

Gregory Ferrell Lowe and Fiona Martin (eds)

**THE VALUE OF PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA**

NORDICOM, University of Göteborg, Göteborg, 2014, 288 pp  
ISBN 978-91-86523-84-8

Before us lies the results of RIPE@2012 conference *Value for public money – money for public value* held in Sydney. The Book *The Value of Public Service Media* edited by Gregory Ferrell Lowe and Fiona Martin is a collection of fourteen papers discussing the topic of public service media's (PSM) value. The editors wrote the first chapter and placed the rest under three separated parts.

"The Value and Values of Public Service Media" introduces readers to other chapters and places them within the debate around different understandings of the value of PSM. This discussion is important because nowadays austerity measures and intervention raises questions whether public value is a measurable value, and if it is – how? Leaning on Bennington and Moore's (2011) notion that PSM should deliver value according to demands of their public, but add value to public sphere as well, the article stresses that beneath market value lies an ethos, unquantifiable and dedicated to serving a wider community.

The first section called "Defining & Critiquing 'Public Value'" contains four chapters. The first, written by James Spigelman titled "Defining Public Value in the Age of Information Abundance" deals with the digital revolution and data overload. He states that the human role in the selection, organization and analysis of information is now more critical than ever. Otherwise, we are left with useless piles of data. Spigelman expresses his concern with a managerial approach that insists on a universal measurement apparatus. He advocates that PSM treats its audiences primarily as citizens and not purely as customers. The second article, "Comparing 'Public Value' as a Media Policy Term in Europe", written by Hallvard Moe and Hilde Van den Bulck investigates different definitions and various adaptations of the concept of 'public value' by stakeholders and policy makers, at various levels – from the state level institutions to European Union level. They showed how the term became a buzzword used to legitimize policy directions, often not very connected to community interests, at the same time leading to a lack of clarity in the understanding of 'public value'.

Peter Goodwin's "The Price of Everything and the Value of Nothing? Economic Arguments and the Politics of Public Service Media", follows giving a critique of the economic argument. Goodwin expressed concern with the trend of convergence leading to ownership concentration in media. He thinks that merit goods should get more public funding (not less) and show more initiative. Therefore, he directly opposes new austerity measures.

Addressing the same topic, in "The Concept of Public Value & Triumph of Materialist Modernity. '...this strange disease of modern life...'" Michael Tracey writes about the importance of PSM for creativity and culture, education and the maintenance of a functional civil society and citizenship – all unmeasurable social achievements. Referring to them, he states "[t]hat there is no such measurement, one might claim, is what makes us human" (p. 88).

Four articles form the second part, entitled "Dimensions of Contemporary Public Service Value." The opening chapter of this section "A Market Failure Perspective on Value Creation in PSM", authored by Christian Edelvold Berg, Gregory Ferrell Lowe and Anker Brink Lund intends to answer question whether the thesis of 'market failure' is still valid

for broadcasters and in what way is it appropriate for broadband services. In response to the argument that public media (funding) causes market distortions, the authors say that they see PMS “as a legitimate intervention to correct market failure” adding that “the production and distribution of meritorious public goods is platform-neutral” (p. 118). PSMs are still important because plurality in media ownership does not necessarily mean plurality in content.

In “What Media Value? Theorizing on Social Value and Testing in Ten Countries” Josef Trappel criticizes the use of Porter’s ‘value chain’ concept in media markets and presents some important empirical evidence concerning five social values in ten countries: independence of the news media from power holders, company rules against internal/external influence on news room/editorial staff, citizens participation, rules and practices on internal pluralism, watchdog: mission statement and recourses. Trappel concluded that PSM intrinsically pay more attention to social values than other types of media.

Karen Donders and Hilde van den Bulck wrote “The ‘Digital Argument’ in Public Service Media Debates. An Analysis of Conflicting Values in Flemish Management Contract Negotiations for VRT.” Their case study of VRT discloses relations and features of actors involved in the creation of media policy. Using advocacy coalition analysis researchers showed that, in negotiations on new management contracts, two coalitions were formed around three political parties – the Socialist Party (coalition society first), and Christian Democrats with Flemish Nationalists (coalition market first). The first won because of the stronger ties between stakeholders and a higher level of public support.

