

Public value and structural participation in Public Service Media: RTP as a case study

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Postdoctoral project

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Service Media: RTP as a case study**

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Abstract

Public service media organizations are facing multiple threats all around Europe. In order to face challenges such as the fragmentation of audiences, stagnated budgets, the digital transition and the attacks from the far-right, some public service broadcasters are reinforcing their core values through public value strategies. This post-doctoral project studies how the RTP understands its value and how it manages its relationships with its different stakeholders. To do so, a case study on the renewal of the management contract of the RTP is developed, applying both document analysis and semi-structured interviews with experts. The results show that the most highlight values for this new management contract are cooperation and territorial cohesion, and that the RTP is characterized by institutionalized structural participation. It is concluded that public value has to be understood as a holistic and adaptable concept, and that the implementation of public value strategies contribute to public service media legitimation.

Keywords: public service media, RTP, public value, participation, governance, stakeholders.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Introduction

In the current media environment, where the digital dynamics set the pace of news production, Public Service Media (PSM) organizations play a crucial role in sustaining the public sphere through quality, rigorous, independent, and valuable news services (Lowe & Stavitsky, 2016). Being publicly funded media outlets, they must comply with higher accountability standards, which eventually translates into more value being delivered than in commercial media, highest quality standards and more socially responsible, democratic and diverse content (Túñez-López, Campos-Freire & Rodríguez-Castro, 2021; Fuchs & Unterberger, 2021)

However, as their audience figures decrease and their limited budgets place them in a weak position to compete with the digital giants (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2022), the presence of Public Service Media content is at risk of being diluted. In countries such as Spain and Portugal, this multifaceted crisis is intensified due to financial instability, which led to the erosion of the legitimacy of the two biggest public service broadcasters of the Iberian Peninsula.

In order to address the loss of public trust, many European PSM organizations turned to public value strategies that reinforce participation and innovation within these corporations (Vysloužilová, 2019): from the pioneering work of the Austrian ORF's trailblazing Public-Value-Kompetenzzentrum to the most recent experiences of the Swiss SRG SSR or the German ARD. Even if not in such an explicit way, the Portuguese public service broadcaster (*Rádio e Televisão de Portugal*, RTP) has implemented different types of participation practices aimed at regaining citizens' trust and institutional credibility.

Following the revival of the public value notion and considering the renewal of the management contract of the Portuguese public service broadcaster, *Rádio e Televisão de Portugal* (RTP), this research project will discuss how the RTP understands its value and how it manages its relationships with its different stakeholders.

The main purpose of this research is to outline the map of values of the RTP drawing from the renewal of its management contract, paying special attention to the role allocated to participation and stakeholder involvement in this new state of the Portuguese public service broadcaster. To do so, a case study on the renewal of the management contract is developed. This case study is built by applying two methodological techniques: document analysis and semi-structured interviews to experts.

The results of the research allowed to, first, identify the main values present in the proposal of the updated management contract. Cooperation and territorial cohesion are ranked as the most prominent values (essential values), followed by excellence, diversity, media literacy, social engagement and innovation (important values) and accountability, universality, independence, social justice and citizen participation (interesting values).

In terms of the most significant manifestations of structural participation, it is noted that this is quite institutionalized within the Portuguese public service broadcaster, through the *Conselho de Opinião*, an advisory body that aims at representing Portuguese civil society, and a Director of Cooperation, where the relation with the media sector of Portuguese-speaking African countries is coordinated.

The research concludes that public value dimensions are intertwined and cannot be understood individually. This also means that public value is a changing concept that can integrate different dimensions according to the changing needs and expectations of the society. Moreover, it is also suggested that the development of a clear public value strategy can contribute to enhance public value creation and, thus, contribute to the legitimation of public service media.

Chapter 2

Theoretical background

2. Theoretical background

To contextualize this research project, in this chapter we will develop a theoretical background where we approach 1) the notion of public value, along with the main public value strategies that European public service broadcasters are implementing; 2) what we understand by structural participation, and 3) the context of the Portuguese PSM organization, RTP.

2.1. Public value: from trendy concept to a lifeboat for PSM

The notion of public value was borrowed by public service broadcasting from political administration and public policy studies. In fact, *Public Value Management* took over *New Public Management* in the 1990s after Mark H. Moore (1995) proposed a new approach to public administration and public policy management. While *New Public Management* was developed in the framework of the liberalization waves and aimed to transpose managerial practices from the private sector to public administration, *Public Value Management* respects the essence of the public sector, understands the need to combine individual and public preferences and, at the same time, it introduces a dynamic component in the definition of the public sector's goals (Kelly et al., 2022).

Under Moore's theory, public value was understood as the goal towards which all public managers should aim, even though "they cannot know for sure what that is" (Moore, 1995, p. 71). Public value has no given, fixed definition because it varies depending on how society's needs and values evolve. For Moore (1995), public management should go beyond traditional, pre-existing tasks and opt for an active role in defining what is valuable and in identifying new opportunities to create public value. Moore understood *Public Value Management* as a triangular strategy that aligns three vertices: a definition of public value produced by public managers, sources of legitimacy and support that can enable such definition, and the operational capacity required to produce it.

