

DETAILS

- **Researcher in charge:** Dr. Roberto Suárez Candel
- **Scientific Supervisor:** Prof. Dr. Uwe Hasebrink
- **Host Institution:** Hans Bredow Institut for Media Research at the University of Hamburg
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- **Website:** <http://www.psb-digital.eu>
<http://www.hans-bredow-institut.de>
- **Contact:** r.suarez@hans-bredow-institut.de
www.robertosuarez.es
Heimhuderstr. 21 – 20148 – Hamburg
Germany
Telf.: +49.40.450.217.43
Fax: +49.40.450.217.77

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Redefining and Repositioning Public Service Broadcasting in the Digital and Multiplatform Scenario: Agents and Strategies

An international comparison within the European Union

Post-doctoral Research Project funded by
the Marie Curie Programme

Dr. Roberto Suárez Candel

ABOUT

The raise of a multiplatform communication scenario implies profound changes in the structure, the business models and the reception patterns of the media system. In the case of Public Service Broadcasting/Media (PSB), the new context sets important challenges and questions concerning its legitimacy, its organization and its performance.

In this sense, divergent opinions collide. On the one hand, free market and competition are considered sufficient to guarantee not only the protection of those values that once justified PSB but also the fulfilment of its functions. On the other hand, the possibilities resulting from technical innovation and the convergence of distribution platforms are regarded as opportunities to improve the performance of public operators and thus offering a better service to the citizens.

Taking into account that conflictive situation, this research project investigates to what extent the configuration of a digital and multiplatform media scenario requires an adaptation of Public Service Broadcasting/Media and how it can be carried out. The main goal is to identify and to analyse what strategies are implemented in order to redefine the PSB remit and to reposition its operators and its services.

In the first part of the research, the current transformations affecting the media are studied. New tendencies and operational logics are identified and systematized. Especial attention is also paid to technological innovation. As a result, a theoretical model concerning the challenges, opportunities and risks for public service in the multiplatform scenario will be designed.

In the second part of the project, the research is focused on the adaptation strategies to the multiplatform scenario currently carried out by public service operators. In that sense, the network of decision-making agents, the pursued goals and the implemented procedures will be analysed. In order to achieve an international perspective of the issue within the European Union, the national cases of Germany, Poland and Spain are compared.

Regarding the expected results, first of all, this project has a strong theoretical ambition. It wants to contribute to the development of the Public Service Media studies by means of providing new ideas concerning the conceptualization of the public service remit and its operationalization in the current media conjuncture. Secondly, it also aims to produce valuable pragmatic knowledge by means of detecting and systematizing best practices among the adaptation strategies implemented in the compared countries. In the end, conclusions and recommendations for the different players involved in the redefinition and repositioning of Public Service will be drawn.

MAIN CONCERNS

- How do digitalization and the configuration of a convergent multiplatform media scenario affect the values, functions and objectives that legitimize Public Service Broadcasting/Media?
- To what extent do those changes force a new theoretical conceptualization and the practical reconfiguration of PSB?
- What are the main challenges, opportunities and risks for Public Service Broadcasting in the mentioned scenario?
- What kind of decision-making networks are influencing the current transformation of PSB?
- What strategies are being implemented in order to redefine the remit of the public broadcasters and to reposition them within the multiplatform media market? Which are the most effective ones?

KEYWORDS

Communication Sciences
Media Studies
Television Studies
Public Service Broadcasting/Media
Digitalization
Convergence
Multiplatform
Comparative Analysis
European Union
Germany
Poland
Spain



OBJECTIVES

- **First part: "THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE MEDIA SYSTEM AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS ON PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING"**
 - Drawing a detailed picture of the current transformation processes affecting the media system.
 - Carrying out a reflection on how those transformations influence PSB at three levels: remit, organization and performance.
 - Designing a theoretical model of challenges, opportunities and risks for PSB in the multiplatform media scenario.
- **Second part: "REDEFINING AND REPOSITIONING PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING: AGENTS AND STRATEGIES"**
 - Conclusions on the contrast between the model of challenges, opportunities & risks for PSB and the national realities.
 - Identification of patterns regarding adaptation strategies carried out by public service operators and evaluation of their effectiveness.
 - Conclusions on the international comparison of PSB decision-making networks. Identification of patterns, tendencies and best practices.
 - Conclusions on the influence of supranational policies over national strategies.
- **As final outcome of the project and the international comparison carried out:**
 - Identification of best practices concerning the strategies for redefining and repositioning PSB in the multiplatform media scenario.
 - Recommendations for those agents involved in that adaptation process.