The second part ends with “Multi-stakeholderism. Value for Public Service Media” by Minna Aslama Horowitz and Jessica Clark. It aims in setting a model of collaboration between actors of different interests and expertise. The model entails three circuits of power introduced by Clegg (1989). At the micro-level (individuals participating) social media driven collaboration; at the meso-level (institutional circuit) – conventional media organizations; and at the macro-level (structural issues) – policy driven collaboration. Their intention is to show that optimal public value would be achieved if diverse stakeholders are involved in creating it.

Third part of the book “Public Service Value in Practice” starts with the article “Disaster Coverage and Public Value from Below. Analyzing the NHK’s Reporting on the Great East Japan Disaster.” In it, Takanobu Tanaka and Toshiyuki Sato conduct a comparative content analysis of disaster coverage in public (NHK) and commercial (Nippon Television and Fuji Television) media. Their results are in favor of NHK, which prioritized the saving of people’s lives and not so much damage reporting. They suggest that PMS works more on social media development and on the implementation of ‘human security’ as a wider security concept and a type of public media value.

The second article, written by Stoyan Radoslavov, “Media Literacy Promotion as a Form of Public Value? Comparing the Media Literacy Promotion Strategies of the BBC, ZDF and RAI” provides three case studies of countries that represent different concepts of public value: the BBC – public good, ZDF – a democratic good, and RAI – a cultural good. Radoslavov sees media literacy promotion as one way of promoting public value because it benefits society and not just individuals.

Next, Jonathon Hutchinson gives us his point of view regarding public value. In the chapter entitled “Expanding the Public Service Remit through ABC Pool” he sees PMS as

an R&D initiator, especially in testing risky online media environments and defends public funding as a form of investment that benefits the media market as a whole. Hutchinson gives three examples and conducts a case study of his own – *New Beginnings*, an ABC Pool project – in order to highlight the significance of PMSs for building social and cultural capital. The article also stresses the importance of cultural intermediation and co-creative practices with the audience as partners.

In the chapter “Public Value and Audience Engagement with SBS Documentary Content. Go Back To Where You Came From & Immigration Nation” Georgie McClean talks about the role of PSMs in ensuring representation, recognition and social participation in multicultural societies, like Australia. The second part of title refers to two documentary programs covering asylum seekers and immigrants’ problems. McClean analyzed audience responses in focus groups and viewing diaries, and found that SBS provided cultural recourses that helped viewers to develop understandings, identifications and reactions on important social issues.

The book ends with chapter 14, “Finding the Value in Public Value Partnership. Lessons from Partnerships Strategies and Practices in the United Kingdom, Netherlands and Flanders.” Authors Tim Raats, Karen Donders and Caroline Pauwels clarify that partnership projects present a special form of public value. Additionally, the partnership of PSM with other (not always public) cultural and educational institutions provides a means to increase return-on-investment. Thanks to the sharing of costs and the expansion of distribution.

This collection intends to re-articulate the public value ethos in media services, now in circumstances that quite differ from those when it was first articulated. Of course, the book does not give final answers to all of our questions – that is not its purpose. However, the book does represent an important contribution to the discussion on public value. And that is not a small thing if we know that public institutions make a great deal in forming a firm cohesive strength in every community.

At first, it may seem that this book is meant to serve only media scholars. But looked at closely we see that it intends to serve the wider social science community. Experts in law and public policy can find something regarding regulations, political economists can see how different economic ideologies affect public services, and security experts can benefit from the Japanese case study. But, the most useful utilization would be if people responsible for media management learn from it and pass their knowledge further. This way, the book can have a life outside the sometimes confined academic borders.

**Kristina Čelap**

Des Freedman

**THE CONTRADICTIONS OF MEDIA POWER**

Bloomsbury Academic, London, New York, 2014, 192 pp

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As the media – legacy, digital, or social – shift through different transformations and disruptions, the issues of media power and the power over media remain highly relevant. The topics of disintermediation and decentralization – as close relatives of the term ‘disruption’ – are often brought up in the discussion and research on the new media

environment. However the question remains whether media power and the power over media have really changed or are we merely seeing a small redistribution within the old patterns of power relations.