Thus, Moore anticipated some of the trends that would define public management in the following years (also in the broadcasting and media sector),

such as the need to apply innovation strategies and to engage citizens and stakeholders in participation practices within the decision-making process. Stoker (2006) also touches on this last aspect when studying the management of public value from the point of view of network governance, arguing that “the judgment of what is public value is collectively built through deliberation involving elected and appointed government officials and key stakeholders.” (Stoker, 2006, p. 42), so this type of governance implies a context in which “no one is in charge but where leaders at various levels play key roles” (Stoker, 2006, p. 52) .

Since Moore’s seminal work, many scholars approached public value from very different fields. Beyond public administration, some contributions from an economic point of view should also be noted. Mariana Mazzucato, for instance, highlights the importance of the revitalization of the public sector in value creation, considering public organizations and public funding as key factors in boosting new markets and in the promotion of collaborations with the private sectors. According to Mazzucato (2018, p. 269), public value is a framework under which governments are urged to “think big and differently” in order to better fulfil existing and emerging needs within the societies they serve.

This urge to meet the communicative and democratic needs of the society, as well as the imperative to regain public trust in a context of decreasing legitimacy, was key for public service broadcasters to start implementing public value strategies back in the early 2000s. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was the first public service media organization to embrace public value as a key concept in its 2004 Charter Manifesto (BBC, 2004), in its corporate communication and also in its governance and regulation (with the implementation of the first *ex ante* test for the approval of new media services, the Public Value Test).

As argued by Lee, Oakley and Naylor (2011), the BBC used public value with a rhetorical purpose in order to promote operational and institutional changes as a response to external pressure in a time where the corporation was undergoing its own online and digital expansion. Suárez Candel (2012) also reinforces this idea by stating that

“the concept of public value (...), has become a key topic when redefining public service in order to adapt it to the new technical/operational scenario and to the new regulatory framework resulting from the conflict [between public and private media]. Instead of focusing on the accuracy of the normative definition, the concept of public value emphasizes the assessment of the benefic that a certain content or service will provide the citizenry with” (Suárez Candel, 2020, p. 54)

This first experience with the application of public value to public service broadcasting led to the expansion of this “buzzword” (Moe & Van den Bulck, 2014) as a narrative of self-defence across European public service media. For Moe and Van den Bulck, the term served for different things, as “for some, it is a new regulatory concept meant to discipline public service broadcasters, while others see it as a way to ‘defend’ and promote what public service institutions do” (Moe and Van den Bulk, 2014, p. 73).

Similarly, Gransow (2020) also points to this absence of a specific definition of public value, which can be understood both as an aspiration for public service broadcasters to provide quality content and services that fulfil society’s needs; and as an analytical tool for its evaluation.

Therefore, the problem of defining PSM’s public value (the original sin of this management stream) resulted in different understanding of this concept across European public service broadcasters (Cañedo, Rodríguez-Castro and López-Cepeda, 2022). Even within the BBC, different breakdowns of public value dimensions coexist. While it was originally conceived as the sum of individual, social and economic value (BBC, 2004), BBC’s public value has also been disaggregated into 5 dimensions linked to the corporation’s public purposes: democratic value, cultural and creative value, educational value, social and community value and global or international value.

Other relevant understandings of PSM’s public value have been developed across European corporations. The trailblazing *Public-Value-Kompetenzzentrum* of the *Österreichischer Rundfunk* (ORF, the Austrian public service broadcaster)

has prompted further research into PSM's contribution to society, collaboration with other public service broadcasters and, most importantly, the dialogue with ORF's many stakeholders around its remit. In Germany, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (ARD) overcame its original reluctance to apply public value, as it was feared that it would imply restrictions for public service broadcasters (Gransow, 2018, p. 219), and established a Public Value Coordination. Another example can be found in Switzerland, where its PSM organization SRG SRR is deploying an ambitious public value strategy after its continuance was questioned in the 2018 referendum on the licence fee.

Despite the many approaches and understandings of public value within European PSM, two key elements arise as essentials for creating public value: participation and innovation. The public value theory originally put forward by Moore (1995) proposed a renovation of the public sector by assigning the public manager the tasks of meeting the needs of the stakeholders and of constantly seeking to evolve through innovation. When Moore's theory was transferred to the field of Public Service Media, public value was understood as a means to open PSM governance and decision-making processes to stakeholder participation and as a compromise with innovation.

2.2. What we talk when we talk about structural participation

Participation, in its many understandings and articulations, has always been a challenge for media organizations (Livingstone, 2013; Howoritz & Napoli, 2014; Debrett, 2015; Azurmendi et al., 2018), especially those concerned with the promotion of democratic cultures and communication rights. The development of new media propelled the academic and professional debate around the wide array of participatory possibilities allowed by new technologies (Carpentier, 2011). The dynamics of convergence were seen as a change of paradigm from "one-to-many to many-to-many communications" (Carpentier, 2011, p. 111) and for the emerging of bottom-up participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006).

The issue of participation has been especially relevant for public service broadcasters: in their transition towards Public Service Media organizations, their

public service remit has been expanded to accommodate the features enabled by new media. In this way, establishing more bidirectional relationships with the audiences and involving them in content production and in decision-making practices was considered by PSM organizations as a means to enhance some of their core values, such as universality, creativity, diversity, social cohesion and participation in democracy (Vanhaeght & Donders, 2015). Although most of the strategies put into practice by PSM organizations in the last years have been linked to content production, there is also a chance for a “participatory turn” (Bonini, 2017) that would allow for structural participation (Carpentier, 2011) within the decision-making processes of PSM organizations and for a consequent distribution of power.

