Teleac/NOT forwarded the thousands of responses to the responsible ministry and have kept the site live. The interesting result was that a majority of Dutch participants failed to pass. The programme and the site generated public debate on the meaning and usefulness of this type of exam.

Collaboration

Web 2.0 describes the development of social networking online. A host of such services are popular today, especially YouTube, Flickr, MySpace and Facebook. Less often remarked but of keen importance for constructing democratic discourse are social networking services offered by PSM companies that integrate broadcast and online services in connection with user-created content of thematic interest.

A fascinating development is underway at ARTE, the Franco-German PSM operator (pictured below). In ARTE radio (www.arteradio.com) this PSM provider uses the creative commons licensing approach to all content. Especially interesting is the open platform nature of the enterprise. Listeners are producers and can submit material which is posted on the site. ARTE offers the space and the contents are posted with the ambition of building a community partnership between user-created content producers and ARTE radio's own work and production. Amazingly, the operator is able to do this with 3.5 employees and a reported budget of €175 000 annually (Gire, 2007).
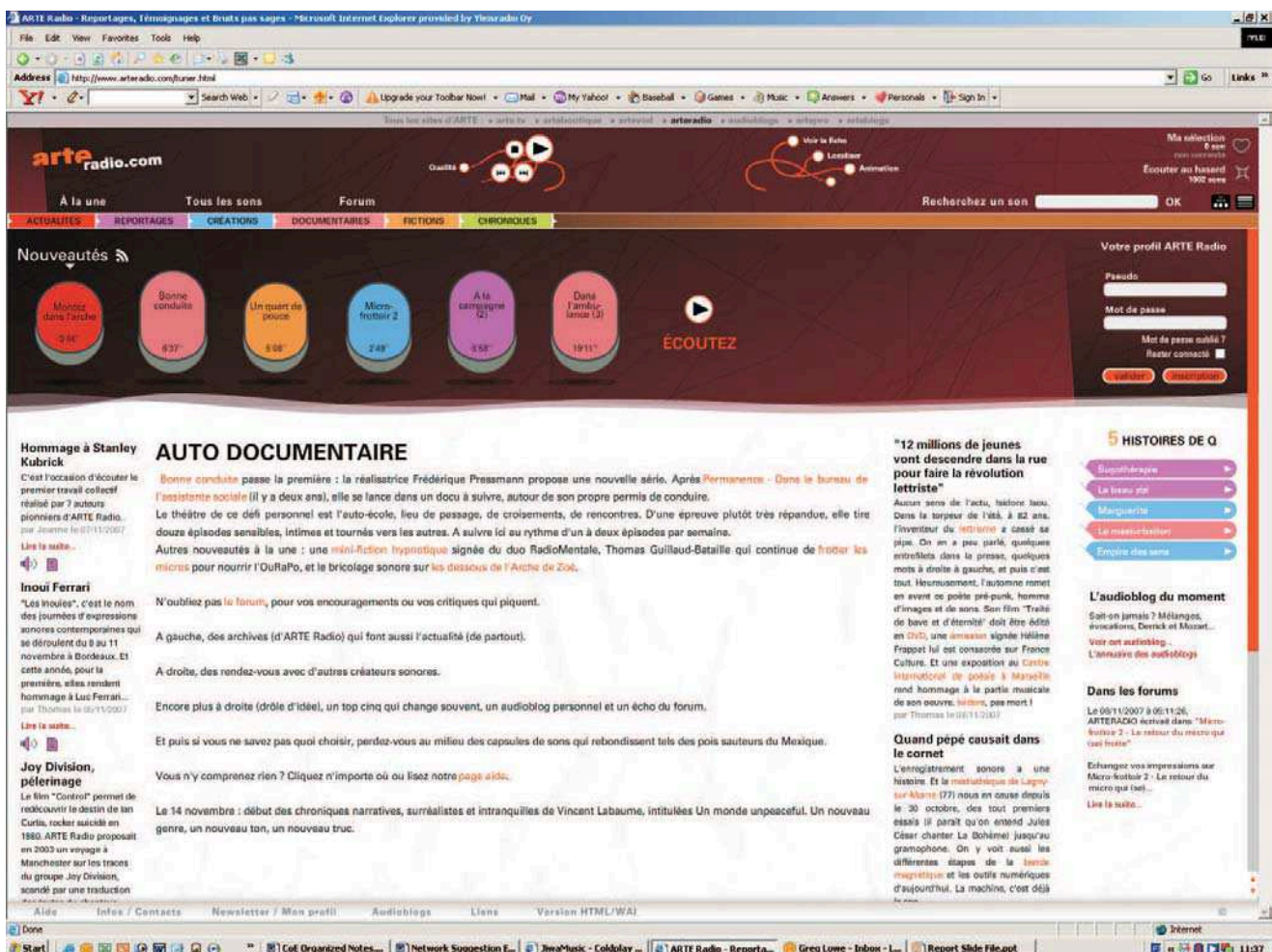
A related example of a PSM web 2.0 production in association with television and using archive material, was the BBC's Creative Archive project in 2006 (http://creativearchive.bbc.co.uk). Although assessment appears to still be under way, the thrust of the project was fascinating, as participants could access archived BBC materials specifically designated for their use in personal productions. This experiment was on the cutting edge of what is often referred to as "remix culture" and was very popular. It will be interesting to see how this type of exciting collaborative approach can be developed further for promoting individual participation both in and through the media.

As earlier observed in our discussion about the BBC4 *Today* programme, there are many examples of ways that PSM companies are

incorporating public opinion, personal observations, and categorical analyses to inform and to steer the substance of content production in radio and television programmes. All such efforts are about enabling collaboration. It is important to understand that, although this happens quite generally in broadcast production today, outside of PSM it is often in conjunction with "reality" productions such as the commercial entertainment hit, *Big Brother*. In PSM it is more often focused on civic interests through current affairs programming.

Democratisation

The role of PSM is not only in promoting individual participation with regard to a specific issue or in a particular situation, as important as that is. The role of PSM is of even broader importance in supporting the ongoing project of democratisation which nurtures perspectives, routines and involvements that construct democracy in society.