*The Contradictions of Media* by Des Freedman is an excellent place to start looking for these answers: a complex in-depth analysis of the modern framework of different power structures in media and from media. Des Freedman is a Professor of Media and Communications Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is also on the national council of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom and is the chair of the Media Reform Coalition. This book reflects this duality, with a combination of an academic approach on one side and activist approach on the other side. Freedman starts with the theoretical analysis of key conceptual approaches to the concept of power and uses four paradigms that provide the organizational foundation for the book: chaos, consensus, control, and contradiction.

He is particularly focused on the latter, as he states that "(p)erhaps no single model can do justice to the heterogeneity of media flows and the complexity of media power, but the contradiction paradigm, with its emphasis on both the constitution of and the cracks in media power, provides by far the most persuasive account of how best to challenge the traditions, institutions and practices that underpin it." He defines Marx's conception of contradiction as a key feature of capitalist society and believes that the contradiction paradigm is "needed to compensate for the misplaced optimism of pluralism, the occasional functionalism of the control paradigm and the unwarranted celebrations of the chaos scenario." (p. 29) Media power, according to this perspective, may be comprehensive but it is nevertheless always unstable and contestable (p. 29) as it is "irreducible to any single place or person or text and that it is instead organized more like a force field – the meeting point of institutions and individuals in defined contexts struggling to dominate creative and symbolic production." (p. 146) He is careful not to reduce the power to merely economic power, like Nick Couldry has warned before, as he defines power as far too extensive and productive a concept to be 'reduced' to primarily economic features; in this perspective, the power of the media – institutions, channels and texts that rely above all on symbolic interactions – is even less reducible to economic imperatives.

The theoretical framework of the first four chapters is focused on how "media power – vested in and circulating through corporate institutions, policy networks, professional routines and technological developments – assists in the reproduction of elite power more generally"; this framework includes classical critical theorists, including Adorno and Marcuse (and his concept of 'repressive tolerance'), Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukacs, German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, the theory of hegemony and Gramsci, theories of elites, criticism of neo-liberalism, and different perspectives on ownership (Lazarsfeld and Merton, Raymond Williams. Vincent Mosco). He is particularly analyzing media ownership patterns which, "while unable to reveal the full dynamics of how the media function, are one of the crucial elements in the reproduction of media power". He is rightfully skeptical about the processes of decentralization and disintermediation (and new actors such as Facebook and Twitter), since they "may change the architecture of media markets and improve possibilities for dispersed production – but this does not necessarily imply a transformation of underlying patterns of control." (p. 99) As he warns, despite utopian promises about the dispersion of new media power, the digital media environment is today

often even more concentrated. His critical perspective may be defined as “myth-busting,” or as he states, he “will be called a curmudgeon and a pessimist, willfully challenging any narratives about ‘progress,’ ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’” (p. 92), partly reminiscent of the position taken by Theodore Roszak in his criticism of the specific aspects of media power, namely information, in his book *The Cult of Information* from 1994.

But Freedman goes one step ahead and is not just ‘pessimistic’, but also analyzes the opportunities for resistance to (media) power that could create organic resistance towards hegemony. He calls the development of “a more critical approach to media policy that challenges dominant frames and objectives by highlighting the exclusions, gaps and taken-for-granted agendas that mark ongoing policy debates.” (p. 64)

His activist approach is seen in the fifth chapter: “For all the consultations, reports, seminars, working parties, blogs, speeches and even legislation that populate the policy environment – in other words, for all the *noise* that is generated – what needs to be made visible are the questions that are not asked, the alternatives that are not considered and the agendas that are not posed. It is these silences that media policy activists need to highlight.” (p. 76) The issue of policy silence is particularly relevant, from a methodological aspect and for academics and researchers. Freedman states that “a focus on policy silences would also have consequences for study of the field itself. Methodologically, this would involve a more qualitative approach to policy analysis including interviews with a range of people beyond traditional ‘insiders.” (p. 75) And it is this approach and this analysis of policy silences, where we are faced with the almost complete evisceration of alternative media frameworks, that particularly, strongly contributes to current debates and to future research (or activism) in the field of media policy and media power: to more thoroughly analyze silence as “a socially constructed phenomenon that reflects the unequal distribution of power in society.” (p. 73)