Media scholars such as Uwe Hasebrink have pointed out the role of audiences as independent and pluralistic civil society actors with “a special sensitivity for the problems and concerns of media users” and “oriented towards the common welfare” (Hasebrink, 2011, p. 329). By conceiving the audiences as citizens rather than consumers (Livingstone & Lunt, 2011), PSM organizations could open their governance structures in order to place them in the centre of PSM decision-making and therefore contributing to boosting their own legitimacy (Horz, 2016).

However, the involvement of the audiences in PSM’s content and governance can also bring some dilemmas that must be addressed. The increasing popularity of User Generated Content in legacy media may lead to copyright concerns (López-Cepeda et al., 2019). On the other hand, reflections about the possibilities of both content-wise and structural participation often ignore the fact that audience might not be that interested in such participation practices (Głowacki, 2014).

For the purpose of this research, participation we refer to the many strategies and practices designed to open PSM governance, decision-making, production, and distribution processes to their stakeholders. This means that by participation we refer to what Cañedo, Rodríguez-Castro and López-Cepeda (2022) understand as two different public value dimensions: citizen participation and cooperation. While citizen participation is conceptualized as the citizens’ right

to participate in the process of creation and broadcasting of content, cooperation is linked to the involvement of other institutions, broadcasting organizations or audiovisual companies in the business strategies of PSM.

2.3. Public service broadcasting in Portugal

Public service broadcasting in Portugal is embodied in the company *Rádio e Televisão de Portugal* (RTP). The television services of the RTP started in 1957, amid Salazar's dictatorship. This meant that during this first period the control of all organs of social communication were heavily controlled by the State (Martín Jiménez, 2013). However, the revolutionary character of the Portuguese transition to democracy led to greater independence from the government for the public service broadcaster (Martín Jiménez, 2013), something quite different to what happened to the Spanish public broadcaster of Spain, RTVE, also born during a dictatorship, but with a high dependency from the government even after the democratic transition (Ortiz Sobrino and López Vidales, 2012).

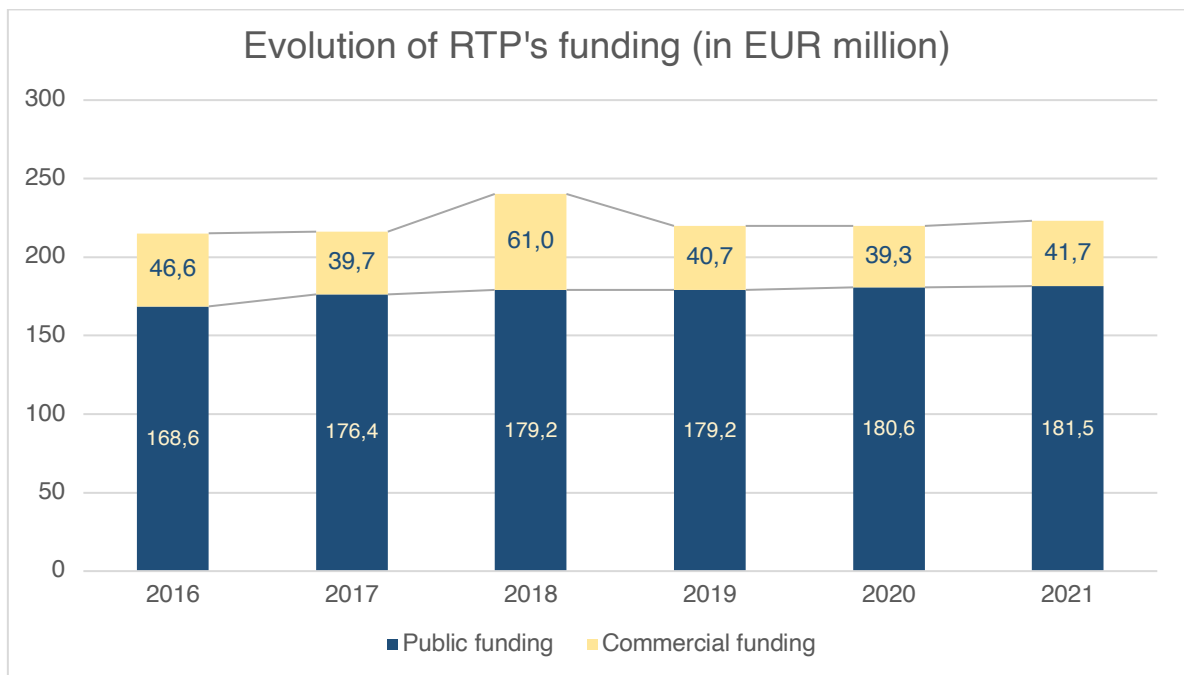
Nowadays, the Media Pluralism Monitor considers that the independence of public service media in Portugal enjoys good health in terms of funding and governance, with just a 3% risk (Rui Cádima et al., 2022). This sustainability stems from the Board of Directors been elected and monitored by the Independent General Council (*Conselho Geral Independente*, CGI), as well as by the funding system of RTP, based on the licence fee (Contribution to the Audiovisual Media).

The governance of the RTP is mainly undertaken by three bodies: the Independent General Council, the Board of Directors and the Advisory Council (*Conselho de Opinião*). The Independent General Council was first established in 2014. It is the body in charge of monitoring the fulfillment of the public service remit, in the terms provided in the management contract. The CGI, composed by 6 members elected for a period of 6 years, also elects the Board of Directors and defines the strategic lines of the corporation. The CGI could be compared to what in the UK was the BBC Trust until the renewal of the Royal Charter in 2017.

