

Is This Social TV 3.0? On *Funk* and Social Media Policy in German Public Post-television Content Production

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Abstract

This article investigates how social media affects German public television. Due to recent dynamics in the field of social TV, notions of social TV as basically “tweeting while watching TV,” or as an “additional function” of television, need to be revised. As an addition to existing ideas of “Social TV 1.0” and “Social TV 2.0” and other characterizations, I refer here to “Social TV 3.0.” Current social TV features need to be characterized in the light of a “network of content” that combines the “media logic of television” and the “logic of social media” by means of their dynamic, flexible, and horizontal integration into the “matrix-media strategy” of TV executives impelled by a social media policy. By taking the content network *funk* (“a consortium of public broadcasters” [ARD] and “Second German Television” [ZDF]) as a prime example of social TV 3.0 in Germany, I analyze the merging of television and social media.

Keywords

social TV, post-television, social media, content networks, mobile media, convergence

Introduction

New media, and social media in particular, are challenging German public service broadcasting (PSB). The audience’s use of mobile media technology (notebooks, tablets, smartphones) has increased significantly during recent years, causing linear television, with its flow of content within a defined program architecture, to lose much of its cultural appeal and value. According to a current German ARD and ZDF online

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study,¹ Thomas Bellut, director of ZDF and vice chairman of the ARD and ZDF media committee, points out that television still commands attention despite online platforms' being in place. However, as a result of media upheavals and the increasing use of mobile media technology, television content needs to be modified to make it time-independent and available on all platforms, including mobile media (ARD and ZDF 2016). On behalf of the ARD and ZDF media committee, Koch and Frees (2016) claim that the smartphone in particular has become the preferred mobile media device for accessing TV content in Germany. Two-thirds of German citizens and almost everyone between the ages of fourteen and twenty-nine use the smartphone to access the Internet. Younger media users in particular prefer mobile media, even to receive TV content on demand. Manfred Krupp, director of the Hessian Broadcasting (HR) and chairman of the ARD and ZDF media committee, says that the "mobile Internet" is driving the media upheavals that have been observed for years. All providers will have to face the consequences for media markets and user behavior, and take on new technological and content-related challenges (ARD and ZDF 2016).

German public television is currently in a difficult position, and different strategies are on the table, which might inhibit PSB's crises of cultural validity. While social networking sites in particular play a significant role for (younger) media users and TV audiences, and online video platforms associated with TV broadcasters have been enhanced, German PSB is attempting to integrate TV with social media—commonly referred to as social TV. As Buschow and Schneider (2015a, 18) have put it, "This comes as no surprise, because Social TV offers the chance of bringing the audience and society back into the public service organization—as customers and citizens." However, even if social TV has the effect of regaining the audience, it is not working as a long-term strategy in promoting user involvement with PSB in Germany. In 2013, a representative research survey on the potential and dynamics of social TV in Germany (Buschow et al. 2013) showed that, although the addition of social media to TV might generate new and more attractive formats, this does not compensate for the poor content that younger audiences in particular are not interested in. Thus, the question of whether social media or social TV can "rescue linear television"² (Koch and Frees 2016, 418) must remain unanswered (cf. also Buschow et al. 2013). Perhaps the question itself is suspect, since social TV does not intend to "rescue" linear television at all but rather requires a new perspective on novel *TV-related content* within a mobile and networked media environment. If contemporary dynamics in the field of social TV appear to be responses to new challenges by TV executives as a result of mobile and networked media upheavals, notions of social TV as basically "tweeting while watching TV" in audiences' everyday lives, and as an "additional function" of television content, must be revised.