Freedman is thus combining an important activist contribution with a highly relevant methodological and theoretical insight into the key aspects of media power, as an engaged intellectual taking a critical stance in relation to different policies, power plays, and media, old and new. He is often using a more essayistic approach, taking on many particular topics and specific media content, from *Counterpunch* to *Breaking Bad*, *Mad Men*, and *Sopranos*, and showing how they still reflect the dominant structures of power and how they still represent “a hegemonic project that is designed to legitimize elite frames and assumptions,” emphasizing the existing model and existing structures of power as the only remaining ideological platform. In the end, *The Contradictions of Media Power* represents an important contribution to a wholesome analysis of different contours of media and modern power, combining different approaches and perspectives (although predominantly critical). It is a highly important read for anyone interested in the functioning of today’s media and a must-read for anyone even slightly interested or involved in media policy and regulation, digital media, and the relationship between the state, owners, the media and the public. And with its fervor and engagement, it might be a work that is capable of mobilizing the disenfranchised.

**Marko Milosavljević**

Ulrik Haagerup

### **CONSTRUCTIVE NEWS**

InnoVatio Publishing, Hanoi, New York, Pretoria, Rapperswil, 2014, 137 pp  
ISBN 978-3-906501-07-9

“Conflicts, drama, crooks and victims. That’s news. This is our world. Or is it?” This sentence, taken from the book’s web teaser depicts the key idea of the Ulrik Haagerup’s book. *Constructive News*. The author is Executive Director of DR News (Danish Public Service Broadcasting Company) who has written this book on the basis of his practical experience in the Danish Broadcaster DR newsroom where he started a project of changing bad news habits and making journalism more meaningful, now when the audience is turning its back to traditional media. As the title says, it is a book on constructive news and beneath the title on the front page, there is a subheading explaining its goal. “Why negativity destroys the media and democracy – And how to improve journalism of tomorrow”.

The theme of this project, more than just the book, according to Haagerup, is not only the change of news habits and the change of technology, but also the negativity sold under the label “this is the news”. In the first pages of the book, Haagerup fears of being mistaken and misunderstood, so he wants to make clear that according to his opinion, journalists should be real watchdogs, independent and incorruptible, always seeking the best version of the truth. It is obvious that Haagerup is writing from his rich journalistic experience and he presents himself as a winner of prestigious journalism awards, also as a member of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalism.

In the preface, Helmut Schmidt, former Chancellor and the publisher of the German weekly *Die Zeit*, calls media negativity one of the greatest threats to democracy, because the consequences are severe, because in such a world, people get a false picture of reality. In such a world, says Schmidt, media-democracies do not produce leaders, but populists. Conflict and crime affect our news agenda. Haagerup quotes Steve Jobs who already in 2010, talking about Rupert Murdoch’s media, expressed his concern that the news axis was no longer pointing between different political directions and ideologies, but between the different roles we play in society, a choice between being constructive and destructive. One year later, Murdoch had to shut down the paper *The News of the World*. It was a consequence of the scandal when it was discovered that the paper was hacking the phones of the celebrities to get stories.

The book *Constructive News* consists of 2 parts and 9 chapters. In the first part (the first 3 chapters) under the title “What is the Problem?” the author detects the problem after analyzing his own broadcast at DR. He thinks the stories picked by the news are almost always negative, and do not represent the world we live in and do not give the proper context.

In his book, Haagerup calls on the news media to try to imagine that good journalism can also be inspirational. He advocates for a media that would start changing things, to get involved in the dialogue on how to improve media quality. “Imagine if we spent less effort on shooting at each other, disagreeing and fighting over who is mostly to blame.”