The Board of Directors is composed by just 3 members. Their tasks, of a very managerial nature, include the fulfillment of the management contract, to collaborate with the CGI, and appoint other leadership heads within the RTP.

The Advisory Council is an internal body that aims to gather the perspective of different areas of the Portuguese society. It is made of 32 members elected for 4 years by different political, cultural, and civil society organizations, such as the Assembleia da República, the workers of the RTP, unions, youth and family associations, migrant communities, audience associations or consumers associations, among others. The Advisory Council advises on the activity plans and multi-year programs, and can be compared to the *Rundfunkräte* in the German public service media system.

Figure 1. Evolution of RTP's funding (2016-2021, in EUR million)



Source: European Audiovisual Observatory (2022).

Regarding the funding of the RTP, two types of funding mechanisms are combined. Public funding comes from the licence fee, that costs Portuguese citizens 2.85€ and is paid on the electricity bill (Rui Cádima et al., 2022). This means that, as calculated by the European Broadcasting Union (2022), the annual licence fee per citizen is of 36,25€. Besides the RTP, this licence fee also

funds the Portuguese news agency Lusa. On the other hand, the RTP is also funded by commercial income, although this only represents 18.7% of the total funding in 2021. Figure 1 represents the evolution of RTP's funding, both public and commercial.

In terms of market share and according to data from the European Audiovisual Observatory (2022), RTP is the third most important media company (market share 13,2%), just after SIC (Sociedade Independente de Comunicação, market share 22,8%) and Media Capital (20,8%).

This figure drops significantly when looking at RTP's weekly use: according to the Reuters Institute Digital News Report, RTP News online reaches 12% of the respondents weekly, which means that the Portuguese public service broadcaster's online news services are ranked in position number 15, way behind other competitor such as SIC News online (33%), Notícias ao Minuto (27%) or Correio da Manhã online (23%) (Newman et al., 2022).

Moreover, in terms of audience trust, the Reuters Institute Digital News Report places RTP as the most trusted media brand of the country, with 78% of que respondents saying they trust the public service broadcaster's news services and just 7% saying they don't (Newman et al., 2022).

RTP is currently undergoing the renewal of *Contrato de Concessão do Serviço Público de Rádio e de Televisão* (República Portuguesa, 2021), the management contract that governs the operations of the public broadcaster since 2015. In 2021, a public consultation was convened, an open process that received over 2500 responses (RTP, 2021), although the final version of the updated management contract is still pending at the moment of writing. Moreover, the government announced that they are working in a new version of the draft, so the approval of the final text is expected to be delayed.

However, considering the critical juncture the RTP finds itself at, it is still appropriate and timely to study which values stood out throughout this renewal process and to contrast them with those underscored in the original 2015 contract, to explore the role that public value and participation will play in this new phase for the RTP.

Chapter 3

Method

3. Method

In this chapter, the methodology applied in this research is described. We explain what the research objectives were and the different methodological techniques that were used to meet them.

3.1. Research objectives

The main purpose of this research project is to outline the map of values of the RTP drawing from the renewal of its management contract, paying special attention to the role allocated to participation and stakeholder involvement in this new stage of the Portuguese public service broadcaster.

This general purpose is disaggregated into the following five specific objectives (S.O.):

- S.O.1. To identify the main values of the RTP in the current stage from a normative perspective, differentiating between the core values traditionally linked to public service media and new, emerging values linked to the evolving demands of the society and to the advances of the media environment.
- S.O.2. To contrast the different perspectives on the public service remit of the RTP presented within the framework of the public consultation on the renewal of its management contract.
- S.O.3. To study the structural participation and stakeholder involvement strategies developed by the RTP in order to become a more democratic and collaborative organisation, and how those strategies are linked to the RTP's public value.
- S.O.4. To analyse the corporate communication strategies put in place by the RTP to communicate to their stakeholders its contribution to society.
- S.O.5. To compare the value definition of the RTP and its strategy of stakeholder involvement with the experience of other European Public Service Media organisations.

3.2. Research questions

Drawing from the general and specific objectives, XX research questions (R.Q.) were also posed:

- R.Q.1. What are the main public value dimensions identified in the draft of the updated management contract of the RTP?
- R.Q.2. To what extent did the public consultation on the management contract engaged stakeholders and citizens in defining RTP's role and values?
- R.Q.3. How does the RTP understand participation and which actions is the public service broadcaster undertaking in this regard?
- R.Q.4. How does the RTP communicate its contribution to society to its stakeholders?

3.3. Method

In order to meet the research objectives and answer the research questions, this project is built around a case study (Yin, 2018) on the renewal of the management contract between the Portuguese State and the RTP.

The case study is a widespread method in the study of media policy, as it facilitates the approach to the complexity that usually surrounds this type of research objects (Broughton Micova, 2019). For the development of the case study, and aiming to overcome the limitations of using a single method and thus strengthen the research results (Wimmer and Dominick, 2013), two methodological techniques were applied: document analysis and semi-structured interviews to experts.

Document analysis allows to settle the basic knowledge about the object of study (in this case, the values of the RTP and its approach to stakeholder involvement), to identify the most relevant issues from both a policy and industry point of view, to evaluate their development over time, to assess the perspective of different stakeholders and to see their impact on the final policy decisions (Karppinen & Moe, 2019). The corpus of documents that were analysed included the laws that regulate the RTP (including the draft of the renewal of the

management contract and the responses received in the public consultation), as well as the grey literature of the RTP (strategic lines, annual reports, etc.).