One excellent example of what PSM are doing here is in the *Why Democracy?* project (www.whydemocracy.net), pictured below. *Why Democracy?* is a collaborative production of public service broadcasters from across Europe and around the world. These include the BBC (UK), DR (Denmark), YLE (Finland), ZDF (Germany), SBS (Australia), SABC (South Africa), ARTE (Franco-German) NHK (Japan), and many more. This is about growing public interest and stimulating public involvement in democracy today. This initiative is supported by the EBU (EuroVision), the Danish Film Institute, the Ford Foundation, Sundance Institute in the USA, and many others. In October 2007, 10 one-hour films that focus on contemporary democracy were broadcast in what is reportedly the world's largest ever factual media event. These can now be viewed online and there is ample opportunity to join in dialogue and debate. More than 40 broadcasters are participating with an estimated audience of 300 million viewers. Each participating broadcaster will produce a locally based season of film, radio, debate and discussion to tie in with the global broadcast of the *Why Democracy?* documentary films. This will result in 20 short films dealing with personal, political and rights issues around the theme "What does democracy mean to me?"
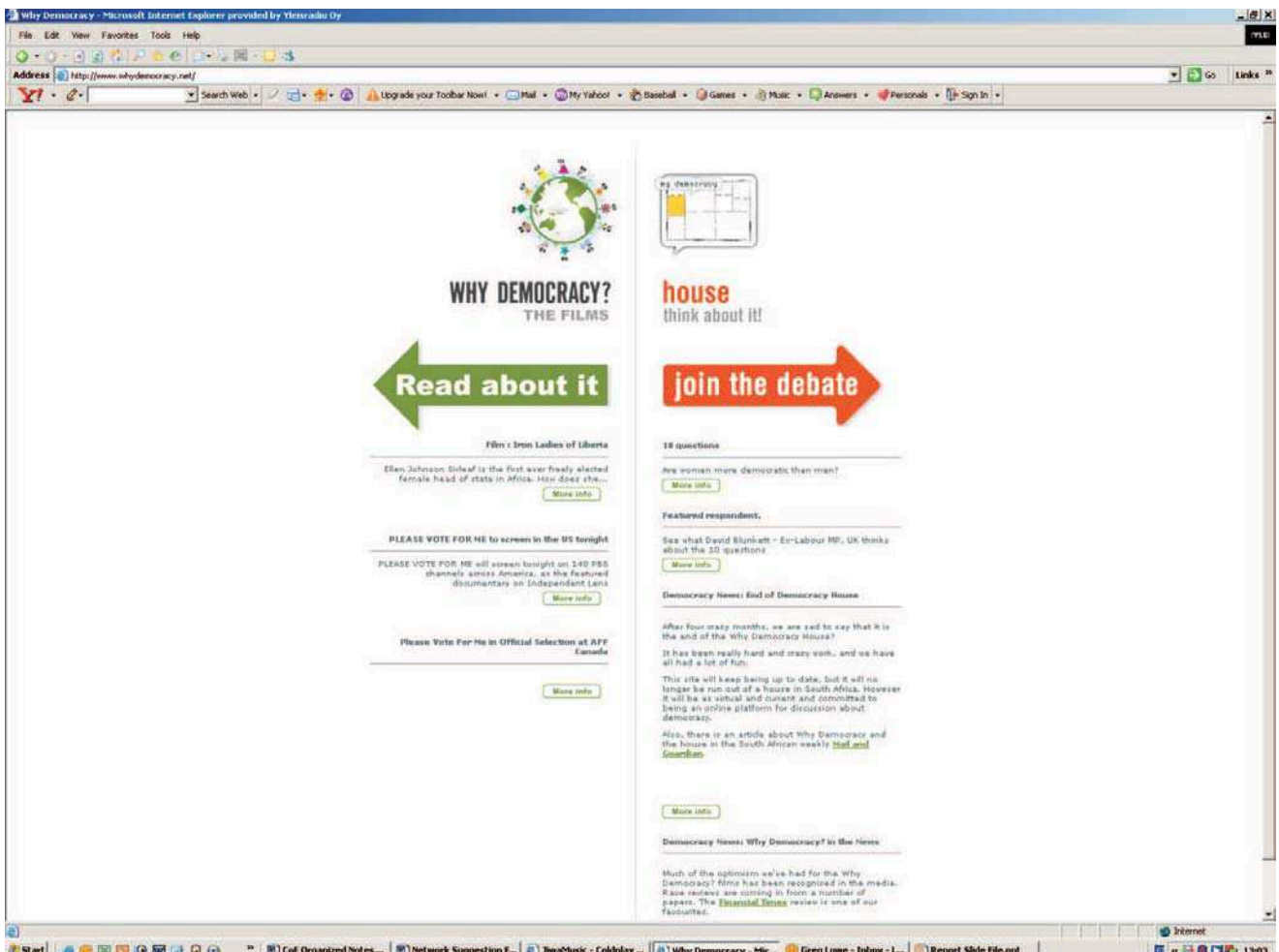
This international project is large scale and long term. It is also important that the funding and production represent a viable example of civil society organisations working co-operatively. Given the scope and scale

of this initiative, it would be unlikely to work without the institutional framework provided by PSM with its emphasis on democracy.

There are many PSM projects of smaller scale, ongoing practice and with a domestic emphasis. Among these are various programme strands offered for children. Such pro-grammes and services feature news and information designed to nurture an appreciation for democracy. A good example is *Logos!*, a daily pro-duction by the German PSM operator ZDF. It provides news for children with lots of explanation and back-ground information at an appropriate language level and in a way that is suitable to their interests. Users can see a streamed podcast of "logo" in the ZDFmediathek section at *www.zdf.de*. Research has found that adults also use the service because the producers present complicated subjects in easy-to-understand ways.

Mobilisation

The last category to be treated focuses on services that assist citizens in personal efforts to be activists with regard to social movements and involvement. This is a new frontier so there aren't many examples yet. But one very good example is provided by the BBC.

The BBC's Action Network (*www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnet-work/*) service provides advice and tools to people who want to run campaigns on (mostly) local concerns. Action Network producers leverage the BBC's television and radio networks to publicise the range of self-organising groups who use its database to store documents and communicate via messages and email alerts. The service maintains distance from government and is careful not to endorse particular campaigns or be directly involved.
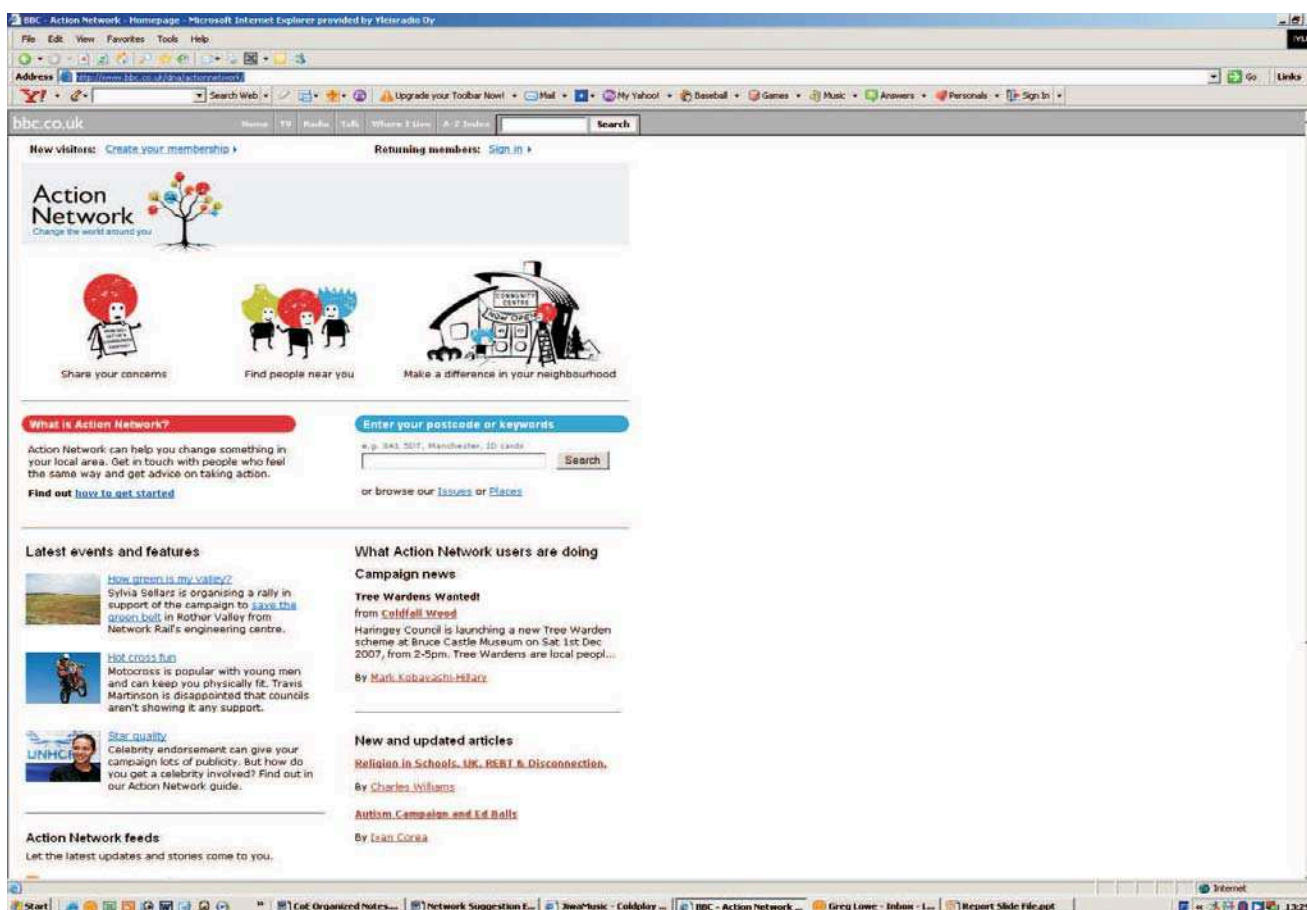
VI. The role of PSM for democratic participation

The examples demonstrate that much of democracy in practice is communication dependent. That is evident in dimensions which include clarification, investigation, magnification, activation, mobilisation and co-ordination. These roles apply variously to specific genres, which is how media content are organised. For example, news services have editorial requirements that don't apply to entertainment, while entertainment is often rated for appropriateness (e.g. sexual and violent content) which does not apply to news. But both news and entertainment content have their place in the constellation of public services. PSM provide for democratic processes, as found for example in current affairs (McNair, 2007), political satire (Bruun, 2007) and public service entertainment (Palokangas, 2007). Each genre has an irreplaceable function in continuous social proc-esses of "working through" the complexity of always evolving social experience and changing conditions (Ellis, 2000).