To my mind, social TV is a phenomenon of media upheaval that affects television as a cultural form (Williams 1974) as such. Consequently, I favor an approach to social TV that emphasizes structurally intertwining the "media logic" of television with "social media logic" (van Dijck and Poell 2015). Current social TV features need to be characterized in the light of a "network of content" that synchronizes television, digital, and social media by means of the dynamic, flexible, and horizontal integration of

TV, the web and social media within the “matrix-media strategy” of TV executives (Curtin 2009) impelled by a social media policy. In the academic discourse on social TV, different manifestations and characterizations are in circulation, which describe the merging of TV with digital and social media. In addition to existing ideas of “Social TV 1.0” and “Social TV 2.0” (Schatz et al. 2008), I refer to “Social TV 3.0.” This labels social TV as a matrix-media strategic attempt by TV executives, a consequence of the new challenges associated with mobile and networked media.

My argument proceeds as follows: First, I briefly discuss different concepts of social TV, to unroll different stages of social TV and basic assumptions about the entanglements of television and social media. Second, I introduce my understanding of social TV 3.0 due to the modified social media policy of TV executives. In doing so, I analyze the German content network *funk*, launched by ARD and ZDF in 2016, as a prime example of social TV 3.0. Finally, I present some preliminary conclusions.

What Is Social TV, Anyway?

Generally speaking, social TV describes a form of “computer-mediated interpersonal communication over distance or over time” that generates “the impression of watching TV alongside a group of friends” (Chorianopoulos and Lekakos 2008, 116).³ However, since its introduction, social TV has existed in different forms. In the 2000s, media companies announced television sets with combined messaging services such as “Amigo TV” (Coppens et al. 2004) and Siemens’ “COSE” (“Communication Services on TV” Gneuss 2006), so-called “living room applications.” More recent introductions include new products such as “smart TVs.” Early forms of social TV emphasized innovations in, and the improvement of, television and communication technology, to merge TV and communication tools into one device. Schatz et al. (2008) characterize such single screen applications as “Social TV 1.0,” which enables “people to socially interact parallel to watching” television “in stationary contexts.”

Nonetheless, what we usually understand as social TV in its recent state (i.e., tweeting while watching TV) mainly began to occur as the result of audiences’ everyday media practices (Buschow and Schneider 2015b, 18). In addition, Buschow and Schneider (2015a, 18) depict the progress of social TV in Germany as the result of a “crisis of legitimacy” of Public Service Media (PSM): “While they [the PSM] communicate their public value to the stakeholders—and thus their contribution to the common good—they fail to include the audience, which increasingly takes an active role in this communication.” In this sense, the audience is framed as a “neglected stakeholder” who is “represented by committees ‘on trust’ or via market research methods” (Buschow and Schneider 2015a, 18; cit. Scherer 2011). Due to digital media’s growth, and its expansion to improve participatory practices, audience engagement has adopted new forms of “connected viewing” (Holt and Sanson 2014), as characterized by the merging field of television and social media.

Thus, social TV has transformed from being a single screen application to being a media phenomenon that describes audiences’ everyday media practices. Within the discourse, social TV has appropriated a user’s point of view that emphasizes

interpersonal communication, as notebooks, tablets, and especially smartphones are used with relation to television (Han and Lee 2014; Klemm and Michel 2014). Whether we make the distinction between pre-, parallel, or follow-up communication (Buschow et al. 2014, 131; cf. also Buschow et al. 2013; Chorianopoulos and Lekakos 2008), social TV emerges almost exclusively as a second or third screen cultural practice that exists in addition to television content. Schatz et al. (2008) define such mobile media-engaged manifestations as “Social TV 2.0”—a “part of a portfolio of ubiquitous services which accompany users through their daily lives as they migrate from device to device.” Beyond the first-stage single screen phenomena, social TV 2.0 describes a large number of mobile media-integrated communication practices such as chatting, messaging, tagging, and sharing specific television content, in combination with “social interaction features” such as commenting (e.g., on Facebook), microblogging (e.g., on Twitter), and producing and distributing user-generated content (UGC) (e.g., on YouTube). With this in mind, social TV 2.0 is considered by the authors (2008) to be a “versatile, ubiquitous media service. Such a service should effectively address users’ needs for spontaneous socializing and the sharing of experiences in the context of TV.”