On the other hand, a second fundamental method in this project are semi-structured interviews to experts. These interviews will be conducted to management staff of the RTP involved in the definition of PSM values and/or in the involvement of stakeholders and to policy experts. The application of this method is intended to complement the knowledge obtained in the document analysis with a qualified and informed perspective on the practical application of the decisions that affect the object of study, revealing information that could not be obtained with other methods (Van Audenhove & Donders, 2019).

At the end of this research project, three interviews had been conducted with senior management of the RTP: Luisa Coelho Ribeiro, member of the management board of the Portuguese public service broadcaster; Marina Ramos, director of Management and Communication of the RTP, and José Arantes, director of Cooperation at the RTP. The interviews were conducted between July and August 2022.

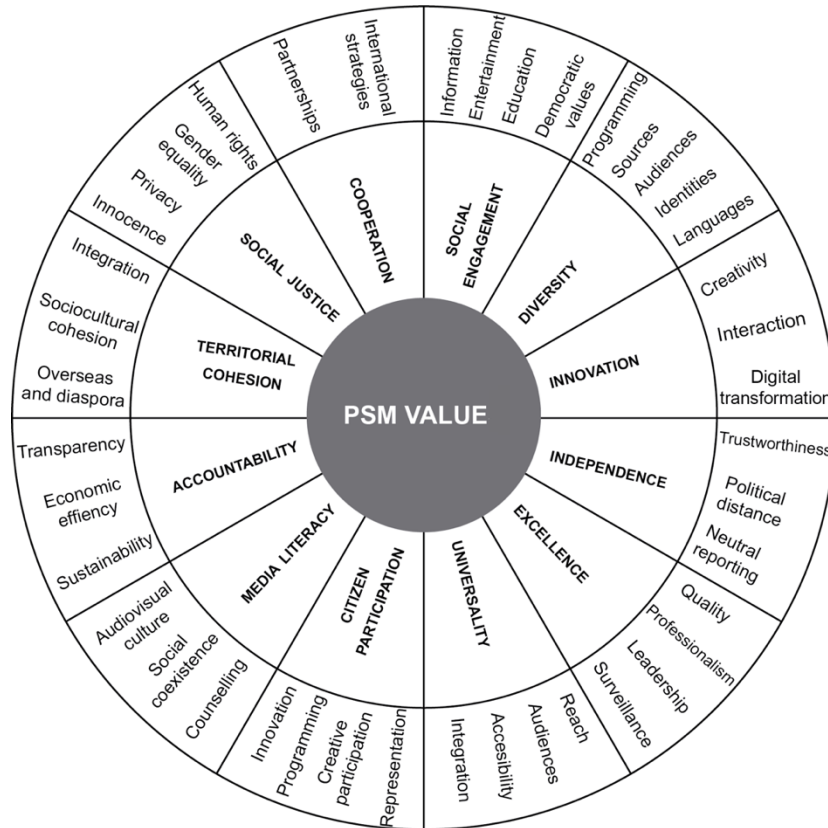
3.3.1. The definition of RTP's map of public value dimensions

To define the map of values of the Portuguese public service media organization, we departed from the model proposed by Cañedo et al. (2022). Based on the document analysis of the legislation and grey literature from 17 European PSM organisations, this model identifies twelve dimensions of public value in the multiplatform ecosystem, which are represented in Figure 2: social engagement, diversity, innovation, independence, excellence, universality, citizen participation, media literacy, accountability, territorial cohesion, social justice and cooperation.

During the document analysis of our research, we analysed the prominence of each of those 12 public value dimensions and established three levels of relevance, which are (from lowest to highest presence): interesting values, important values and essential values. To carry out this hierarchical ranking, the number of times that each of these dimensions of public value are referenced

was calculated. Once the analysis and counting of the mentions of each dimension has been completed, these are distributed in each of the levels.

Figure 2. Core dimensions of PSM's public value



Source: Cañedo, Rodríguez-Castro and López-Cepeda (2022).

Chapter 4

Results

4. Results

The results of this post-doctoral research are presented in two sections. First, we present the results of the analysis of the government proposal of the *Contrato de Concessão do Serviço Público de Rádio e de Televisão* (República Portuguesa 2021) in order to map the values that would guide the new management period of the RTP. Then, we analyse some of the participatory practices identified within the Portuguese public service broadcaster.

4.1. RTP's public value dimensions: cooperation as a key objective

The analysis of the draft of the text proposed by the Portuguese government (República Portuguesa, 2021) allowed for the classification of the 12 public value dimensions of public service media into three categories, according to their presence in the text (see table 1). Thus, cooperation and territorial cohesion were the most predominant values of this draft. Excellence, diversity, media literacy, social engagement and innovation were categorised as important values, while accountability, universality, independence, social justice and citizen participation were tagged as interesting values.

Table 1. Public value dimensions of the RTP after the analysis of the draft of the renewal of its management contract

Essential values	Important values	Interesting values
Cooperation	Excellence	Accountability
Territorial cohesion	Diversity	Universality
	Media literacy	Independence
	Social engagement	Social justice
	Innovation	Citizen participation

Source: processed by the authors.