Regulation is crucial to ensure 1) that PSM have the necessary mandate as a core component of their remit and 2) that PSM are held to account for fulfilling its mandate and mission. Policy needs to recognise the role of public service media as one of the priorities in democracy for citizens to ensure their sufficiency in both resource and support. As already encouraged by the Council of Europe, it is not sufficient to preserve the PSB role and co-related functions; the goal must be to develop all of that as PSM.

This will be difficult because space in the media-society ecology is commercially valuable and the public interest can be at risk as a result (not intentionally but rather as a result of neglect or unawareness). Moreover, providing the services necessary for democratic discourse will not always succeed. One must be prepared for occasional disappointment yet remain persistent, because setbacks are learning obligations (Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2007). Moreover, citizens will not always avail themselves of opportunities to participate in either democratic discourse or decision making, and those that do participate will often be already involved by other means (Bentivegna, 2002; Dahlgren, 2001). This in no way detracts from the importance of continuing development and potential involvement in new services, however. Growing broader awareness and stimulating wider interest is fundamental to the long-term development process.
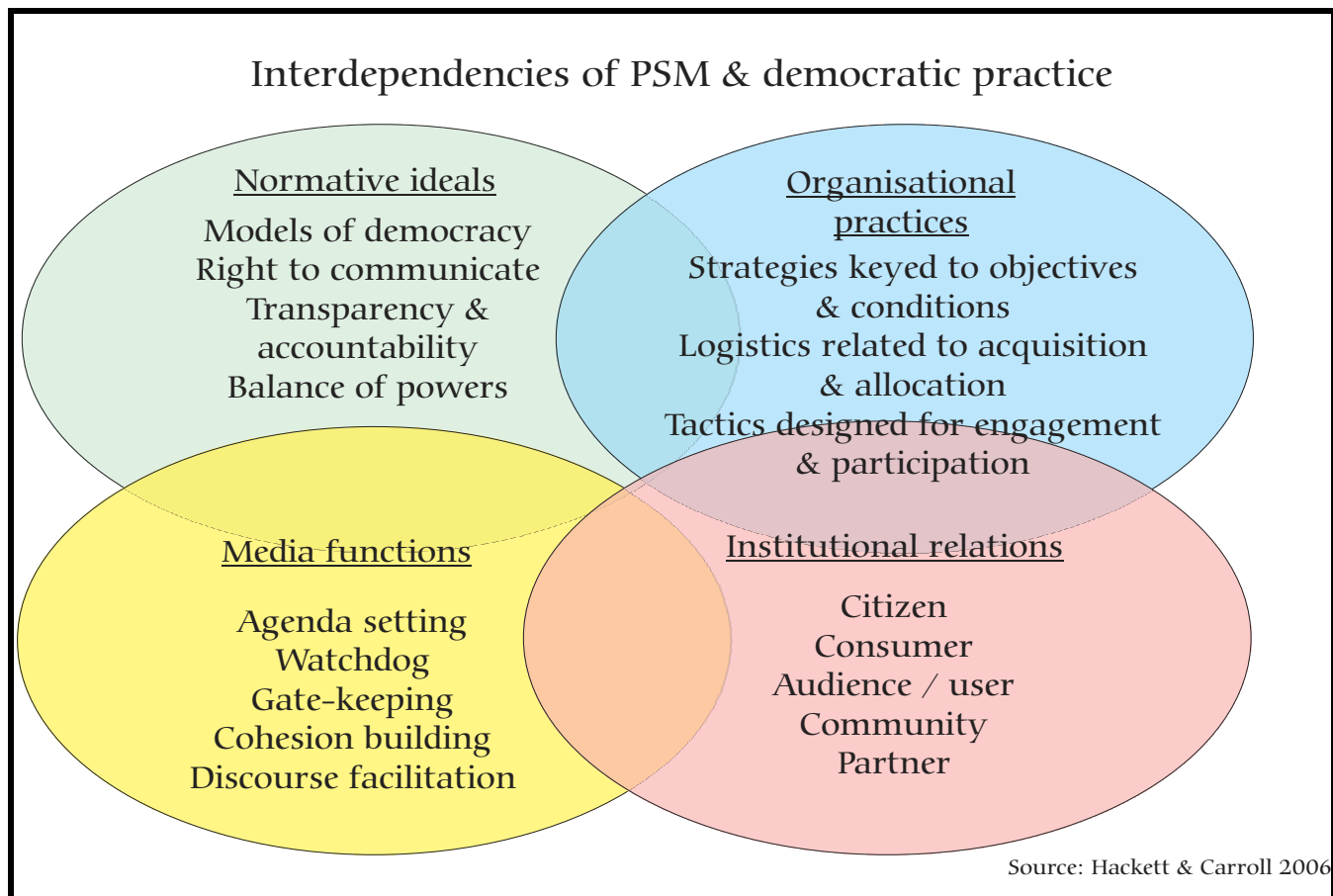
Democratic practice and PSM are interdependent

Democracy and public service media are interdependent in four reflexive respects that are instrumental to the media-society ecology because sociocultural dynamics enable and constrain the possibilities (pictured in Figure 3). We have discussed much of the substance earlier and need not tarry long on this subject.

Figure 3: Ideals, practices, functions and relations

Interdependencies of PSM & democratic practice

Normative ideals
Models of democracy
Right to communicate
Transparency &
accountability
Balance of powers

Organisational
practices
Strategies keyed to objectives
& conditions
Logistics related to acquisition
& allocation
Tactics designed for engagement
& participation

Media functions
Agenda setting
Watchdog
Gate-keeping
Cohesion building
Discourse facilitation

Institutional relations
Citizen
Consumer
Audience / user
Community
Partner

Source: Hackett & Carroll 2006

Normative ideals infuse the ethos that legitimates PSM efforts to facilitate wider individual and broader collective participation in democracy. To achieve that in practice requires PSM organisations to be obliged to formulate relevant objectives in strategic terms to allocate the resources necessary to achieve those objectives (logistics), and craft tactical designs that concretise the objectives in programmes and services. Radio and television channels still serve as the most cost-efficient and common platforms for cohesion building, while non-linear platforms make robust discourse facilitation viable.

The enactment of all these functions, and the correlated fulfilment of strategic objectives, on the one hand requires defending traditional roles, especially the social role and identity of citizens in a democracy, and on the other emphasises the development of partnership relations between PSM providers and the publics they serve. This will be no easy task for PSM, and for two

reasons primarily. The first complication is linked to heritage. PSB companies have a tradition of viewing audiences as "pupils", which is an engrained feature of the enlightenment paradigm. This dysfunctional aspect of the historic construct has been rightly criticised in accounting for much of the distasteful, even insulting, arrogance of professionals in this sector (see for example, Lowe, 2008 and Ytreberg, 2002). This character was established during the long decades of monopoly. Although that is long over the conditioned perspective has been slow to fade in various companies.

The second reason is linked to the typical complexity of PSB institutions which have been characterised by high regard for self-sufficiency and correlated with dense bureaucratic conditions, lack of responsiveness and difficulties with adaptability. Of course this is not unique to PSB but rather endemic to public sector institutions generally. But for both of these reasons, at

least, crafting partnership relations will not be easy. A third reason can be added here, and as a product of the other two: the publics such companies seek to establish partnered relations with have conditioned experiences that dampen popular market enthusiasm. The "PSB brand" poses huge challenges in accomplishing this crucial PSM objective.

The role of PSM is grounded in the public service mission which, despite its classical connotations has demonstrated ample capacity for continual development while still preserving the ethos that grounds its social legitimacy. This must remain the foundation for contemporary development as PSB completes the transition to PSM. Coppens and Saeys (2006) analysed PSB mission history and found the mandate was broad and loose everywhere until the mid-20th century. In the early decades it "only" aspired to the Reithian Trinity: "To inform, to educate and to entertain". This was supplemented in the mid-20th

century by emphasis on national identity and culture. Still later the mission came to include non-discrimination, protecting juveniles from potentially harmful media effects and promoting tolerance in the interests of public harmony and prosperity. All of that was elaborated in response to the impact of social movements in the 1960s and 1970s. At the end of the last century PSB companies augmented the public service mission by prioritising diversity and quality, as well as revitalising the focus on social cohesion. This later came in response to concerns about fragmentation.