Haagerup notices that in the today’s journalism tabloid criteria prevail: the conflict angle, the drama angle, the victim angle and the villain angle. Journalists suffer from a collective disease, according to the professor in psychology Henrik Knopp. There is a traditional journalistic template which demands that all the stories, even those that could be

inspirational, have to be negatively angled. Professor Knopp compares superficial news with no context with fast calories that make us slower, fatter and more tired. In the same way, people who just hear about problems and who disagree and argue disrespectfully, they become mentally exhausted. Haagerup gives arguments as to why there is need for a change and gives examples of good practice in the second part of his book under the title "Inspiration for a Solution."

In the second part, Haagerup discusses the new approach in practice, in his own company – DR. This approach is the result of a change in strategy which started with asking simple questions: "What's the meaning of DR? Why are we here?" Then, the mission of DR was described – DR shall inform, challenge and bring together people in Denmark. DR cut down on administration and invested more in quality content. In the news, there was less covering of crime, entertainment, and more quality reporting on business, politics and health. DR launched a *Society Channel*, DR2, as a 24-hour channel with only background news, documentaries, and current affairs. In the main news show on DR1 at 9pm, they continuously insisted on background magazine stories and international issues. At the same time, DR News added constructive elements in its storytelling. Every day, they wanted to have at least one story which could inspire or give a positive example or solution. And, Haagerup concludes: "A strange thing happened: Viewers came back."

Maybe the idea of constructive news looks too idealistic and there are critics who even ridiculed the idea or making a caricature of it by describing it as depicting the world in the bright colors, supported with sentimental music. The author of the book answers the critics and gives a shortlist of the traps of constructive news that one should be aware of, such as: Constructive news is not the same as positive news. Critical reporting is still important. It is not happy news. It is not conservative. According to the Ulrik Haagerup, constructive journalism is mainly about news you can use, about context and solution based journalism. It is not about hiding, but explaining. It is also not about avoiding or hiding the existing conflict or negative side of the story. Constructive journalism is more about finding examples how people overcome crises, how people find solutions.

To conclude again with the web book teaser, constructive news, as envisioned in the book, is, more than anything else, a wakeup call to the media world struggling to survive into the future.

**Tena Perišin**

Chin-Chuan Lee (ed.)

**INTERNATIONALIZING INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2015, 338 pp

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With no malice intended, hegemonic tendencies are almost congenital, and reverential deference to the hegemonies is reflexive from those who are habituated to think that the hegemony knows better. The best brains of the emerging world have long been anesthetized to think of themselves as useless and hopelessly "third world" reeking with primitivism, backwardness. These "best brains" tracked to the "west" where epistemology

is constructed as the paragon of the universe. The brains drained from the global south to the global north to drink from their knowledge wells. Thus the locus of the best knowledge has shifted almost permanently to the "west." The "locus" is not a geographical location, but a way of thinking about epistemology.

Thanks to Latin American scholars in the 60's, Raul Prebisch, Andre Gunder Frank, Oswaldo Sunkel, Teotonio dos Santos dependency theory exposed the impact of "western" dependency on the persistent poverty of the poorer nations. Divya C. McMillan in her book *International Media Studies* (2007), engages in a post-colonial critique to move beyond the "west" and the "rest" frame and positions media studies in the overlapping narratives of the global, national and local narratives.

The use of the term 'international' and 'global' almost interchangeably in international communication studies is problematic. 'Inter-national' speaks for the exchange between and among nations almost as peers regardless of economic status, while "global" is inherently hegemonic, expressing a one way flow from the powerful to the powerless.

*Internationalizing "International Communication"* is long overdue. The authors in a scholarly and biting critique, and rightly so, of the prevailing model of international communication studies, which is still driven by the structures of nation-states, will open up a different approach to study communication in a cosmopolitan ecology across countries. Chin Luan Lee, the editor of the book, critically reflects on the history of the field of International Communication, and thoughtfully proposes: "Scholars of international communication need the cultural confidence and epistemological autonomy to make their mark on global or cosmopolitan theory, which necessarily will entail borrowing, recasting, or reconceptualizing Western theories – the more the better, whatever helps us elucidate and analyze rich local experiences and connect them to broader processes, whatever broadens our horizons and expands our repertoire, as long as we are not beholden to any purported final arbiter of universal truth."

