CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Christian Fuchs and Klaus Unterberger

This book presents the Public Service Media (PSM) and Public Service Internet Manifesto and associated materials that were created in the work process that led to the manifesto. The book's overall goal is to stimulate discussion about and ideas on the future of Public Service Media, the Internet, democracy and the public sphere.

This publication is a result of the *Research Network InnoPSM: Innovation in Public Service Media Policies* that was led by Alessandro D'Arma (University of Westminster) and Minna Horowitz (University of Helsinki) in the years from 2019 until 2021 and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (see https://innopsm.net/). The two of us (Christian Fuchs and Klaus Unterberger) were steering group members of InnoPSM. In the first meeting of the InnoPSM steering group, we generated the idea of a workshop that was to be focused on the future of Public Service Media under the title "Public Service Media Utopias" to stimulate discussion about how the future of Public Service Media and the Internet can and should look like. Alessandro D'Arma and Minna Horowitz kindly agreed to host and support such a workshop as

the fourth major event of the InnoPSM network. The Public Service Media and Public Service Internet Manifesto is the outcome of InnoPSM's focus on Public Service Media and Internet utopias.

Our basic starting point was the insight that the survival of Public Service Media is in danger, that the dominant form of the Internet and Internet platforms undermines the democratic public sphere and that we need new forms of the Internet and the media to safeguard and renew democracy and the public sphere.

There were several steps that led to the creation of the Public Service Media and Public Service Internet Manifesto. As the *first step*, Christian Fuchs organised an exploratory survey on Public Service Media utopias (Public Service Media/Internet Utopias Survey). The exploratory survey was focused on gathering ideas about the future of the Internet and Public Service Media. The survey was qualitative in nature and focused on three themes:

- communication, digital media and the Internet in an ideal world;
- progressive reforms of Public Service Media;
- Public Service Media and the Internet in 2030.

There were 141 responses. The results are documented in a survey report that forms Chapter 3 of this book. They informed and structured the further work process that led to the Public Service Media and Public Service Internet Manifesto.

The second step should have been a 2-day-long workshop held at the University of Westminster on May 18 and 19, 2020. The overall goal was that individuals interested in Public Service Media utopias come together and co-write a Public Service Media Utopias Manifesto. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to change plans so that the workshop was replaced by online events and activities that led to the Public Service Media and Public Service Internet Manifesto.

The actual *second step* was short video interviews organised by Klaus Unterberger with technical support by Julius Kratky on the question of how the future of Public Service Media and the Internet should look like. We thank Julius Kratky from ORF (Österreichischer Rundfunk) for his support in this step and

for utilising his skills and his switchX technology that supports the conduct and recording of video interviews over a distance. InnoPSM published these videos online (see https://innopsm .net/2021/03/05/envisioning-public-service-media-utopias -video/). We thank Graham Murdock (Emeritus Professor of Culture and Economy at Loughborough University), Atte Jääskeläinen (Director General at the Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland), Julie Mejse Münter Lassen (researcher, University of Copenhagen), Jockum Hildén (researcher, University of Helsinki) and Thomas Steinmaurer (Professor and Head of the Center for ICTs and Society at the University of Salzburg's Department of Communication) for their video contributions.

The *third step* was an online webinar that featured a talk on "Public Service Media in Challenging Times: Connectivity, Climate and Corona" by Graham Murdock, one of the world's leading critical scholars in the field of media and communication studies. There were around 300 participants. The talk has been documented as online video (see https://innopsm.net/2021/01/23/murdock/, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4dJSzyW_GM&t=3s). The talk was followed by an audience debate. A written version of Graham Murdock's talk and the audience debate form Chapter 4 in this book. The event informed the next step.