More recently still there has been growing emphasis on building social capital. There are two types of social capital that PSM helps to build (Jauert & Lowe, 2005: 28). One type is about "bonding" and the other is about "bridging". Bonding is crucial for social solidarity, unity and cohesion. Public service media play a crucial role by maintaining the ties that bind and channel the democratic discourse that clarifies views in all their rich variety. Bridging is crucial for diversity and plurality. Public service media are crucial for building this kind of social capital by ensuring intercultural understand-ing and cross-cultural dialogue. Of course private commercial media have a crucial role in this and one must not neglect this. But what is arguably unique to PSM is important here. "In an era of media abundance and market fragmentation, where the dynamics of differentiation are in the driver's seat, PSM are essential to ensure cross-levelling (unity and cohesion) as well as levelling across (diversity and pluralism)" (ibid). That is an essential reason why PSM must have the obligation to organise and operate a platform portfolio and not be constricted to radio and television.

PSM obligations for democratic discourse

There are four obligations for PSM that can be deduced from normative theories about media-society relations (Carpentier, 2007: 159).

1. The informative and control obligation;

2. The representation obligation;

3. The forum obligation;

4. The participatory obligation.

All normative models highlight the importance of information provision as a means of public control on the actions of the state. This obligation is pivotal to the watchdog function discussed earlier. What is often overlooked is that information is not neutral. Information is always selected, created, developed, shaped and framed for particular reasons. Deciding which information is selected, what information is developed, how it is presented, and the basis on which it is distributed all have social, political and economic implications. PSM have an irreplaceable role because its civil society organisation [CSO] status demands keeping a critical eye on both political and industrial sectors.

The representation obligation has two dimensions related to standards and practices. The first is avoiding misrepresentation and stereotyping. The second is incorporating diversity in content perspectives and pluralism in the groups that are accommodated. The representation obligation is about ensuring fairness by prioritising recognition of differences that make a difference which certainly include gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, language, age and class. This obligation is rooted in an understanding that individuals are always situated within broader social groups and that dialogue is required for both cohesion and differentiation.

The forum obligation is primarily about services and activities that nurture democratic culture, which is democratisation in practice. In concrete terms that is operationalised in decentralised decision making, i.e. "subsidiarity" which is a prerequisite for wider individual participation and, thus, for the enactment of the right to communicate. The forum obligation does not deny the realities of social conflict or minimise the importance of disagreement, but in the interests of growing deliberative democracy it privileges a dialogic mission.

The participatory obligation is the meat of the matter for widening individual involvement in democracy. It also requires the most effort and investment for development because it is at the heart of cultivating partnership between PSM and the public it must serve. This obligation is about the degree to which people are able to 1) influence production in media content and 2) impact decision making by political representatives. This obligation is thus about participation in two senses; participation in media and participation through media.

These four obligations are relevant to the health and scope of the public sphere which is, in turn, a crucial determinant of the degree of democratic development and maturity a society has achieved (Angus, 2001). In diverse and pluralistic societies the media have a significant role in both constituting and mediating the public sphere, or the public's spheres (Schultz, 1997). The role of PSM is primarily to ensure the good health and necessary development of this. The public sphere is produced in and by public communication about issues, events and processes of common interest (Splichal, 2007), to remind of earlier discussion.

"Meaningful democracy requires dialogue, communication, and the ongoing formation of public spheres within which citizens can participate… [Thus] the prospects for democracy hinge on the patterns of communication and power that media institutions enable… Media's democratic roles, then, include providing each significant group with a forum to articulate and develop its interests, facilitating the search for society wide political consensus, to being universally accessible and inclusive, and reconstituting private citizens as a public body in the form of public opinion".
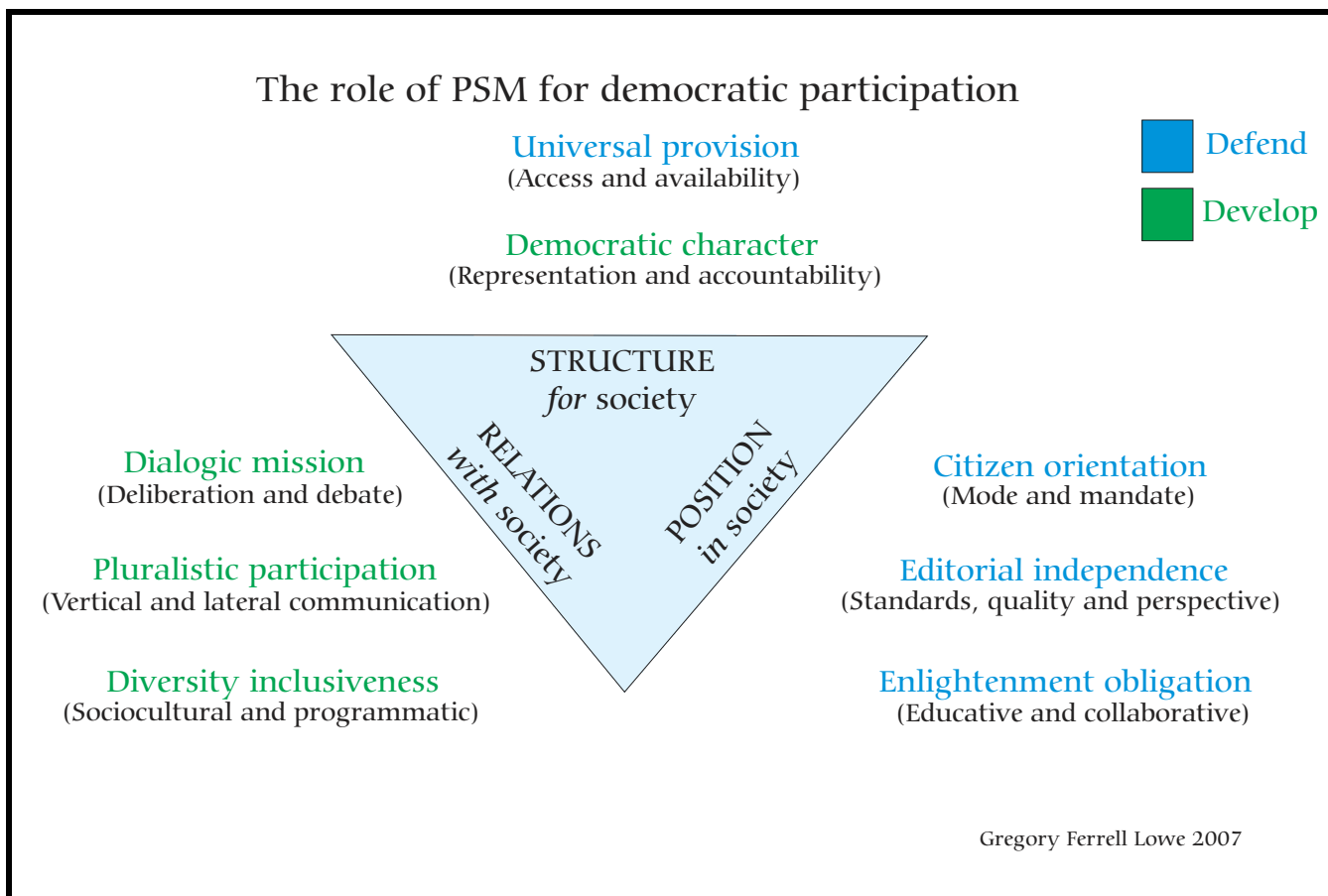
(Hackett & Carroll, 2006: 40).

Public service media and democracy

The conceptual model (presented in Figure 4) features three integrated elements. The first is the inverted triangle in the middle which characterises the identity of PSM as three facets that are linked to the media-society ecology. The second element is the eight aspects which correspond to the three facets. The third element is the colour-coded distinction between aspects that primarily require defence and aspects primarily requiring development.