The temptation to look for one single theory to explain everything for a "western" mind is understandable since the logic of science has been designated as the logic of social science. Tsan-Kuo Chang addresses this contentious issue when he discusses the production of knowledge. Research methods get *sacralized* by the disciples of certain *gurus*, and thus perpetuated even though these methods are no longer helpful in addressing globalized communication issues. Mr. Chang is right in pointing out that "in the past four decades, the field as a whole has been engaged in research activities that are stuck in an outdated mode of replaying past experience without serious intellectual attempt to go beyond the conceptual boundaries of existing frameworks in knowledge production."

The devotees of "media imperialism" and "cultural imperialism" who tend to see the ubiquity of media as imperialism, and confuse it with transnational communication, ought to consider Michael Curtin's proposal to "internationalize our scholarly endeavors so much as we should explore alternative approaches to the (related) issues", and take a thorough look at Colin Sparks' *Resurrecting the Imperial Dimensions in International Communication*, which he frames in the realpolitik of multi-polar societies. The critique of Schiller and his contemporaries must be contextualized in the times and the media technologies of their times.

The most enlightening and provocative chapter in the book is *Local Experiences, Cosmopolitan Theories*, by Chin-Chuan Lee. In this brilliant chapter Dr. Lee concisely

reviews the attempts in the last decades to internationalize media studies, and exposes the inadequacy of those models, with an appropriate critique of the uber-enthusiastic, uni-polarists, such as Fukuyama, and argues for a different way not just to examine the workings of media, but to understand how communication and media impact the lives of the consumers of the media across countries characterized by evolving digital ecology: cosmopolitanism.

Dr. Lee states: "if international communication scholars are truly serious about achieving the goals of mutual understanding through cultural dialogue, it is imperative that we listen humbly to symphonic music whose harmonious unity has themes and variations and is made of a cacophony of instrumental sounds".

The internationalization of communication is "inter-penetration, mutual learning, and cross-fertilization", and Dr. Lee shares an illustrative poem:

**Married Love** by Guam Daosheng (1262-1319)

You and I  
 Have so much of love,  
 That it  
 Burns like fire,  
 In which we bake a lump of clay  
 Molded into a figure of you  
 And a figure of me.  
 Then we take both of them,  
 And break them into pieces,  
 And mix the pieces with water,  
 And mold again a figure of me.  
 I am in your clay.  
 You are in my clay.  
 In life we share a single quilt.  
 In death we will share one coffin.

**Basilio Monteiro**

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 Maria Edström and Ragnhild Mølster (eds)

**MAKING CHANGE. NORDIC EXAMPLES OF WORKING  
 TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEDIA**

Nordicom, Göteborg, 2014, 216 pp  
 ISBN 978-91-87957-00-0

Based on the understanding of media content as a reflection of society and the influence of the media in the comprehension of gender, the book *Making Change: Nordic Examples of Working Towards Gender Equality in the Media*, edited by Maria Edström and Ragnhild Mølster, offers positive examples in the endeavor of achieving gender equality in different media areas and statistical gender based data in Nordic countries. The book is divided into two parts.

The first part, which is conducted from overviews and good practices, is divided into these sections: film, journalism, computer games and advertising. Each section contains four or seven texts from various authors. It also contains a section titled 'Initiatives,' which is a crossover of all media sectors. The second part offers statistical data, resources and a summary of activities within the Nordic Gender and Media Forum project, and contains a list of doctoral dissertations in the field of gender and media. Although Nordic countries are often among the top in the Gender Gap Index, the media sector is still dominated by men, both in the production and in output. However, there are many efforts and positive practices towards improving gender equality, which includes the recognition of the problem, the conduction of surveys, legislation, the existence of different organizations and self-regulation bodies, and the monitoring of gender equality.

The film industry is characterized by an under representation of women both in production and representation, while female characters are more often portrayed as passive objects, or active in relation to male characters. Anne Gjelsvik points out that the nomination of women in key positions in the film industry can help in forming role models and breaking traditional barriers. Therese Martinsson believes that further studies are essential to get the grasp on changes and to conduct deeper analyses (p. 24). Websites showing successful women in film, sharing experiences, constant monitoring and counting of female leading parts, directors, scriptwriters and producers are positive measures that can help in achieving gender equality.

