Public Service Media in the Digital Era

Tegenlicht's public values in an age of platformization

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Phenomenon

"Who will stand up for the public broadcaster?" (Lange & Woudt, 2019), "What is happening to the public broadcaster?" (Tienhooven, 2019) and "The future of NPO: How will we continue?" (Jan Duin & Keultjes, 2019). These newspaper headlines took my attention since these articles illustrate what is said about the future of the Dutch public broadcast institution Nederlandse Publieke Omroep (NPO), the overarching institution of BNNVARA, the broadcaster I work for. The future of public service media (PSM) such as NPO is unpredictable. Nowadays, media consumers have the ability to watch whatever content they like on whatever moment they want to. Younger audiences, with an age lower than 34, seem to consume less television content than six years ago, according to a study by Stichting Kijkonderzoek (2020). Also, video on demand seemed to have passed linear television content when it comes to consumption time, according to an online market research by Multiscope (2019). Thus, people seem to consume online media content more and more. NPO therefore has been given permission to use platforms to strengthen its programs, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube (2019, 1). In this study I will use the following definition of platforms: "a programmable digital architecture designed to organize interactions between users—not just end users but also corporate entities and public bodies" (Van Dijck, 2016, p. 4). According to the Media Act (*Mediawet*, 2008), NPO content has to fulfill democratic, social as well as cultural needs of Dutch society by carrying out public values. Examples of public values that NPO has to carry out are transparency, equality and democracy. However, what does the incorporation of platforms mean for the distribution of NPO's public values? Will platforms strengthen or undermine the realization of public values? In this changing media landscape, which is dominated by networked platforms, NPO might need to rethink their use of platforms.

Research question

In order to discuss what the incorporation of platforms means for the distribution of NPO's public values, I look into Tegenlicht as a case-study which is part of NPO. By taking Tegenlicht as a case-study, I will also be able to give advice on the strategy of NPO as a whole. I shall address the following research question: *What is the discourse of the incorporation of Tegenlicht's platforms for the distribution of public values?* To be able to answer this question, a set of subquestions will be answered. First, what is the debate around NPO and the digital era and what is the discourse of public values of NPO, broadcaster VPRO and Tegenlicht in specific? Second,

3

what is the discourse of public values in the context of platformization? Here, specific interest will be paid to the consequences that platforms have for the distribution of public values, by delving into the theory by Van Dijck, Van Poel and De Waal in *The platform society: Public values in a connective world* (2016) that I will use as a basis to describe the participatory possibilities of platforms. Third, to what extent do Tegenlicht's platforms represent the public values of the brand? Here, attention will be paid to the architecture of platforms and if they do justice to the public values that Tegenlicht wants to carry out. The method used to answer this third question will be explained further in this study.

Relevance

There is a growing body of literature (Ala-Fossi, 2016; Kalogeropoulos & Nielsen, 2018; Sehl, Cornia & Nielsen, 2016; Sørensen, 2018) that recognizes the ecosystem of connective media in which broadcasters have to redefine themselves and in which the relevance of public service media (PSM) is being contested. However, few studies (García Avilés, 2018; Vanhaeght, 2019) have investigated PSM from a platformization perspective and have taken the distribution of public values into account. From an academic perspective, this research will therefore contribute to a deeper understanding of PSM in a digital landscape. This study is also relevant for a social reason, because NPO has a legal task to "… connect and enrich the Dutch public with programs that inform, inspire and amuse" (Over NPO: Missie en taken, 2019). It is important to investigate how PSM and brands such as Tegenlicht can continue distributing their public values in a digital era, where the incorporation of platforms may complicate the realization of such values. This study will provide a framework for a new PSM model in the future, where new possibilities for carrying out public values are made visible.

Theoretical Framework

Since I am interested in the impact of platforms on the distribution of public values, I will approach Tegenlicht's content by using a theoretical framework that sheds light on public values in the context of platformization. Therefore, I will make use of the theory by Van Dijck, Van Poel and De Waal in *The platform society: Public values in a connective world* (2016), that sheds light on public service media's public values in the context of platforms. Van Dijck et al (2016) define a platform as "a programmable digital architecture designed to organize interactions between users — not just end users but also corporate entities and public bodies" (4) and mention a few characteristics of platforms. They argue how a platform ecosystem can be moored in paradoxes. According to

Van Dijck et al (2016), platforms may undermine certain public values due to the technological boundaries of a platform's digital structure. Their theory allows me to approach Tegenlicht's platforms in a more critical way.