Figure 4: The proposed conceptual model

The role of PSM for democratic participation

Universal provision
(Access and availability)

Democratic character
(Representation and accountability)

Defend

Develop

STRUCTURE
for society

RELATIONS
with society

POSITION
in society

Dialogic mission
(Deliberation and debate)

Pluralistic participation
(Vertical and lateral communication)

Diversity inclusiveness
(Sociocultural and programmatic)

Citizen orientation
(Mode and mandate)

Editorial independence
(Standards, quality and perspective)

Enlightenment obligation
(Educative and collaborative)

Gregory Ferrell Lowe 2007

Beginning with the inverted triangle, the three facets together describe the identity of PSM with emphasis on their reflexive character in the media-society ecology. The Structure facet is about what PSM must be for society in order to properly fulfil their role for participation in democracy. There are two aspects of particular relevance here, the first of which requires preservation and the other development – Universal Provision and Democratic Character.

The historic emphasis on guaranteeing universal provision of services in both access and availability is the legacy of "universalism". That is a defining attribute of the public service ethos that must be rigorously defended. To ensure democratic discourse, PSM channels and contents must be available to every citizen, regardless of socioeconomic status or geographic location, in all the media they use for information and communication. This links with discussion about the ensemble of media people variously use. This aspect demands guaranteeing access to platforms and the availability of content. Whereas universalism was historically justified for mainly technical reasons related to spectrum scarcity, it is today essential for social reasons related to commercial enclosure strategies (Moe, 2007).

The second aspect in the Structure facet is related to the responsiveness of PSM organisations in accountability and permeability. Here the enterprise requires continuing development to guarantee a democratic character. That is important for institutional accountability in performance, and for the permeability of its "borders" with regard to the scope of representation in its governance. Although editorial independence is a crucial aspect that must be preserved for PSM's role in democracy, as acknowledged in the Position facet, this should not to be confused with neglecting media-society interdependence because that is required for PSM institutional development. The character of decision making and accountability needs to be itself democratic in a mature civil society institution. In the historic view, PSB were insular in operations and perspectives. This condition is increasingly less characteristic as we see, for example, in the UK with the establishment of the BBC Trust and in Finland with the Hallitus for YLE. This is a generalis-

able trend. What is less clearly on the road to resolution are mechanisms to secure genuine public input and, significantly, consistently collaborative relations with the public that PSM serve. This is a crucial aspect for PSM development and a long-term critical weakness of traditional PSB (Lowe, 2008).

The second facet is called Position and is about how PSM are situated in society. Three aspects are fundamental and rooted in the historic PSB ethos. These aspects must be rigorously defended against threat from two directions today – from the external environment as a product of neo-liberal pressure and restless competition, and from internal managers increasingly obsessed with business logic and commercial concepts. Thus, we are focusing on the impact of "marketisation". There is more to say about this in later discussion about the amalgamation paradox. For now one should understand that marketisation is characterised by the increasing propensity to incorporate commercial logic and a market-based fixation inside nonprofit public service companies. This is evident in the widespread adoption of commercial vocabulary and business concepts which certainly include branding, balanced scorecards, market segmentation, customer-centred thinking and planning, outsourcing, etc. There is nothing wrong with learning these useful concepts, and indeed much to be commended. Nor should there be any negativity about applying tools from any source where such are conducive to higher efficiency and effectivity. But this is a slippery slope in light of the fact that PSM companies must not be conceived or treated fundamentally as businesses because 1) they actually are not, and 2) their mandates are primarily about serving the public as citizens rather than satisfying consumers in markets.

The three aspects of the Position facet are essential to the public service ethos and instrumental to its continuation as a public service enterprise. These aspects must be preserved to guarantee serving the needs of citizens as the vital, irreplaceable PSM role devoted to the evolving construction of democratic discourse. Although PSM companies need to master relevant concepts and practices necessary for competitive success in today's market-driven media-society ecology, this must not imply any weakening of primary emphasis on citizen orientation in and for practice, nor its mode of address in hailing people as citizens first and foremost. Of course, individuals have many and overlapping social identities, but for the democratic needs of society none is more fundamental than the citizen identity. Of the types of media companies available for democratic facilitation none is as well suited by historic legacy and contemporary mandate as PSM. Moreover, private commercial firms must rightly be absorbed primarily with the legitimate interests of commerce, profits and markets as a necessary focus given the complexion of the enterprise. PSM are neither obliged nor legitimate in attempting to mimic that.

Jealously guarding against encroachment on PSB editorial independence is fundamental to guaranteeing the role of PSM in the provision of content and services that support European citizens' right to communicate. PSB established high standards in both normative principles and in applied practice for broadcast journalism. As Jakubowicz (2006) put it, "The difference between Fox and Sky is the BBC". It is vital to preserve these functions associated with excellence in news provision, and arguably even more important given channel proliferation and public fragmentation. As open platforms, non-linear media offer latitude for egregious violations of ethical standards in accuracy, balance, fairness, and so forth. That is evident, for example, in the manipulation of Wikipedia entries by unethical political candidates and commercial companies for self-interested ends (FeatureFeed, 2007; Morphy, 2007; Hackett & Carroll, 2006). PSM companies are needed as "Islands of Trust", to use Nissen's phrase (2006a), in this often anarchic media ecology where authenticity is difficult to establish and people are easily beguiled, as seen for example in phishing attacks that troll for personal banking information.

Editorial independence must be rigorously preserved in linear media and should be advanced in non-linear media. As earlier noted, PSB companies are equated in the public mind as being trustworthy, reliable, credible, fair, honest and professional. Those are "brand" qualities of the highest value. PSB earned this at great effort and cost over decades, and it remains crucial to the quality of all public service provision and essential to PSM performance. It has never been easy to protect PSB editorial independence and it will not be easy in PSM. The constant pressure to be popular threatens PSM with sensationalistic temptations and "happy-face journalism". There are also cyclical attacks from political governors when PSM news coverage and commentary aren't flattering. That has been especially evident in the UK, for example, in the run-up to the war in Iraq and the great difficulties the BBC experienced in that (Barnett, 2007).

The enlightenment obligation is possibly the surprise aspect. There is general agreement that PSB were long troubled by a paternalistic and elitist orientation, as also discussed earlier in this report. That is a valid criticism (Yterberg, 2002) and typically blamed on the PSB enlightenment tradition. But the enlightenment project in Europe is certainly much broader and deeper than its association with PSB, and it is in fact foundational to European social consciousness and societal arrangements. It makes no sense to "throw the baby out with the bathwater" due to the way some PSB services were conceived in a particular historic context or how these companies understood their role in decades past.

What is clearly needed is a collaborative approach and, in a real sense, a humble mentality which is instrumental to developing a genuine public partnership. That is where the keenest challenges lie for PSM

management and practice. As one considers the scope and complexity of division, fragmentation, violence, anxiety, etc. which plague societies today, it is clearly as important as ever to maintain an emphasis on services that facilitate enlightenment as continuous importance for every democracy. Although the enlightenment obligation could have been situated as a developmental aspect because there is obvious need for it, even in our brief discussion, it is positioned here as an aspect for defence because it has been under relentless attacks from within and without that we need begin, at least, with its recovery even if the ultimate objective is refinement.

All three aspects within the Position facet are therefore conceptualised in the model as areas that require firm defence. These are aspects of abiding importance in the public service mission as a principle, and to the enactment of that mission in operational and managerial practices. These aspects demonstrate the requirement for continuity in the transformation of the public service enterprise. But defence does not imply inaction. On the contrary, defence requires constant effort when so much of what has been treated here has frequently been under severe pressure.

The third facet is where the most development work is needed – Relations with society. The future of PSM requires the institution to evolve into an effective and efficient partner with the publics it serves. This has been persuasively argued, in particular by Jakubowicz (2007), and quite a few agree in various formulations (e.g. Lowe & Bardoel, 2007; Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2007; Hackett & Carroll, 2006; Nissen, 2006b, etc.). Three aspects are crucial here. The key aspect is to thoroughly develop the dialogic mission. That is a cornerstone for widening the participation of individuals and collectivities in contemporary democracy. This should be the mandated heart of the PSM ethos moving forward because it is the essence of communication and partnership.

The second and third aspects have also been discussed and are similarly core components for the role of PSM in promoting wider participation in democracy. Continuing effort and investment to build pluralistic participation is essential to mature networks of communication that facilitate democratic discourse in the vertical dimension between governors and the governed, and in the lateral (or horizontal) dimension between individuals and groups in community terms. PSB was about transmission; PSM must be about communication.