Although there is an increase in the number of women in editorial positions, financial decisions are still more likely to be made by men. When it comes to the representation of women in media content, the news is still very male dominated. Maria Edström points out that self-monitoring, measurable goals and changing the newsroom culture can help in gaining gender equality. A survey of a content in the daily paper *Västerbottens-Kuriren* from 2002 revealed that women were the main characters in only 23 % of the stories and news – even though 51 % of readers were women (p. 57). To increase the number of female subjects and sources in the paper they used quantitative analysis – counted every page, article and pictures. That counting matters (along with reachable goals), and monitoring ongoing discussions and active leadership, is Lotta Strömland's, editor-in-chief on SVT, premise. The success of the feminist online weekly magazine *Feministiskt Perspektiv* (Feminist Perspective) proves that there is an audience for feminist or gender-related topics. Kristen Hell-Valle presented a personal, professional story about the difficulties female journalists face – someone to flirt with, lower paid than younger and less educated male colleagues. Stockholm University offers a course called *Women's Leadership and Investigative Journalism* which helps develop women leadership and management skills for current or impending editorial leadership positions. Video games, traditionally considered to be a male industry, are the largest entertainment industry in the world. However, statistics show that female gamers make up 48 % of gamers in the US (p. 79). Gender inequality and discrimination is present in the production of games and in the representation and portrayal of female characters. Johanna Koljonen claims that a discussion of female gamers and game developers as ever-present participants would help in normalizing the presence of women in the game industry, reducing discrimination and the sexist portrayal of female characters (p. 83). The University

of Skövde started Donna, initiative designed to attract female students to their programs, in particular technical ones, in order to achieve (gender) inclusive game development. With the Doris Film, Donna, mostly with female developers, made a game titled *Alex & the Museum Mysteries*. There are both female and male characters in the story, and their parts are not assigned according to stereotypical gender roles.

The section on advertising consists of four texts dealing with the regulation and legislation of advertising in Nordic countries. Runna Fjellanger, spokesperson of the Ungdom Mot Retusjeren Reklame (Youth Against Retouched Advertisements) offers an insight into the work of a network that tries to influence the government to impose legislation, forcing the advertising industry to label retouched photographs (p. 113).

Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland and Norway consider gender discrimination in advertising under the legislation, as a part of marketing regulation or consumer protection. It is considered to be an issue under marketing or consumer legislation. In Sweden gender discrimination and inequality is handled by the self-regulatory organization. It is also important to consider the cultural, historical and political circumstances between countries to understand differences of television advertising.

The last section of Part 1 of the book offers an overview of the strategies and actions of different organizations and projects in Nordic countries that strive to achieve gender equality, in most cases through seminars, studies and handbooks.

The first section of the Part 2 offers a summary of the project the *Nordic Gender & Media Forum* as a platform for discussion on gender equality in the media (p.156), following the empirical data on employment and representation of women in film, journalism, computer games and the advertising industry.

Readable and interesting, this book offers plenty of positive examples in achieving gender equality in different areas in the media industry that could be used in counties all over the world, but it is important to take into account various differences in the cultural, historical and political characteristics of each country. The book clearly shows that, in order to change gender discrimination, recognition of the problem and actions are needed.

**Zrinka Viduka**

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Open Society Foundations

**MAPPING DIGITAL MEDIA: GLOBAL FINDINGS**

**DIGITAL JOURNALISM: MAKING NEWS, BREAKING NEWS**

Open Society Foundations, New York, 2014, 364 pp

ISBN 978-1-910243-03-9

**Lessons learned from *Mapping Digital Media* – Something good, something bad, a little bit of both**

The Open Society Foundation's Mapping Digital Media (MDM) project was launched in 2011 to assess the risks and opportunities that digitization presents the media on a global scale. Research was conducted in 56 countries ranging from global digitization leaders like Sweden to nations like Kenya, still very much on the wrong side of the digital divide. The project resulted in country reports on the digitization processes and these

results are summed up in the "Making News, Breaking News" report. This review focuses on what the MDM project found to be the challenges and positive effects of digitization on public interest media