Since I am interested in the public values of platforms, I am also interested in the participatory possibilities of Tegenlicht's platforms, because the element of participation contributes to the brand's public values. Therefore, I will also discuss the notion of *participatory culture* by Henry Jenkins, Mizuko Ito and Danah Boyd (2016). Their theory is interesting, but not comprehensive enough since the theory does not shed light on levels of participation. In order to distinguish multiple levels of interactivity, I will introduce Salen and Zimmerman's model on theorizing interactivity (2004), who present four modes of interactivity.

Method

In order to answer the research question, I will perform a critical discourse analysis (CDA) which will be the central method of this study. The CDA method consists of three dimensions: an analysis of linguistic elements of a text, processes relating to the production and consumption of a text and the wider social practice to which the text belongs (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002). The CDA method enables us to analyze content in relation to webs of other content and in relation to its social context. Thus, the method does not solely analyze content in isolation. During this study, the CDA method will be used to the analysis of platforms. I am not interested in the linguistics of a text when examining the first dimension of CDA. Instead of analyzing linguistic elements such as vocabulary, grammar and syntax, I will focus on the participative possibilities of Tegenlicht's platforms, since I regard these as a part of the brand's public values. In order to do so, a supportive method is needed. This supportive method will be an affordance analysis, which will allow me to shed light on levels of participation by looking at affordances that are linked to platforms of Tegenlicht.

During the analysis of the second dimension of CDA, I will look at three different webpages and I will perform interviews with three representatives and two viewers of Tegenlicht, to shed light upon the production, distribution and consumption context of Tegenlicht. Finally, when studying the third dimension of Tegenlicht, I will focus on the wider context of platformization in the public broadcast industry, explaining what the introduction of new media technologies could mean for the future of public broadcasters and the distribution of public values. In chapter 4 I will elaborate on the research method more deeply.

1. NPO IN THE DIGITAL ERA

In this chapter, I will first introduce NPO and explain the public values of NPO as well as the values of VPRO and Tegenlicht (1.1). Then, I will describe how NPO is confronted with digital developments in the new media age and which opinions have been formed about the future of the public service medium (1.2), discussing if, and to what extent, NPO has already adjusted itself to meet the challenges of digital developments. Traditional television and radio broadcasting by public service media is put under pressure, since television consumption is decreasing and the consumption of videos on social media is increasing (García-Avilés, 2020). Since I do not only want to take into consideration NPO itself, but also want to consider how the public service medium can deal with these challenges in the future, I will point out the discourse of NPO's future and explain the role of public values in that future (1.3).

1.1 NPO's public values

The *Nederlandse Publieke Omroep* is the overarching public broadcasting system that consists of nine different broadcasters: AVROTROS, BNNVARA, KRO-NCRV, Omroep MAX, EO, VPRO, HUMAN, WNL and PowNed (Omroepen, netten en zenders, sd). These broadcasters are formed on the basis of pillarization and solely produce content. NPO on the other hand, deals with the distribution of this content. The tasks and responsibilities of NPO are constituted in a law that is known as the Media Act (2008). The Media Act determines that one of the primary tasks of NPO is to:

> "Provide public media services at national, regional and local level by offering media content that aims to provide a wide and diverse audience with information, culture and education, through all available channels. […] Public media services are in accordance with public values, meeting the democratic, social and cultural needs of Dutch society. […] To this end they provide media content that is balanced, varied, of high quality and characterized by a wide variety of form. Also, content meets high journalistic and professional quality requirements, is independent of commercial influences and, subject to the provisions of or pursuant to the law, of governmental influences."

So, according to the Media Act (2008), NPO content has to fulfill both the democratic, social and cultural needs of Dutch society, has to address all groups of the political spectrum, be diverse and must be of high quality. Another incorporated task by the Media Act (2008) is the independency from commercial actors. NPO's tasks and responsibilities that are constituted by the Media Act are monitored by the *Commissariaat voor de Media*, to make sure NPO adheres to these goals.

Since platforms are also an important element in the media supply of NPO and since this research focuses on the affordances of the platforms used by NPO, it is useful to consider the media policy of these platforms. This policy is described in the *Policy Platform Selection* (NPO's board of directors, 2019). In this policy, platforms are for a great part considered as a strengthening of NPO's television and radio programs. The board of directors has given NPO permission to use the following platforms to strengthen NPO programs: Apple iTunes appstore, Facebook, Google Assistant, Google Play appstore, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, WhatsApp and YouTube (2019, 11). Although I will further describe the discourse on platforms in the next chapter, here I will hold the definition that the board of directors uses: "an electronic communication network, service or combination of those used to deliver media content, but where the owner of the platform does not have any editorial responsibility" (2019, 1).