Now that the audiences’ communication about particular television shows on social media has gained more attention, even TV executives have identified social TV as being “the next big thing” (O’Neill 2011). Social TV appeared to have been suddenly called forth by PSB professionals who utilized it to complement television’s functions, and moreover, to include desired ideas. In that sense, the rise of social TV has been seen by professionals as an opportunity to bring back audiences to television (Buschow et al. 2014; Busemann and Tippelt 2014) or as an instrument for audience research (Deller 2011; Wohn and Na 2011) as well as a tool for audience measurement (Franzen et al. 2015). Meanwhile, television executives have tried to use social media applications to increase audience participation, but they have also expanded various forms and features of social TV (e.g., in terms of participatory production; Stollfuß 2018). In addition to given characteristics of social TV 2.0 (Schatz et al. 2008), novel structural aggregations are progressing between television, and digital and social media, further highlighting the importance of social TV as a highly flexible media phenomenon. Within the strategy of TV executives hoping to affect audiences’ social media communication practices with relation to television content, social TV takes on different media cultural manifestations, and has new structural implications. While social TV 2.0 can readily be understood as an additional function of television, current social TV features not only extend the characteristics of social TV 2.0 but also highlight new *social-media-driven improvements*, thus allowing us to consider what I refer to as social TV 3.0.

From Social TV 2.0 to Social TV 3.0

In the wake of TV executives’ attempt to use social TV’s features to benefit from new possibilities provided by social media and to enhance television, social TV appearances continued to challenge the notion of social media as supplementing elements of

television. Due to the ongoing convergence of television, the web, and social media, several social TV phenomena have arisen that question the hierarchies of television (as the main element) and social media (as TV's supplement). For example, in connection with modified production and distribution procedures—that is, online-first or online-only publishing, as well as web-exclusive content production—shows such as *Neo Magazin Royal* (2013–) first go online on the second German television platform before they are broadcast on the television screen. The show's concept also contains a set of web-exclusive segments that are primarily produced to be published on social media. Tweets and other social media posts generated by the audience are evaluated and re-edited to become part of the show's textual aesthetics. In this respect, the show's slogan "Anything but Television" emphasizes its format-specific concept of treating social media and the mobile media use of its audience differently, and thereby apart from regular TV scheduling.

To cite another example, in 2012, public broadcaster Bavarian Broadcasting (BR) launched a short-term social TV project called *Rundshow* that combined social media and television by aiming at user participation via Twitter, Facebook, Skype, and Google Hangout. Distributed on the Internet 24/7 and later on television (at 11 p.m.) as well, *Rundshow* seemed a rather cautious attempt to privilege digital and social media over television. "Rundshow is not TV but a platform. The format breaks with the idea of regular television scheduling. It is accessible around the clock," in addition to the half-hour live show format on the TV screen (BR 2012). By contrast, the content network *funk* turns the relationship between TV and social media on its head. With it, television clearly becomes a "supplement" to social media, as I describe in more detail in the following section.

Formats and projects such as *Neo Magazin Royal*, *Rundshow*, and *funk* in particular indicate that social TV has become much more than a communicative exchange stimulated by linear television, the result of television executives' new strategic awareness of the potential of social TV. Likewise, the basic characteristics of social TV 2.0 as described by Schatz et al. (2008), as well as definitions of social TV that are based conceptually on the user's point of view and interpersonal communications, are being shaken up by these newer attempts. Consequently, with particular regard to the *funk* content network, we should think of these new efforts as Social TV 3.0: as TV, the web and social media have merged, television now takes a subordinate role to social media.