The results of this analysis point to a curious situation in relation to the objectives of our research: while cooperation is widely reinforced in the new text of the management contract, citizen participation is the public value dimension with the lowest presence. This contrasting position of the two streams that we consider as parts of our definition of participation points to a predominance of participation and cooperation of the RTP with other institutions and organizations rather than with citizens.

When approaching cooperation at the RTP according to the management contract, three main areas are identified. First, cooperation is understood as the leading role of the RTP in the promotion of the Portuguese audiovisual ecosystem. The RTP must support the Portuguese cultural and creative industries and stimulate creativity and experimentation. This understanding of cooperation is in line with the approach to public value creation of Mariana Mazzucato, conceiving public organisations as market drivers. As stated in the draft of the management contract,

“The Concessionaire must organise its internal production structure so as to ensure compliance with public service obligations, in accordance with the objective of ensuring the effectiveness of its role as regulator and promoter of a diversified and competitive production market” (República Portuguesa, 2021, art. 19.1).

Second, cooperation is also conceived as a strategy to better perform in other public value dimensions. For instance, the management contract encourages the RTP to collaborate with other agents in order to promote media literacy: “To promote the development of media literacy, through the design and implementation, in partnership with other relevant actors in this field, of an action plan, which will include, among other activities, the production and dissemination of content on the subject.” (República Portuguesa, 2021, art. 5.f)

It also urges the public organisation to work with other media companies to help them rise their accessibility standards, and contemplates collaboration with other institutions to promote Lusophony with the creation of a new website:

“The Concessionaire is carrying out the necessary studies for the launch, via the portal to promote the Portuguese culture and languages the world, in partnership and/or with the participation of other public and/or private public and/or private entities whose mission or object is based on the pursuit of the same values” (República Portuguesa, 2021, art. 17.5).

Third, cooperation is also understood as the reinforcement of the relations between Portugal and other African Portuguese-speaking countries. The RTP is allocated the responsibility to collaborate and cooperate with the public service broadcasters of those countries in order to promote their media development and to help them in the integration of innovative practices and technologies.

“The Concessionaire is obliged to develop cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries, namely in terms of information, production and exchange of programmes, training and technical support, as well as the production and broadcasting of international broadcasts susceptible of distribution in those countries, in accordance with the programmes financed by the competent organs of Portuguese cooperation and under protocols signed with the respective States, as well as the production and broadcasting of international broadcasts susceptible of distribution in those countries. cooperation bodies and under the terms of protocols signed with the respective states, as well as to develop cooperation with Macao within the framework of the agreements that have been entered into” (República Portuguesa, 2021, art. 26.2).

Also in terms of international collaborations, the management contract also highlights the importance of the collaboration with supranational media institutions, namely the European Broadcasting Union:

“The Concessionaire must maintain, within the framework of the State's foreign policy, relations of cooperation and exchange with the European Broadcasting Union and other international organisations, as well as with foreign entities connected with broadcasting, negotiating the necessary agreements and giving priority to entities in Portuguese-speaking countries” (República Portuguesa, 2021, art. 26.1).

On the other hand, citizen participation within the terms of the RTP's management contract is heavily linked to collaboration with the civil society through the RTP's governance bodies established for this purpose, namely the *Conselho de Opinião*, which will be approached further on. As stated in the draft for the update of the management contract,

“The Concessionaire promotes forms of collaboration with the Public Administration and civil society entities, with special attention to the bodies and services under the responsibility of the members of the government responsible for the areas of Education, Culture and Communication, with the purpose of ensuring the dissemination of activities and events of educational and cultural interest, as well as the dissemination, by schools, libraries and other similar establishments of works of the same interest. (República Portuguesa, 2021, art. 18.5).

4.2. Participation in action at the RTP

Following the normative assumptions established in the management contract, participation is articulated within the RTP in terms of institutionalised civic participation, collaboration with other media agents and cooperation with other Portuguese-speaking countries.

The most obvious and straightforward participatory practice of the RTP is the space opened to civil society in its governance structure: the *Conselho de*

Opinião (Advisory Council). The main aim of this Advisory Council is to represent the different sectors and sensibilities of the Portuguese civil society, in a similar manner as the *Rundfunkräte* in Germany. The Advisory Council of the RTP is composed of 32 members, who are elected following the terms of the broadcaster's Charter (RTP, 2014). This means that 10 members are chosen by the Assembly of the Republic, and one is designed by Azores, one by Madeira, and another one by the association of municipalities. Beyond these 14 members of a marked political nature, other 18 seats are reserved for different representatives of civil society, including RTP's workers, religious communities, unions and employers' organizations, youth associations, family associations, audience organizations, associations of disabled people, specialists in gender equality or consumer organizations, among others.

The competencies of this body are namely of and advisory nature. In brief, the *Conselho de Opinião* is in charge of assessing the action plans and budgets of the RTP, as well as its annual reports and accounts. Moreover, this council is also assigned the task of overseeing the fulfilment of the public service remit and, among other tasks, assesses the cooperation activities undertaken by the RTP with other Portuguese-speaking countries and those deployed in support of the community or Portuguese citizens living abroad.

The second mayor participatory stream where stakeholders are taken into account is the collaboration with other media enterprises, both of public and private nature. Luisa Coelho Ribeiro (2022, personal communication), member of the board of directors of the RTP, points to audiovisual producers as one of the most relevant stakeholders of the public corporation. According to Luisa Coelho Ribeiro, this can be explained due to the “critical” role played by the RTP in the sustainability of the Portuguese audiovisual and cultural industries, investing over 15 million Euros per year in content production, a figure that can be considered remarkably high considering the size of the Portuguese media market, as well as the annual budget of the PSM organization (around 220 million € in 2021, according to the European Audiovisual Observatory).