Diversity inclusiveness is a related aspect, but it is distinctive in accommodating the broadest range of sociocultural difference in both discourse and organisational complexion. In programmatic terms this means actively accommodating a representative variety of opinions, perspectives and people in the contents of PSM provision. In organisational terms it means employing a fair diversity of people to reflect the actual composition of society. That is also essential for creative renewal as creative organisation literature makes clear (Davis & Scase, 2000; von Krogh et al., 2000; Lampikoski & Emden, 1996). Not only are these participatory developments ethically sound, they are also beneficial in operational development and competitive differentiation. This is an area where modern business theory may be quite helpful in encouraging development to secure the mechanisms for incorporating the public as collaboration partners (Lowe, 2008). Of course, the caveats earlier elaborated in the discussion about marketisation certainly have relevance. For PSM the public must be understood primarily as citizens rather than consumers, and treated as partners rather than targets.

The essential point of the model is that in both character and quality PSM providers must prioritise building partnership with their publics. This is the critical path for focused development because it will produce the most mutual benefit for the public in its many roles, and especially as citizens, while at the same time strengthening PSM security and creativity. This is far more important, and also more readily defensible, than consumer-orientated thinking. It will not be easy or painless to achieve because partnership requires accepting a condition of continual vulnerability and the persistent levelling of relations which must necessarily erode often jealously guarded barriers of PSB professional self-identity. But this is the right and proper challenge of developmental change to guarantee PSM in their role of not only widening but also deepening individual participation in democracy, and for democratisation. If PSM cannot or will not embrace this as a priority challenge, and show good progress in meeting that challenge, it becomes difficult to secure continuing public support as distinction and difference in comparison with the private commercial sector collapses.

Taken together, these three facets and the eight aspects that define them offer a summation of what needs to be preserved and what needs to be developed. Managing the complex dynamics of change and continuity will, in practice, have much to do with handling four paradoxes that characterise PSM.

VII. The service paradox and platform portfolio solution

Handling the transformation of PSB to PSM efficiently requires the competence to effectively balance four paradoxes (Table 1). Here we focus especially on the service paradox because it has the most direct bearing on the platform portfolio solution for PSM's role in widening individual participation in democracy.

Table 1: Summary of four paradoxes challenging PSM management

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Four paradoxes of public service media

1. **The amalgamation paradox:** organise and act in the same way as any "normal" business but pursue non-profit public service objectives. (All of the "burdens" of business with none of the benefits).

2. **The competition paradox:** when PSM is competitively successful it is called market distortion but when PSM is not it is called a waste of public money. (Damned when they do; damned when they don't).

3. **The synergistic paradox:** simultaneously achieve centralisation for efficiency and decentralisation for effectivity. (Be perfectly efficient and perfectly responsive simultaneously).

4. **The service paradox:** equally emphasise universal service for everybody and personalised services for individuals. (Facilitate social cohesion and social fragmentation).

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The amalgamation paradox

When two or more things are combined to create a composite form they have been "amalgamated". Since the mid-1980s public service institutions have been under pressure to achieve ever higher levels of efficiency without any loss of effectiveness. This has encouraged efforts to adopt, adapt, incorporate or otherwise develop business-based ways of organising and acting within public institutions. PSB companies have been high-profile targets in this drive. That is not all "bad". In fact, most of these companies have been successful in achiev-ing the desired results. But a peculiar problem for PSM is that success means these non-profit institutions have all the burdens that are inherent with the rigours of good business practice but can't enjoy the benefits that normally accrue with success. When a for-profit business succeeds, there are bonuses and growth in stock valua-tion producing fresh capital for new investment. In recent years, at least, the more successful PSM companies have been in handling the public's "business" efficiently and effectively the more likely that resources have been taken away and the higher the criticism from lobby groups (Wess-berg, 2004).

A fundamental challenge in the transformation to PSM lies in man-aging the balance between thinking and organising like a "normal" busi-ness while not being one, and at the same time maintaining the public service orientation that is funda-mental to social legitimacy and dis-tinctiveness (Nissen, 2006b; Lowe & Alm, 1997). This challenge is fraught with potential dangers to

the public-interest character of the enterprise.

The competition paradox

Over the past 15 years PSM companies have been forced to compete against increasingly consolidated and vertically integrated international media companies (Miller, 2002). The requirement to compete is not a problem. Competition has forced needed correction in many areas of PSB organisation and orientation, especially greater sensitivity to public preferences and improvement in cost efficiency. The advent of commercial electronic media has been good for European consumers and audiences, and the growth of choice has caused PSB companies to become more responsive and creative. PSB have actually been quite successful in competition for both linear and non-linear media (EBU, 2007; EBU, 2006; Nissen, 2006a & 2006b; Lowe & Hujanen, 2003).

The complications are in how opponents spin the results of PSM performance in persistent efforts to influence media policy for their interests (Born, 2004; Wessberg, 2004). When PSM content or services lack "mass" appeal this is seized on as "proof" that public service media are irrelevant or unnecessary. When PSM content or service grabs market share this is seized on as "proof" that public service media are over funded, distorting competition or damaging media markets. This clever rhetorical strategy forces PSM into a mission impossible where they are "damned when they do and damned when they don't". That is a lose-lose scenario for European society, given its increasing complexity and the pressing needs for a healthy dual media system to facilitate democratisation.

The synergistic paradox

PSM companies are expected to be increasingly efficient at no loss of effectivity. The pressure on financial resources demonstrates a two-pronged attack. First, there is curtailment of funding either in the amount of revenue or in cost adjustments, or both. Second, there are attacks on the premise of licence fee funding that are driven by industry lobby groups and typically advanced on the basis of neoliberal political theory (Jakubowicz, 2006). If pursued to a reasonable degree and for genuinely developmental interests, these cost efficiency pressures are obviously a good thing. PSM managers must plan properly, spend effectively and strategise wisely, and the historic record shows that PSB managers have been lacking in all three. But in some cases this trend has not been reasonable and functions as a subterfuge for "starving the beast", as with neo-conservative strategy in the USA during the administration of President George W. Bush. The idea is to kill public services by starving the institutional providers of the resources necessary to be effective while simultaneously demanding highest efficiency.

The drive to achieve ever higher degrees of efficiency pushes standardisation and centralisation in the pursuit of higher control and accountability. But this is confounded by simultaneous demands to be very responsive companies characterised by high flexibility that require decentralised arrangements. That is necessary to cater to the diverse and even conflicting needs of groups across an expansive range of media platforms, genres and services. There are limits in efficiency after which effectiveness breaks down. This balance is a familiar challenge in supply chain management because it is not possible to be both perfectly efficient and perfectly responsive at the same time (Ayers, 2006).

The service paradox

The defining balance with regard to the substance of this report is providing universal services for everyone and also personalised services for individuals. The problem is the potential of undermining social cohesion by developing services that stimulate social fragmentation. Getting a handle on what that means and why it matters is the first task. The second is consideration of the PSM platform portfolio as a viable solution to handle both without undermining either.

A more diverse society does not inherently mean a more democratic public sphere. As diversity grows there is increasing complexity. Democracy requires interaction among people who will take contrary positions and must collaborate in good faith to build consensus and negotiate compromise. These functions require an institutional framework with a clear and resourced mandate to facilitate democratic discourse. "Both the network forms of communication and the publics formed in them must be embedded in a larger institutional and political context if they are to be transformed into public spheres in which citizens can make claims and expect a response" (Bohman, 2004: 146).

This is about respecting pluralism, which is already recognised in various EU policy objectives, as discussed earlier. According to McQuail (1992), media contributes to pluralism in three ways: 1) by reflecting proportionate differences in society, 2) by giving equal access to differing points of view, and 3) by offering a

wide range of choice for individuals. This is familiar to those involved with research and policy for public service broadcasting because Europe has always been extraordinarily multicultural as a continent. What's new is the growth of multicultural conditions within member states. The challenge of social cohesion has grown apace with this condition, and has become a priority due to worrisome social and cultural conflict (Lowe & Jauert, 2005).