### **Looking for Digital Champions**

The first part of the two-part report presents the global findings from a thematic viewpoint. It suggests that digitization has been fully realized in only a handful of the countries studied, and has encountered problems in all of them. Problems vary from clear-cut technical and operational difficulties to regulatory inefficiencies as well as challenges related to media ownership, audience reach and quality of content. At the same time, the research shows that in each country there have also been positive effects, especially in terms of access to media and information, the increase in freedom of speech, as well as the presence of minority voices in public discussions.

The second part, which sums up the project's findings regionally, is a richer read. Where the first part seems scattered and lacks a clear red thread to follow, the region by region discussion is more coherent. As can be predicted, from the regions in the study only a few can be considered true "digital champions." In many of them digitization has presented more challenges than positive outcomes for public interest media. One of the biggest problems reported seems to be the quality of journalism. Digitization has made it easier than ever for journalists to gather information and tremendously increased the number of outlets to disseminate news, but at the same time problems regarding a lack of verification and "copy-paste" reporting have proliferated. In addition, because of 24-hour news broadcasting, journalists have had to become jacks of all trades working within ever-tightening time limits, which in turn has resulted in a decline in specialized professionals and critical journalism.

### **Waging war over audiences**

Intensifying competition over audiences is bad news for public interest media. The MDM report found this to be especially true of broadcast media and newspapers in regions such as South-East Asia, Asia and Africa, where sensationalism, sports and celebrity news are what sell. The report states that instead of more good quality media products, the outcome of increasing the number of media outlets "is an unprecedented crisis in the supply of public interest journalism".

More competition also means declining revenues. When funding is scarce, media companies often have to resort to state advertising in order to survive. This has had a detrimental effect on public interest media. State money rarely comes without expectations of loyalty and media are forced to fall in the official line. This has been the case particularly in regions with a history of authoritarian rule, from the former Soviet Union to the Arab world and – a bit surprisingly – even in some countries in the EU. Public interest media suffers from government crackdowns online as well.

Digitization has opened up the stage for public discussions in the form of user-generated content websites, such as blogs and social media, but in many regions they are constantly under scrutiny by the state and get easily shut down. Yet, at the same time, this development of digital platforms has opened up numerous possibilities for participation and public debates in all regions in the study.

A particularly positive outcome of the digitization process has been the emergence of minority voices into the (digital) public spheres. New media, particularly online, has given

birth to opportunities for minority groups to voice their opinions. Moreover, as a result of digitization all regions now enjoy freer political discussions, and in some it has had a direct impact in engendering social change. Social media and blogs have proven to be effective tools in rallying people behind causes of public concern, from environmental issues (Armenia and Estonia) and exposing corruption (Russia and India) to facilitating full blown revolutions (the Arab Spring).

### **Reading an unfinished map**

The examples given above are only a scratch on the surface of a phenomenon too large to sum up in one report and too young to analyze thoroughly. This enormity of the project proves to be one of the biggest downfalls for the reporting. Instead of drawing a clear bigger picture the report leaves the reader with too much data to compute, and confusion concerning what digitization has resulted in and where.

The regions and countries in the study are so varied that it is almost impossible to really gather whether digitization has indeed presented more challenges or possibilities for public interest media globally. What the report does do well, however, is present country and region specific examples, though the reporting is much more detailed on nations actually digitized.

Another shortcoming is the lack of a clear concluding chapter to sum up the report. This is done to a degree in the first part of the report, but after reading through such a massive amount of information, it would do the reader good to be reminded of what, again, did the project actually find. In addition, the report also lacks a comprehensive discussion on what could or should be done to make the future of public interest media brighter in this ever-digitizing world. It is by no means a simple question to address, but as the project states that its aim is to build bridges between those involved, from academia to policymakers and facilitate discussion, instead of only listing results, it should do just that and draw a clearer map for others to follow.

**Paula Mitchell**