Funk and TV Executives' Social Media Policy in Post-TV Content Production

On October 1, 2016, the content network *funk* was launched by the German television broadcasters ARD and ZDF. "Funk is a joint adventure of ARD and ZDF. Formats will be initiated and supervised by all local broadcasters of ARD's state broadcasting network and the ZDF. The leading executive broadcaster is the SWR" (Funk 2016d). *Funk* is part of the public broadcasting system and financed by the television and radio license fee based on the German Broadcast State Contract (Funk 2016d). But this web-TV service takes an "online only" approach with young people (between the ages of

fourteen and twenty-nine) and represents, I would argue, the next step of German public (post) television in the era of digital and multiplatform media. *Funk* provides more than forty different formats grouped by “orientation” (e.g., lifestyle), “information” (e.g., web documentaries), and “entertainment” (e.g., web series). These include content such as *AufKlo* (a girls’ talk show on YouTube on topics like friendship, love, healthy food, and career prospects, hosted by Eda Vendetta and ItsColeslaw), *Hochkant* (a short-message, daily news format made for Snapchat and Instagram, containing topics from politics to pop culture and hosted by Salwa Houmsi, Eva Schulz, and Florian Prokop), and *Datteltäter* (a political satire web series on YouTube about German-Muslim community life, cultural stereotypes, and prejudices, produced by Younes Al-Amayra, Fiete Aleksander, Farah Bouamar, Marcel Sonneck, Hibat Khelifi, and Nour Khelifi). The network’s content is designed for distribution on social media sites and applications such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat, and also on the network’s own website and the *funk* app for smartphones. Its relationship to traditional linear TV is loose at best. Given that it is impossible to attend to all forty different formats here, I briefly discuss two examples—*iam.serafina* and *Y-Kollektiv*—to provide an idea of *funk*’s social-media-driven content.

The fictional web series *iam.serafina* (2016–), the first soap opera on Snapchat, is now entering its sixth season. The web series tells the coming of age story of the main character, Serafina (portrayed by amateur actress Franca Serafina Bolengo), and deals with a range of everyday issues familiar to a twenty-something (e.g., self-actualization, professional qualifications, her future), thereby addressing questions important to young people within a fictional narrative. After finishing school, Serafina is unsure about her private and professional future. She has an interest in fashion but seems uncertain of what to do with it. She faces problems with her boyfriend and her roommates or, as in the third season, with hate speech, and the difficulties of posting private topics on social media platforms. Based on the idea of a scripted reality soap, *iam.serafina* tells its story through the specific mode of communication of Snapchat. Ten-second videos (so-called snaps) are filmed, edited, and sent by the main character herself 24/7 from Wednesday to Sunday, in real time, and without going through post-production. The clips are deleted within twenty-four hours (a compilation of the snaps of one day per season is available on the *funk* website). The personalized and subjective approach of the series provides for the snaps to be based on a script that only defines the basic situations, leaving the dialogue open for improvisation. This simulates the authentic narrative of a twenty-something on social media (Media Convention 2017). The one-day compilation of snaps varies in length from eight to twenty minutes. The series is filmed vertically, due to its audiovisual performance as a smartphone display. It relies on direct interaction between the character and the audience via messenger, promptly integrating user comments. The content also incorporates a large number of Snapchat’s different image effects, filters, drawings, and captions.

During its first season, the series was made public for two weeks. Due to its success, the second and third seasons were extended to four weeks. The second and third seasons also use YouTube and Instagram as additional platforms for Serafina to share her life and work (e.g., as a fashion YouTuber) with her audience. *iam.serafina* relies

on real-time effects, the live appearance of the character, and most importantly, direct user interaction, in keeping with interactive and community-driven principles of social media applications such as Snapchat. As a PSB social media format, *iam.serafina* not only deals with everyday issues of young people in the twenty-first century but also uses the technological and communicative infrastructure of the current mobile media environment to relate the fictional story of a twenty-something on social media. By combining Snapchat's communicative mechanisms with the genre coding of a traditional television format, *iam.serafina* exemplifies the convergence of TV and social media. It exemplifies the search for new ways of content development, particularly for younger audiences, in keeping with the overtly social-media-driven policy of the show's producers.