Karppinen (2007) argues that a fundamental tension in modern democracies in Europe is between pluralism on the one hand and integration on the other. Pluralism is associated with the ideal that multiplicity is better than uniformity, and there is also an implication that disagreement produces fruitful results and is an enabler of progress when handled peaceably (McLennan, 1995). But of course there are limits to diversity after which social order breaks down.

This is where PSM have an irreplaceable role in building cohesion. With regard to democracy, the functions of media cannot be reduced only to consumer choice or satisfying individual preferences without unravelling the best possibilities for satisfying the need for services that facilitate building cohesion. "The media are often seen as a central tool for creating a common culture, constructing a national identity, or a shared arena for public debate" (Karppinen, 2007: 15). An integrating agent is necessary to orchestrate a portfolio of platforms that are both integrated and distinctive as recognised in the importance of an institutional framework to guarantee priority in the provision of genuinely public services (for relevant discussion see Murdock, 2005).

Dahlgren (2003b) recognised the damaging potential of a splintering media market for shared public spheres. In his view, fragmentation is undercutting the integrative func-

tion of the public interest in media. This is fuelled by the growing emphasis on consumption without an equally important emphasis on production. Thus, a historic balance is increasingly out of kilter. Integration is the crucible where pluralism and cohesion are amalgamated, and achieving this relies on a "morality of co-operation" and a "spirit of mutuality" (Fenton, 2007: 232).

Changes in both social perspective and society practice are producing a situation in which the individual is increasingly the focal point (Gitlin, 1998). Too often overlooked is the realisation that individual interests grow in and out of a cultural context with wider, always evolving concerns (Eschle, 2001). Individual participation in democracy is about social connection and relations. Through media the private becomes part of the public sphere and the public sphere impacts private life (Scannell, 1996). That is fundamental to the media-society ecology.

The PSM platform portfolio solution

The exercise of citizenship not only entails individual rights but also, significantly, social responsibilities (Held, 2006). To exercise both the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the individual must be informed and stay informed. This needs to be understood mainly as the production of knowledge rather than merely as a flow of data (see McKenzie & van Winkelen, 2004; Thomass, 2003). Two relevant perspectives are differentiated on the basis of the responsibility to be informed for the production of knowledge (Böck, 2007). One perspective is linked to information provision where the responsibility rests with the source. The other perspective is linked to information acquisition where the responsibility rests with the individual. Television and radio lean towards the first perspective while new media lean towards the second. At the base of PSM strategy is how to ensure both, which can only be done by utilising an integrated portfolio of media, channels and services.

As discussed early in the report, there are two broad approaches to democracy: representative and participatory. Participatory democracy is a system in which citizens are directly involved in decision making about policy in detail. Representative democracy is a system whereby elected officials represent the interests of constituencies. Here, representatives decide policy and citizens vote on the basis of promises and performance. Western democracy is representative and has never been especially participatory. Today, however, the two approaches are increasingly seen as twin developmental aspects of an integrated design where the challenge is twofold: revitalise representative practices and develop participatory practices. In complex societies the representative aspect can't be maintained nor the participatory aspect developed without media to facilitate democratic discourse.

Broadcast media are well suited to support the communication needs of representative democracy, and have done that splendidly in

Europe since the early decades of the 20th century. In recent years the public service role has grown in importance due to concerns about the scale of money involved in commercial advertising for modern political campaigns, the personality-orientated focus of mediated campaigning which undercuts issue politics and rational discourse, and the professionalisation of political media consulting that features spin tactics in image manipulation to shape perspectives.

Baker (2002) therefore suggests that two broad categories of media are needed to fully facilitate participatory democracy. The first is a "republican version" (associated with representative democracy) in which media organisations facilitate the search for consensus by being universally accessible, inclusive, and thoughtfully discursive. This includes the factual services of information but is also about expression. This is where broadcasting works best and illustrates the important connection that linear media have in linking participatory democracy

with representative democracy. The other media category is a "pluralist version", in which segmented media provide links for significant personal, cultural and political groupings to interact on the basis of shared interests to create forums for both the expression and the development of those interests. This is where non-linear media work best and is the essential reason that PSB must be mandated and resourced to become mature PSM operators. In both of these categories it is crucial to observe that the individual exists in a habitus that is thoroughly social in nature because this signals the centrality of civil society in democratic practice.

Individual participation can be rather direct via PSM, but it can also be indirect and multi-step or multi-stage via involvement in civil society organisations more generally. In this, as well, PSM would have a vital role. Although he did not write with PSM especially in mind, Curran (2000) encapsulated the role of PSM rather well in widening individual participation in modern democracy which illustrates why a platform portfolio is a viable solution to the service paradox, and the importance of social-individual dynamics on as well:

> "It should empower people by enabling them to explore where their interest lies; it should foster sectoral solidarities and assist the functioning of organisations necessary for the effective representation of collective interests; it should sustain vigilant scrutiny of government and centres of power; it should provide a source of protection and redress for the weak and unorganised interests; and it should create the conditions for real societal agreement or compromise based on an open working through of differences rather than a contrived consensus based on elite dominance".

Commercial media can contribute, and should be mandated to do so, but they cannot fulfil most of these functions as well as public service media because the complexion of ownership and the demands of their financing modes obstruct realisation. PSM are better positioned to complete the mandate because 1) the complexion of ownership is public and 2) so long as the nature of finance is non-profit. We should also remember that the deeper, broader PSM mandate must be to nurture democratic culture to continually secure democratisation. Private commercial media do a fantastic job of nurturing consumer culture and facilitating market development, and that has crucial importance to prosperity and quality of life. But the commercial template is not as well suited for nurturing democratic culture and facilitating political development.

Here one should make distinction between power through media and power of media (Couldry & Curran, 2003). The notion is rooted in earlier thought about democratisation in media and through media (see Wasko & Mosco, 1992). Media exercise power as the fourth estate and that has direct bearing on representative democracy. But media can also be harnessed by groups in the pursuit of distinctive social objectives associated with justice, equality and consciousness raising (for example today about climate change). All of that has been proven essential for society development in sociocultural terms – and by extension societal preservation – when remembering how social movements have invigorated democratic conditions over the decades.

Participation in the media is about ways and means for non-professionals to be involved in 1) the production of content and 2) in deci-sion making – the latter being structural involvement, as Carpentier (2007) observed. There is strong focus on individual interests. This area of participation is important for two reasons. First, it opens opportunity for citizens to be active in discourse that constructs meaning. Second, it cultivates democratic preferment in both attitude and practice.

Participation through the media is about the possibilities citizens have to engage in public debate and to represent their own interests in public spheres. Here the emphasis is on dialogue, debate and deliberation, and thus a stronger focus on the collective interest (as discussed in Nieminen's work). To an important degree, securing the democratic needs of society in and through PSM is about crossing the border between audience and public (Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2007). That is what PSM are doing as the earlier examples demonstrate.

This report highlights the importance of participation as both normative value and practical need with regard to widening individual activity in democracy. Fulfilling that role as explained in the conceptual model demands development that secures wider participation in media and through media. PSM are well suited to meet these needs when configured as, and mandated to develop, a platform portfolio because that is the practical, material resource for simultaneously serving society needs for cohesion on the one hand and pluralism on the other. The service paradox can't be resolved except via a platform portfolio solution, so this needs support in public policy and financing in the democratic interests of European society, and to nurture continual maturation of European democratisation.

VIII. The possibilities and limitations of individual participation

Quite a lot has been said about the importance of participation, engagement and involvement. One needs to be clear to ensure realistic expectations for PSM promoting wider participation by individuals and groups.

To be engaged is not precisely the same as to participate. One can be engaged by a discussion he or she is only witnessing. It is only when advancing a personal opinion that he or she attempts to participate. Engagement is a mental condition characterised by attuned interest, whereas participation is manifestly behavioural. It is also important to understand that participation may cascade over time and across contexts. For example, one can be engaged by an online discussion but not participate in it. But then later, with friends or family, one might participate in a discussion triggered by the online engagement. Of course, one can participate without actually being engaged, in which case the individual is acting out of duty rather than "self-actualisation" (Bennett, 2007). Further, we need to remember that talking does not exhaust the range of active participation possibilities. In democratic practice the range of possibilities includes mobilising, lobbying, protesting, bargaining, and voting – to name but a few.