Marina Ramos (2022, personal communication), director of communication and marketing of the RTP also acknowledges the distinctive role played by the

RTP in terms of its supporting major events. The presence of the public service broadcaster not only in the coverage of big political, religious, or cultural occasions, but also as a partner in large events such as music festivals, allows the RTP to broaden its public service activities beyond broadcasting and media. In this regard, Ramos considers the RTP the “broadcaster of big events”, exemplifying this role and ambition with different campaigns developed along with other relevant actors with the objective of promoting public service values, such as a campaign with editors to promote reading habits.

Being present in this kind of major events is also strategic for RTP when it comes to reinforcing its brand identity. As Marina Ramos puts it, the RTP brand is present, for instance, in Portugal’s biggest music festivals, where they deploy actions of brand activation, they have their own stands and even stages branded after the public service broadcaster.

These partnerships of the RTP illustrate the extent to which the public service broadcaster acts as the engine that drives and supports the Portuguese cultural and creative industries. In this regard, Luisa Coelho Ribeiro states that "there are many people in Portugal that depend on the RTP", a situation that was intensified during the worst months of the Covid-19 pandemic (Luisa Coelho Ribeiro, 2022, personal communication).

Moreover, in terms of collaboration with other media agents, the member of the Board of Directors of the RTP also points to the coproduction agreements fulfilled with other national and regional public service broadcasters. One example can be found in the continuous collaboration between the RTP and the CRTVG (*Corporación Radio e Televisión de Galicia*), the regional public service broadcaster of Galicia, a Spanish region that borders the north of Portugal. RTP and CRTVG have collaborated in the production and distribution of television formats such as *Vidago Palace*, *Auga Seca* or *Sen fronteiras*. The association in international networks such as the EBU is also highlighted by Marina Ramos, which points to the value of the initiative *Keep Media Good*, that has been adapted by the RTP.

Besides this collaboration with national and European media agents, one of the core actions of the RTP is the one targeted at the cooperation with the five

African countries that have Portuguese as an official language (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe). As explained by José Arantes (personal communication, 2022), director of Cooperation of the RTP, the tight relationship between the RTP and these African countries stems from their independence, after which Portugal played a crucial role in the development of their public service broadcasters. Since then, the RTP has kept as a compromise to contribute to the development of the media industries of the Portuguese-speaking African countries. While the most straightforward cooperation actions are conducted along with the public service broadcasters of these five countries, with which RTP coproduces different media formats (such as a live television special for the New Year celebration), Arantes also highlights the collaborations established with other media stakeholders, such as private media outlets and independent producers.

By deploying this cooperation strategy, the RTP contributes to the development of the media industries of the Portuguese-speaking African countries not only in terms of programming, but also in terms of modernization and training. One of the lines of action of the RTP Cooperation is modernizing the stations of these five public service broadcasters. This means providing new equipment in line with technological advances, but also the implementation of new management, media and journalistic practices. In this regard, training also becomes key, as the RTP contributes to further educating communication professionals, addressing the needs formulated by their African partners.

Beyond these important contributions, the collaboration of the RTP with these five African countries also involves sharing the same core public service values. José Arantes (personal communication, 2022) considers part of the RTP's cooperation work the transfer of values such as transparency, rigour, impartiality, and professionalism to their African partners.

“Our allied values are values shared with our partners. They are the values of transparency, rigour, impartiality, professionalism (...), and deontology, and therefore these are very important values for us, which we cultivate and I believe RTP has played an important

role in developing these perceptions in Africa". (José Arantes, personal communication, 2022).

This way, the Portuguese PSM organization aims at shaping the African-speaking Portuguese countries' media industries according to deontological principles. Also in terms of value, this cooperation also contributes to fulfil some of the objectives included in the management contract of the RTP, such as the promotion of the Portuguese language around the world and the increasing of the relationship with the communities of Portuguese citizens living abroad.

4.2.1. The public consultation on the renewal of the management contract

As mentioned before, the Portuguese public service broadcaster is currently undergoing the renewal of the management contract that rules its activities. One of the objectives of this research was to analyse the public consultation that was opened in 2021 after the draft proposal of the Portuguese government had been published. This public consultation received over 2500 responses from both individual citizens and civil society organizations (RTP, 2021).

However, the two constraints handicapped this objective. On the one hand, the responses to the public consultation are not available to the public. While the publication of the responses received to these consultations is widely spread in other European contexts, the Portuguese government did not provide nor the responses in full nor a summary of the most relevant issues raised, and the participants involved. On the other hand, the renewal of the management contract is being delayed due to the change in the government, as the new Minister in charge of media has announced that the previous proposal will be changed. In this regard, José Arantes (personal communication, 2022) considers that no major changes will be introduced, and that the feedback received during the public consultation is still valuable as a "useful reflection" on the PSM model that the Portuguese society wants.

In any case, the experience of the public consultation on the first draft of the renewal of the management contract proposed by the Portuguese government is

still useful and has been positively assessed by the public service broadcaster. The public consultation was open on the 3rd of May 2021 and closed four weeks later, on the 31st of May. The response of the civil society was remarkable, as over 2000 answers were received.