On the other hand, the so-called *Y-Kollektiv* (a group of ten newly graduated young journalists including Anne Thiele, Tobias Zwior, and Maike Evers-Schmidt) creates video reports and web documentaries on Facebook and YouTube for younger audiences age twenty-four and up. The videos are between eight and fifteen minutes long, and comprise a variety of issues such as the war in Iraq, animal welfare, xenophobia, and illegal techno parties, film festivals, and live action role-playing games. The young journalists tell their stories from a highly subjective point of view. The *Y-Kollektiv* empathizes and engages with different topics, to inform the audience; share impressions, attitudes, and opinions; and open up discussions on Facebook. The journalists tend to confront the audience with personal opinions, rather than informing them from a neutral standpoint. *Y-Kollektiv's* web documentaries authenticate the narrators (i.e., the journalists) by emphasizing their status as the authors of the documentaries (Tröhler 2004). They directly address the audience, breaking the fourth wall and making self-reflexive statements that render their own feelings and thoughts apparent. In her web documentary *Hilfe für Mossul* (2017) for instance, Anne Thiele says, "While I stand there uselessly watching them through my camera, doctors and paramedics are trying to save the woman's life. It makes me feel terrible to shoot this scene while someone is dying." The content also adopts a highly personalized touch, as interviewees are called by their first names. Moreover, *Y-Kollektiv* involves its audience in follow-up discussions. Each journalist creates a video statement in addition to written statements in response to various user comments visible below the documentary; he or she also provides additional personal statements. After her return from Mosul, Anne Thiele made a thirty-second video statement about her personal feelings about the situation in that major Iraqi city, specifically addressing the divide between her easy-going modern life in Germany and the gruesome situation in a war zone, which she had experienced for the first time. A couple days later, she also responded to user comments and questions in a three-minute video clip on Facebook.

Due to their appearances in the digital realm and the communicative environments of the social media culture, *iam.serafina* and *Y-Kollektive* contribute to a public form that "comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation" (Warner 2005, 66) and, that is, as Michael Lahey (2016, 637) writes, determined by digital technologies "of transmission and exhibition that allow this public to come into existence and interact with others in the bounded network." With this in mind, I regard these social TV

developments as a new stage, social TV 3.0, which refers to the dynamic, flexible interweaving, and the balance, of TV's media logic and the logic of social media. In this, I am guided by van Dijck's and Poell's (2013, 2015) theoretical and analytical approach to investigate these entanglements on the levels of institutional strategies, professional practices, and content. In this, however, the authors' attempt does not differ from positions taken in the previous section of this article; van Dijck and Poell (2015, 149) also understand social TV in terms of an adjective that describes television. But if we take the authors' approach as an attempt to enframe different social TV phenomena within a theoretical and analytical context that is driven by the structural entanglements of *media logics* and a result of the matrix-media strategy of *TV executives*, a conceptually nuanced definition of social TV 3.0 would be as follows: Social TV 3.0 refers to the flexible and dynamic harmonization of television's media logic and the logic of social media, amalgamating TV's cultural form with the infrastructure of social media's connective environment. This is taking place in the face of a change in policy by television executives who are impelled to align themselves with the social media culture.

As *iam.serafina* and *Y-Kollektiv* illustrate, *funk* has been conceptualized not as an extension of linear television into the world of social media but rather as an option for digital natives who are turning their backs on linear TV. *Funk* places social media at the center of the network's content while it continues its public responsibility. In this sense, Bellut makes clear, content networks such as *funk* will prove a challenge to TV professionals, who will need to create online formats that younger people are really interested in, and to present it to them where they are looking for it—on the web (Funk 2016b). The content network challenges the notion of social TV, as a combination of the “lean-back medium of television” and the “lean-forward mode of on-demand web and mobile use, in which users engage in diverse, highly personalized and individualistic forms of participation” (Debrett 2015, 558). Rather than prioritizing TV over social media, it takes the opposite approach. As the ZDF clarifies on a website about *funk*, new, innovative media formats mainly stem from platforms and mobile media applications such as Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat. At the same time, linear television is losing its cultural value and social importance, especially among younger people (Funk 2016d). Recent studies based on empirical data indicate that television still plays an important role for young media users between the ages of six and thirteen (KIM Studie 2016), and between the ages of twelve and nineteen (JIM Studie 2016). Nevertheless, the use of online videos on video on demand (VOD) and social media platforms is constantly growing in significance. While children from six to thirteen still prefer watching television for daily leisure (77 percent; KIM Studie 2016, 43), media users from twelve to nineteen already tend to prefer online videos (52 percent) to TV (46 percent) for daily consumption (JIM Studie 2016, 11). Moreover, a broader study on average viewing time of television and online video platforms (by TNS Infratest's 2016 “report on digitization” for German PSB) also points to the differences between age groups. While older audiences (fifty years and up) still prefer television (84.3 percent) to VOD (only six percent), television is losing its cultural appeal among younger media audiences, as the use of VOD platforms increases. In the media