When discussing public participation in democracy, two terms are commonly referenced: 1) "participatory democracy" and 2) "discursive democracy". To an important degree the latter can be understood as a dimension of the former. Participatory democracy proposes that citizens should be active co-producers of democracy (Skogseth, 2007). In today's highly mediated political environment the role of voter positions the citizen mainly as a specta-tor. Participatory democracy recognises this as inadequate for mature democratic practice.

Discursive democracy is more precisely about communicative action emphasising citizens' participation in dialogue, deliberation and debate, as argued throughout this report. PSM have a pivotal role in facilitating democratic discourse, which necessarily pre-supposes the individual is situated in social networks. Dahlgren (2006: 24) offers a pointed observation:

> "While both engagement and participation can be said to be anchored in the individual, I would underscore that since we are talking about the political realm we must have a perspective that emphasizes collectivities; the engagement and participation of the citizen is predicated on them being connected to others by civic bonds".

Constraints and limitations

Having the right to communicate does not guarantee exercising that right, anymore than having the right to vote has meant that every citizen votes. Opportunity does not guarantee enactment. In fact, there are many constraints on individual participation. Research generally shows that people already engaged and active seize new opportunities while those not already engaged do not.

A pertinent example is the Blacksburg Electronic Village project in the late 1990s in the American state of Virginia. Despite considerable investment, widespread access, and civil society involvement, the effort failed to realise most participatory objectives with regard to historically marginalised individuals (Kavanaugh & Patterson, 2002). For those who were already engaged by other means, however, the new opportunities were seized as a con-venient conduit for already established patterns of activity. Jankowski (2002) criticised the project for 1) relying on a top-down design that privileged local elites and 2) positioning people primarily as political consumers – two problems we will come back to shortly.

Dahlgren's (2003) review of the research about new media and political participation led him to conclude that "the Net is a tool, a

resource for those with political involvement, but that it generally does not recruit large numbers of new citizens to the public sphere" (2001:51). It is increasingly clear that involvement and participation are linked with socioeconomic characteristics (Livingstone et al., 2005). Although a laudable goal, universal participation is unrealistic (Dahl, 1998). With the appropriate mandate, support and resources PSM can guarantee universal provision. But neither PSM nor any other actor can guarantee universal participation. All that PSM can fairly be required to do is continually develop the platform portfolio to offer expansive participatory opportunity for individual involvement, and to promote both awareness of the benefits and the value in seizing them.

One should also recognise that the strong support for widening individual participation when considered in the abstract and as an ideal is confounded in practice. This is not to imply that pursuing the objective is any less desirable, but rather to ensure policy makers are prepared for the occasionally troublesome consequences of success. Participation at the individual level is, at its most intense enactment, about activism where success is keyed to effectively using the links between mobilisation and mediation. Internet activism has become a mobilising resource for transnational involvement among individuals opposed to various dimensions of globalisation, for example. This is not uniformly appreciated by policy makers or industry leaders. It is a boon for some but a bane to others. So what is respected and supported in the abstract may be resisted and resented in practice.

Another obvious area where participation produces effects that may not be considered ideal by sponsors involves actions deliberately intended to be obstructive. Individual involvement may be focused on impeding, confusing or neutralising something an individual opposes (Hackett & Carroll, 2006). This is evident in the example about individuals defacing Wikipedia entries in the 2004 American elections. Individuals very often use media as a means for contesting the ground of a policy pursuit (Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2007). As we see from the ongoing clashes over copyright and fair use, as well as hacking phenomena, some individuals are active in fighting against the mainstreaming of new media and corporate involvement in it.

IX. Concluding remarks

It should be clear that widening participation is more complicated and a longer-term project than one might initially have thought. It should also be clear that participation is not an end in itself. The issues are always about 1) who can participate, 2) how they can participate, and 3) for what purposes. The first and second issues have been treated in detail and from various angles through the report.

The third issue provides an important and appropriate element for concluding the report because it encourages examination of arenas of necessary responsibility that aren't all and only for PSM to shoulder. Public service and democratic practice that will facilitate wider individual participation in democracy today depends not only on the wisdom of policy but also on the good faith efforts of policy makers. This, then, is the core question on which the report will conclude discussion:

For what purposes are citizens as individuals being encouraged to participate?

When one speaks of widening individual participation, what precisely are the intentions in that? A characteristic reason for failure, according to empirical research, is that encouraging participation has too often been self-serving. It has been symbolic rather than symbiotic. It can at best only facilitate expression, not deliberation. It is top-down rather than bottom-up or side-to-side. This is why McNair and Hibberd (2003: 278) pointedly observed that, "In today's political culture access has to be more than symbolic. It must be accompanied by the visible, relatively unrestrained participation of citizens in robust debate *with* their governors" (emphasis added, GL).

Some policy makers and media professionals want wider participation as an avenue for securing buy-in for self-interested ends rather to secure genuine public service interests. For participation to widen the practice must build equity – citizens that participate must see that there really is discernible impact on the discourse of policy makers and the outcomes in decision making. The problem is that when all is said and done, too often all is said and nothing done. Successful participation only happens when there is a political objective beyond involvement for the sake of expression (Fenton, 2007). It is not the role or the responsibility of PSM to ensure that. It is for policy makers and political systems to guarantee it.

Reviewing the research, Bryant and Wilcox (2006) found that efforts to widen individual participation in democratic processes via mediation have not gone well for three reasons. These should be regarded as key "failure factors":

1. In most cases, the approaches are top-down in organisation and orientation, and thus do not overcome the feeling of powerlessness that many participants feel, nor the sociological barriers which are political, economic and cultural in nature.

2. The invitation to participate is only to involve oneself in discussion. Although such involvement matters to some, it is not keyed to working collectively and nor does it necessarily achieve anything tangible. Most citizens do not participate because they are not convinced that something worthwhile comes of their involvement.

3. There is a lack of sufficient investment needed to build those capacities that ensure access, availability and, especially, that the skills needed for people to participate successfully are secured. This is especially evident in so many failed efforts to reach the marginalised and to activate excluded groups.

What happens with whatever citizen participation produces on and in PSM platforms? What are PSM companies supposed to do with the ongoing results of democratic discourse? Of course they can react in the development of content and in building collaborative development processes that secure the public as partner. But beyond that it is really only for policy makers as elected officials to react to what has been said, contributed and done – and to themselves contribute in making democracy a truly discursive practice. PSM companies must be man-

dated to develop the platforms and manage the portfolio. The rest depends on political will and media policy to advance public interest in media as an ethos grounded in the right to communicate which is devoted to the continual and personally vested practices that nourish democratisation in and for Europe.

Building discursive democracy will not be easy, it will not be cheap, and it will not happen quickly or in uniform fashion. Nor can all of the considerable efforts and important investments of PSM guarantee success. PSM can nurture democratisation but only policy makers and decision makers can secure public participation in deliberative democracy.

X. Recommendations

1. The Council of Europe should encourage member states to fully implement Recommendation CM/Rec (2007) 3 on the remit of public service media in the information society, and especially the programme of developmental change to secure robust PSM organisations.

2. The PSB remit in member states should be formulated to explicitly mandate provision in both linear and non-linear media as a platform portfolio of public service media.

3. The Council of Europe should collect and publish information on best practices concerning the role of PSM promoting wider democratic participation of individuals. The Council should fund a project involving expert scholars and strategic advisors inside PSM companies to produce that collaboratively.

4. The Council of Europe should continue to encourage the development of genuine PSM in updating media policy in its member countries. It is especially important to encourage it in countries lacking a long tradition of public service broadcasting.

5. Member states should require PSM senior management to elaborate specific policies with concrete objectives explicitly aimed at growing democratic discourse and widening democratic participation of individuals as core components of their organisation strategies.

6. PSM companies should be encouraged to forge alliances with civil society organisations that have demonstrated shared commitment to the democratisation of European society via democratic discourse and thereby for collaborative development of media services that involve the public as citizens.

7. PSM should be required to continually maintain diversity inclusiveness as an active agent of participatory pluralism in content, accountability, and employment opportunity for building partnership with the public.

8. PSM editorial independence must be rigorously defended and PSM companies must be mandated to conceive and serve the public as citizens above all.

9. The definition and emphasis of the PSM ethos should be developed in direct, explicit relevance to the right to communicate.

10. The Council of Europe should support vigorous efforts to develop mechanisms and procedures to ensure that the results of democratic discourse continually impact policy deliberations and decision making in general.

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