The *fourth step* consisted of an online debate utilising the eComitee platform (https://ecomitee.com/en). eComitee is an online discussion and collaboration platform that supports constructive digital debates. We thank Andreas Kovar and his team for providing us access to and support in using their eComitee platform. We invited a group of 82 scholars and Public Service Media professionals to engage in an online debate focused on the future of Public Service Media and the Internet. The overall discussion theme was "Envisioning Public Service Media Utopias". There were four clusters of discussion:

Cluster 1: PSMs' Challenges
Cluster 2: Visions of Change
Cluster 3: PSM Utopias
Cluster 4: Public Service Internet

Each cluster posed a series of questions for discussion:

Cluster 1: PSMs' Challenges
What are the biggest challenges for PSM at the moment?
Please describe (at least three) the most important challenges PSM is facing currently.

What obstacles prevent PSM from changing?
Please focus on external and internal issues, in media policy as well as in corporate structure and culture.

What would they have to overcome to improve performance?

Cluster 2: Visions of Change
What elements of media production are in/dispensable for PSM in the future?
Please focus on PSMs' remit currently in place: culture, information, diversity, education and democratic communication. Is there anything PSM should NOT deliver in the future? Or something it is not delivering now and should deliver and enable in the future?

What is your most radical idea for transforming PSM?
Please address the role of PSM in society, being a media producer, a curator, a media infrastructure and so on.
IMAGINE: You are the Head/CEO of the European PSM-sector: What would you start doing (initiate, create) immediately?

Cluster 3: PSM Utopias
How can PSM achieve to be relevant in the future?
Please focus on media perception, on PSMs' mission and remit to reach out to the whole society, its role as information provider.

Should PSM withdraw from or focus on providing entertainment media?

Please focus on the role of entertainment for the audience, its relevance as mirror of daily, societal life.
IMAGINE: 20 years from now: PSM is a successful European infrastructure: What has been changed? What is the reason for its success? How does the public perceive and use PSM?
IMAGINE: The best world ever: How do PSM look like?

Cluster 4: Public Service Internet
Why do we need public digital spaces and a Public Service Internet in Europe?

How could such spaces look like?

What kind of Public Service Internet initiatives could be useful: a platform, a network, a cooperation between several, national 'spaces' or a European project?
How should a project like that best be financed?

Who should participate: PSM, quality media, public institutions, NGOs, civil society, the public?

Utilising the eComitee platform, an active group of scholars and PSM experts discussed these questions for a time period of 2 months. We thank all the colleagues who participated in the discussion. We thank Michael-Bernhard Zita for the facilitation of the discussion and eComitee process. After the discussion in the four clusters was closed, Alessandro D'Arma, Christian Fuchs, Minna Horowitz and Klaus Unterberger created a summary of the discussion. This summary is documented as Chapter 5 in this book. Based on the summary, we created a first version of the manifesto. We thank Graham Murdock for his inputs to the early manifesto version.

   The manifesto draft went through subsequent editorial stages before it was put up to the eComitee platform for discussion and for gathering inputs and editorial suggestions. The online debate of the manifesto lasted for 3 weeks. We then reviewed all suggestions

and edited the document, which led to the final version of the Public Service Media and Public Service Internet Manifesto.

The *fifth step* consisted in the launch of the manifesto and the gathering of signatures. We launched the manifesto in an online event on 17 June 2021. A video of this event is available online (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0kiilUrF9o). The manifesto can be signed here: http://bit.ly/signPSManifesto, https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Mxb1yKT7S0lzC6ftfpXj3HTb iH6R6D-m6s5hkf50tyY.

The Manifesto was originally published in English and has been translated into several languages, including Chinese, German, Portuguese, and Spanish. Please see https://archive.org/details /@public_service_media_and_public_service_internet_manifesto.

A manifesto is not a document and is never finished. A manifesto is an open-ended process. The Public Service Media and Public Service Internet Manifesto is an open-ended public debate process that wants to inspire envisioning democratic futures of society, the Internet, the public sphere and the media landscape. Democracy needs a Public Service Internet and Public Service Media.