audience ages thirty to forty-nine, television is frequented by 67.2 percent and VOD by 17.5 percent. In the audience from fourteen to twenty-nine, TV is frequented by 46.6 percent, while VOD has already risen to 36.3 percent; in the audience from fourteen to nineteen, viewing time of television (41.1 percent) and VOD (40.9 percent) is virtually equal (Kunow 2016, 37).

ARD and ZDF want to respond to these developments by launching *funk* as a way to adapt to the new expectations of younger people. The hope is that public broadcasting will become part of a dynamic media system. The communicative dynamics within the digital and mobile media environment have led the TV industry to approach its audience on a decidedly participatory level, offering them a more active role and a deeper user experience via direct, interactive, and even real-time social media communication. More than ever, it is clear that television executives take seriously what Lahey (2016, 634) calls “audience-as-collaborator framing,” as it seems “increasingly central to how television producers imagine the industry-audience relationship,” especially in the social TV context. Even if audience participation occurs within specific boundaries—since media producers and TV executives define at least the underlying conditions for user participation in relation to *their* content (Lahey 2016, 634–35)—audiences have greater influence on decision-making processes and strategic directions concerning TV’s merge with the web, and particularly social media. However, with *funk*, these shifts due to and within the merging field of TV and social media affect the network on the following three levels.

Level of Institutional Strategies

On the level of institutional strategies, the content network has made the most radical attempt to privilege social media over TV. “We are funk, we are ARD and ZDF, and we are not TV. . . . Our programs like . . . will be distributed directly on YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and the website funk.net” (Funk 2016a). The policy behind *funk* clearly counts on the network’s emancipation from television: “Social networks are our home turf” (Funk 2016c). Due to the reorganization of PSBs as PSM, the challenges for PSM are as dynamic as the digital media upheavals themselves. While the core principle of PSB still applies to PSM—that is, to ensure that democratic public service content is available to all citizens—the concept of public value needs to be adjusted. Social media are gaining influence, especially regarding the user’s orientation and information, entertainment, participation, social values, identity, and guidance in a mobile media culture (Hasebrink 2016). Commercial social media platforms that establish different forms of communication and algorithmically prefigured information processes and business models (the economization of user-generated data, personalized ads, etc.) change the general preconditions of an informed democratic society. To promote a strong PSM in the digital realm in terms of a political democracy, Steinmaurer and Wenzel (2015, 39–62) suggest we redefine public value as “public network value” that emphasizes a particular quality of the public discourse (deliberative aspects). They also urge us to rethink forms of cooperation, in particular with nonprofit and commercial providers (liberal aspects). Collaborations with major

commercial providers such as Facebook are judged to have little democratic value, due to the providers' nontransparent policies and algorithmic operations. Still, PSM cannot ignore the most popular platforms: the audience is already there. Social media already have a lasting effect on the formulation of public opinion (Thimm and Bürger 2012). Meanwhile, a number of public broadcasting employees are specializing in content production for social media on behalf of the broadcasters' "social media guidelines" that must be compatible with the German Telemedia Act and the Interstate Treaty on Broadcasting (ARD 2012, 17). In consideration of basic principles, PSB "commits to intensifying the dialogue" with its audience on the net and social networks, particularly Facebook and Twitter (ARD 2012, 17–18). These principles include the moderation of content; compliance with rules and regulations regarding netiquette and the general law; open access; no commercials, additional charges for users, or editing of UGC; and the coordination of high-quality content by selected PSB employees, even on third-party platforms.