Luisa Coelho Ribeiro (2022, personal communication), member of the board of directors of the RTP, embraces this response, especially in a country like Portugal, where “it is not common to have civic participation”. Therefore, she welcomes all the opinions as long as they are well-intentioned, as she also acknowledges that, in a small country as Portugal is, it would not be rare to see some conflict of interest arise among the responses.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5. Conclusion

In a time where pressure on Public Service Media organizations is multiplied and intensified, public service broadcasters turn to their core values and advance new ones as a means to gain back their legitimacy. As we have seen in this project, some PSM organizations are starting to develop public value strategies where innovation and participation are placed among their top priorities. The case study developed around the Portuguese public service broadcaster, in a time of change marked by the renewal of the management contract, allowed us to draw some conclusions on this country's context. In this closing chapter, we will answer the research questions previously presented and draft some future lines of research.

When looking at the main public value dimensions that can be derived from the analysis of the updated management draft proposed by the Portuguese government (R.Q.1), two essential values were identified: cooperation and territorial cohesion. As presented in the results chapter, cooperation has a prominent role in the definition of the RPT's public service remit. In this regard, cooperation is understood as a strategy to meet a triad of purposes: the promotion of the Portuguese media market (PSM as a market driver), the enforcement of other public value dimensions (such as media literacy or universality), and the support of Portuguese diplomacy in relation to other Portuguese-speaking African countries, as well as within the European public sphere.

Territorial cohesion, on the other hand, is linked to the promotion of the Portuguese language (both inside and outside Portugal's borders) and to the need to serve both the community of Portuguese citizens in the diaspora and the community of Afro-descendants in Portugal. Moreover, this top priority is also related to the accurate representation of different identity manifestations, as long as they are aligned with some of the emerging values identified in this new text, such as the respect of human rights, environmental sustainability and animal welfare.

The response to R.Q.2 has been stained by the political changes that developed during the renewal of the management contract. As the process is taking more time, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the results of the public consultation will actually influence the final text. However, the head charges of the RTP that were interviewed for this research positively assess the results of the public consultation, while they also deem that no major changes will be included in the final text with relation to the first draft.

In close connection to this, we have also seen that the most remarkable participatory practices (R.Q.3.), always understood as structural participation, are the *Conselho de Opinião* and the cooperation direction. This means that the most important forms of structural participation are institutionalized and are given a prominent role within the management. Moreover, the board of directors of the RTP is also very aware of the need to take into account the view of their stakeholders (namely the government, RTP workers, audiovisual producers, and all Portuguese citizens) in their decision-making.

Another important aspect of public value in terms of a legitimation strategy is the communication of such value to the society (R.Q.4). In this regard, the corporate communication of the RTP is in line with the promotion of the values delineated in the strategic project drafted by the Board of Directors. Among the main priorities pointed by the Head of Communication and Management are campaigns for the promotion of reading, in collaboration with publishers. Moreover, the communication of the public service remit is also influenced by the European Broadcasting Union, through joint projects such as *Keep Media Good*.

Two further conclusions can be derived from this research. First, public value dimensions are closely intertwined and thus cannot be understood individually. The holistic nature of public value explains why this was a successful umbrella concept to refer to all the public service principles that a public service media organization should comply with. Public value cannot be understood as a static concept linked to a fixed definition, but, as stated by Mark Moore, as an always changing concept defined by the changing needs and expectations of the society. That is why public service media managers and decision-makers need

to engage in public discussion with their stakeholders, in order to identify their needs and better fulfill their public service remit.

Second, it can also be concluded that the lack of a clear public value strategy led and coordinated by a specific department or unit within the public service broadcaster (as it happens in the Austrian ORF, the Flemish VRT or the German ARD) ends in weaker actions and results in terms of public value creation. It could be recommended that the RTP opted for institutionalizing public value creation in a similar way as it already does with participatory practices through the *Conselho de Opinião* and the Direction of Cooperation.

This post-doctoral work also leaves space for future lines of research. These would mainly be linked to the study of the final version of the updated management contract, to see whether political change also meant changes in the general lines for the RTP. Moreover, it would also be of interest to explore what the assessment and the expectations of Portuguese citizens and civil society are regarding public service media. This would be in line with the need for public service broadcasters to know their stakeholders in order to act as true public service providers.

Chapter 6

Scientific production

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Scientific production

During the course of this research project, part of the results were presented at two international scientific conferences. This allowed us to discuss the viability and robustness of the method and preliminary results, as well as to strengthen the project presented here.

The information about such conferences is included below:

Conference: RIPE@2022 Vienna. Between the Fourth Estate and the Fifth Power: Conservation and Innovation in PSM Journalism

Date and location: 18-21 September 2022, Vienna (Austria)

Organizers: Department of Communication of the University of Vienna and RIPE

Name of the paper presented: Promoting Public Service Media through collaboration and innovation: an approach to public value strategies from the Iberian Peninsula

Authors: Marta Rodríguez-Castro, Sara Pérez-Seijo, Paulo Faustino

Conference: ECREA

Date and location: 19-22 October 2022, Aarhus (Denmark)

Organizers: Aarhus University, Ecrea, Danish School of Media and Journalism

Name of the paper presented: Unwrapping the value of innovation in Public Service Media: case study of RTP and RTVE

Authors: Sara Pérez-Seijo, Marta Rodríguez-Castro, Paulo Faustino

Besides these two conference papers, the author also intends to prepare a paper gathering the main results and to submit it to a high-impact scientific journal in the coming months.

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