As with other European PSBs, it is indisputable that, in Germany, social media have "genuinely impacted editorial and other professional practices and standards" (van Dijck and Poell 2015, 154). "The dual attraction–suspicion attitude toward social media as *public* platforms has resulted in a cautionary approach toward their monetizing intentions" and a "struggle between 'social' and 'public'" (van Dijck and Poell 2015, 154). *Funk's* affiliation with PSB content is emphasized by the public mandate for education, which is fundamental to German PSB. German PSBs take the commercialization of social media in connection with attempts to rearrange PSB as PSM seriously. Although they offer some valid criticism, their implementation still appears to be relatively haphazard.

Due to its intensified audience-oriented approach on social media, *funk* is entering new territory for PSB as it experiments with forms of content development primarily for social media. While that tends to threaten the PSB's public value, the network tries to counter this by pointing out that *funk* banks on many different social media applications, not wanting to force users to create an account on *one* specific platform. Moreover, the website and the network's mobile media app provide an independent content player (Funk 2016a). The shift from PSB to PSM has caught entities between deliberative and liberal approaches to public value. Thus, the idea of an ongoing dialogue "between creative producers, policy-makers, and academics to develop new perspectives on public value" (van Dijck and Poell 2015, 161) still appears crucial. The concept of "public network value" (Steinmaurer and Wenzel 2015) seems to be a good start. However, PSB's struggle with the logic of social media seems to be the greatest on the level of institutional strategies. With the convergence of television and social media, TV executives must accept the principles constituting the logic of social media as regards the autonomy of external platforms in relation to PSB.

Level of Professional Production Practices

On the level of professional production practices, the logic of social media is more pronounced, underlining the operational processes of *funk*. PSB is still in charge of

funk; general manager Florian Hager, deputy general manager Sophie Burkhardt, and the approximately forty people who support the network of editors and producers are PSB employees. The regional public broadcaster SWR is responsible for the content network within the PSB complex, and *funk*'s headquarters are in the building of the ZDF in Mainz. On the other hand, the primary components of the network are the many so-called "faces" (e.g., Franca Serafina Bolengo, Anne Thiele, Tobias Zwior, ItsColeslaw, Florian Prokop, etc.) who create most of the content for YouTube, Snapchat, and Facebook, and thus influence the practical procedures. Professionals as well as well-known and new web content producers breathe life into the network on behalf of public television broadcasters, while TV becomes supplemental to social media. The programmability aspect of social media, especially social media's ability "to trigger and steer users'" creative or communicative contributions (van Dijck and Poell 2013, 5) greatly affects the networked practices of *funk*. More importantly, aspects of "connectivity" and "datafication" play a central role in content production and management. For instance, *iam.serafina*'s creative producer Thilo Kasper says that Snapchat, and in particular Instagram, make it easy to investigate the user-text-relationship, due to the social medium's possibilities for data analysis (e.g., with Instagram). Moreover, to draw more attention to Snapchat for *funk*'s content, he collaborates with other Snapchat personalities, benefitting from their prominence. The team also uses Snapchat and Instagram for user conversion, advertising via Instagram to lure users to Snapchat, where they are encouraged to follow *iam.serafina* (Media Convention 2017). Social media facilitate various connections: human-human, human-content, and content-human-company network. Their ability to define and mediate connections by means of their "platform apparatus" (van Dijck and Poell 2013, 8) strongly affects PSB's operations vis-a-vis the social media environment.

Level of Content

Finally, *funk*'s social-media-driven policy has made itself most palpable on the level of content, as I have demonstrated, using *iam.serafina* and *Y-Kollektive* as examples. Most of the network's content is produced exclusively for web distribution—primarily on different social media platforms and mobile media apps. Thus, *funk* combines television and social media; direct, interactive, and even real-time social media communication contours the content's form and function, and shapes its basic appearance. On the website, the different formats are linked with their corresponding social media platforms. I would argue that this renders the website a connective interface linking content to users on external social media platforms and applications. Consequently, the networked appearance of *funk* strives to conceal its television context while stressing its affinity to the connective environment of social media.

Regarding what I have mentioned as social media policy in post-TV content production, the case of *funk* indicates a strategic shift of focus of PSB executives toward social TV. The content network privileges digital media and social media in particular over television, while the orientation of *funk* to the level of institutional strategies, professional practices, and content production, as well as distribution, allows social

media logic to disrupt television's mass media logic. As a response to new challenges for content production in the digital age, which result from German PSB executives' matrix-media strategy, social TV 3.0 does not imply adding social media to TV content but rather intertwines social media and television in enforcing television's social media alignment. In this context, meanwhile, TV's cultural form is being transformed as a *social-media-driven network of content* within the "connective ecosystem of social media" (van Dijck and Poell 2013, 8).

Conclusion

The developments in the field of social TV are challenging PSB in Germany to find new forms of content production. In this context, on one hand, the *funk* content network appears to be a rather radical attempt at rearranging television in the context of digital and social media, but the concept of a "network of content" seems to be more sustainable in attracting (younger) people. The flexible way of watching video content via online platforms or mobile media apps enables dynamic media practices that mesh with the "viewers' desire for autonomy in scheduling when they want to watch what" (Jenner 2016, 266). *Funk* takes this aspect seriously; the network's content exists independently of regular TV programming due to its online-only approach. Moreover, the network not only integrates mechanisms for social interaction by embedding external social media platforms and mobile apps but also produces content made specifically for social media circulation. In doing so, the concept of *funk* approaches a method of content production for social TV that does not simply add digital and social media to TV. Instead, *funk* banks on the convergence of TV and social media from a perspective that is clearly digital and social-media-driven. Thus, the merging of television's media logic with the logic of social media seems to further expand the "flexibility and mobility of communication technology" within the technological and cultural context of television (Altheide 1987, 131).

On the other hand, the transformation of public social TV as a social-media-driven network of content needs to be further critically discussed in terms of PSB's public value in the commercialized context of social media. Concepts such as "public network value" (Steinmaurer and Wenzel 2015) would seem to be good starting points for further discussion. However, attempts to support the mixing of TV and social media as "networks of content" disconnected from regular TV scheduling are necessary moves if PSB is to play a relevant role in a networked and mobile media culture.

Furthermore, my aim was to discuss recent projects such as *funk* in the light of a new characterization and definition of social TV 3.0. The alignment of television with a social media culture allows for social media to disrupt the established media logic of public television. The analysis of *funk* on the levels of institutional strategies, professional practices, and content indicates that PSB's struggles with social media vary from level to level. While relatively conflictual on the level of institutional strategies, on the levels of professional practices and content, social media gains more power to disrupt established TV procedures. Therefore, current developments of social TV have a considerable impact on the cultural form of television especially due to an adapted

social media policy of television executives. From this perspective, present definitions of social TV need to be reevaluated and modified. Accordingly, I have presented an understanding of social TV 3.0 that characterizes current social TV phenomena as occurring within a theoretical framework of merging television and social media. In doing so, I refer to their media logic as corresponding to the matrix-media strategy of the TV executives who are reacting to new challenges in the digital age.

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1. The ARD and ZDF online study is a report that is commissioned by the main German broadcasters and realized by the research departments of the regional public broadcasters SWR (“Southwest Broadcasting”), HR (“Hessian Broadcasting”), BR (“Bavarian Broadcasting”), and the main public broadcaster ZDF.
2. All translations of German texts are provided by the author.
3. A similar, but slightly modified, discussion on discursive characterizations and definitions of forms of social TV was also made elsewhere (Stollfuß 2018) to develop an approach of participatory production in German public television within the realm of social TV. The section in the current text takes the discussion in the academic discourse on social TV again to introduce a different understanding of social TV 3.0.

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