I have introduced the structure and tasks of NPO and mentioned the role of platforms in NPO's traditional television and radio broadcasting. However, since public values are also an important element of this research, I now want to delve into the public values that are being carried out by NPO and by VPRO and Tegenlicht in specific. I will begin by mentioning the public values of NPO, which are set out in the *Concessiebeleidsplan* of NPO (2015):

> "1. Independent: the content is made independently of political and commercial influences.
> 2. Reliable: the provided information is reliable.
> 3. Plural: the content contributes to the reflection of different views and philosophies in society.
> 4. Diverse: the content contributes to the reflection of different groups of society.
> 5. With impact: the content contributes to social cohesion, quality of democracy and society, cultural participation, development and development of individual users.
> 6. Committed: the content is made from a clear social commitment.

7. Authentic: the content is original or concerns real and recognizable situations and people.

8. Idiosyncratic: the content deviates from common social perspectives and perspectives." (*Concessiebeleidsplan,* 2015, p. 17)

NPO thus presents itself as a media service that stands for the public values of independency, reliability, plurality, diversity, influence, commitment, authenticity and idiosyncrasy.

Since VPRO is one of the broadcasters of NPO as an overarching public service medium, it underscores some of NPO's values. And some of NPO's values are less underscored by VPRO. VPRO especially marks the public values of accuracy and independent news coverage on their website: "We want to be measured on our quality. We find that of great importance in a time where commerce increasingly determines taste and success is not always synonymous with the best. We take time for thorough research and to investing in the best professionals and talents." (VPRO). But what particularly marks VPRO as a broadcaster is its pillar of innovation:

"Our programs form the base for free thinking in a world that could use some depth and intelligence. A place for new ideas and concepts. For stories that stand for something and make you think. […] Innovation is at our core. Off the beaten track, often against the current, we explore boundaries. Curious about life elsewhere and the future. And fascinated by the extraordinary. In our explorations we like to stay away from the center because the new is created in the edges. That is where our natural habitat lies, where we actively search for special developments, trends and thinkers. That always produces surprising stories." (VPRO)

When we look further and identify how Tegenlicht presents itself, we can state that VPRO's pillars of innovation and accuracy are embodied in the program. On its website, Tegenlicht presents itself as follows:

"We are the future affairs platform of the Netherlands. We examine national and international developments that shape our world in the 21st century. We are on the frontline, where new ideas are developed, tested and criticized within the world of politics, economics, society, technology and science. And we will talk to you about how the world

of tomorrow will look like. […] Tegenlicht settles on the front line, looking for stories where ideas are developed, tested and criticized. VPRO Tegenlicht will give its view of the world through unobvious, controversial and at the same time thorough analyses; both on national and international developments that shape our world in the 21st century." (VPRO Tegenlicht)

So, Tegenlicht marks VPRO's public value of innovation, by underscoring its will to seek insight into how society works and to investigate stories via unobvious analyses. And VPRO's pillars of accuracy and independency are underscored through Tegenlicht's claim to perform 'thorough analyses'. What is also interesting about Tegenlicht is that the brand claims to look for 'stories where ideas are developed, tested and criticized'. From the beginning VPRO has tried to involve viewers with its stories in an innovative way. And by employing platforms, in addition to classic television broadcasting, VPRO can involve its viewer, because these platforms enable viewers to participate in discussions raised by the broadcaster. VPRO's Meet Ups involve viewers even more, because viewers can explicitly have discussions with the producers of the brand. This can be seen as a democratic approach. The overall employment of platforms can thus be considered a public value, which is the value of democracy. That is why I am interested in the participatory possibilities of Tegenlicht.

This study focuses on the role that Tegenlicht's platforms play in the distribution of the abovementioned values. Conflicting ideas revolve around broadcaster's use of platforms, which I will discuss in the next chapter. Some think broadcasters should, and others think broadcasters should not use platforms as an addition to television and radio broadcasting. However, I am specifically interested in whether platforms can enhance NPO's public values or whether these public values are at stake when carried out through platforms.

1.2 Public broadcasters in the digital age

Now that I have introduced NPO and explained the public values of NPO as well as the values of VPRO and Tegenlicht, I will describe how NPO is confronted with digital developments in the new media age. Traditional television and radio broadcasting are being put under pressure, since news ways to consume media have appeared. A study by Stichting Kijkonderzoek (2020) says that the popularity of linear television has strongly declined in the last six years, in specific when it comes

to consumers with an age lower than 34. According to the results of this research, in 2020 people under twenty consume television content less than an hour long, while six years ago the length of television consumption was approximately two hours. (Jan Duin, 2020). So, younger audiences shift to the digital domain and spend less time watching linear television. Television consumption is thus decreasing, while the consumption of videos on social media and on YouTube is increasing (García-Avilés, 2020). Both NPO and the broadcasters acknowledge the growing role of digital platforms, but there seems to be a difference in concerns that they both have:

> "Two camps are located opposite from each other in Hilversum. On the one hand: the conservative camp, especially the NPO board. They believe that the public broadcaster must compete with Netflix, YouTube and Facebook by creating one strong brand online: npo.nl. They disagree with publishing NPO programs on YouTube and social media, because that would make powerful competitors even more powerful. Digital innovation is important, but the NPO is not a tech company, so the available budget is mainly spent on programs. Nearly all of the single broadcasters belong to the other camp. They feel curtailed by strict rules. They believe that NPO should invest more on digital innovation and that programs should be delivered where viewers gather. Whether that be on television, on YouTube, Facebook or Snapchat. The most radicals among them want all NPO programs to be available on YouTube for free and in high quality. After all, the taxpayer has already paid for it." (Kist, 2016).

So, on one hand, we have the public broadcasters who feel as if they are being limited in their digital media production. These public broadcasters want NPO to spend more money on digital innovation by experimenting with content on online platforms. They also want programs to be broadcasted on digital channels, because according to the public broadcasters that is where many audiences shift to. An example of such a digital channel would be YouTube. On the other hand, the governmental board of NPO does not want its programs to be spread on YouTube and social media, because that would only support rival platforms according to the PSM. NPO acknowledges the need for broadcasters to compete with online video platforms such as Netflix, YouTube and Facebook in order to become the leading Dutch supplier of video-on-demand, as is written in NPO's concept version of their *Jaarplan Video 2019* (Takken, 2018). Also, NPO is unwilling to use social media, because they fear that their public values will be at stake as a consequence of incorporating these platforms. Traditionally, journalists have been the primary gatekeepers of

information, but on social media, data and algorithms decide the provision of information (Rijxman, 2017).

Hence, NPO considers digital innovation to be of great importance, but still wants to spend most of its budget on traditional television and radio. Not only NPO is pessimistic about the growing presence of its public broadcasters on major social media platforms. There is also dissatisfaction with NPO's online activities in the political domain. Dutch politicians think that public broadcasters unfairly compete with commercial newspapers and magazines by publishing long articles online, which in the end are products of tax money. Therefore, some Dutch politicians want public broadcasters to be limited in their online production (Lengton, 2018). After all, it is argued that it is hard to ask people to pay for news when news is provided for free elsewhere (Benjamin, 2018). These statements clearly disclose that some politicians define public media solely as the combination of traditional television and radio content. However, as has become clear, public service media are redefining their role as a broadcasting system, due to new media developments. These developments undoubtedly make it necessary to rethink our definition of 'public media'. For years there have been public broadcasters that broadcasted along commercial broadcasters, on radio as well as television. Wouldn't that be an unfair competition as well? Why would it be a different scenario when online public media exists alongside online commercial media? Especially in this digital era, it is important that public content also has to be able to flourish on digital platforms, where tax-paying citizens are also present.

1.3 The future of NPO

During this research it is not only important to shine light on NPO's current situation. Since digital developments will reappear and necessitate us to rethink the definition of public service media, it is also important to discuss the future of NPO. In section 4.3 I will also discuss future scenarios, but then I will zoom out and view the future of public service media from a broader perspective. Now, I will specifically delve into the future scenarios of NPO. That future is important but uncertain, and it is difficult to analyze which scenario is best. Therefore, it is needed to shed light upon the possible scenarios to get a better view on the future. The ministry of Education, Culture and Science, which is responsible for the finances of NPO, has cut millions from the annual budget (Tienhooven, 2019). This decrease of budget has resulted in concerns about the future of public broadcasting. Some scenarios can be pointed out among the discussions about NPO's future

(Takken, 2018), that should be considered as the boundaries between which the future can move towards. As Mijke Slot (2008) proposes in *De draagbare lichtheid van het bestaan* (2008), it is useful to set out the uncertain factors that influence the future. She suggests approaching each uncertainty as an axis, where the most extreme possibilities of an uncertainty form the most extreme values of an axis. I have developed a framework concerning the future of NPO that is based on Slot's model, which is seen in Figure 1. As Slot states, axes are based on uncertain factors that influence how the future will look like. In the case of NPO, one axis is defined on the level of media type, since it is uncertain which media people will consume in the future. Online media consumption seems to be increasing, but it is unsure whether it will overrule traditional television and radio consumption. The second axis is defined on the basis of public values, since the Media Act and editorial requirements are subject to alterations made by the government. Programs and their main principles can change in the future, depending on societal or political issues.

Public values less leading

Scenario 2:
Open-public broadcaster

Scenario 4:
Online broadcaster

Traditional television
& radio content

Online
content

Scenario 3:
Broadcaster with
narrowed content

Scenario 1:
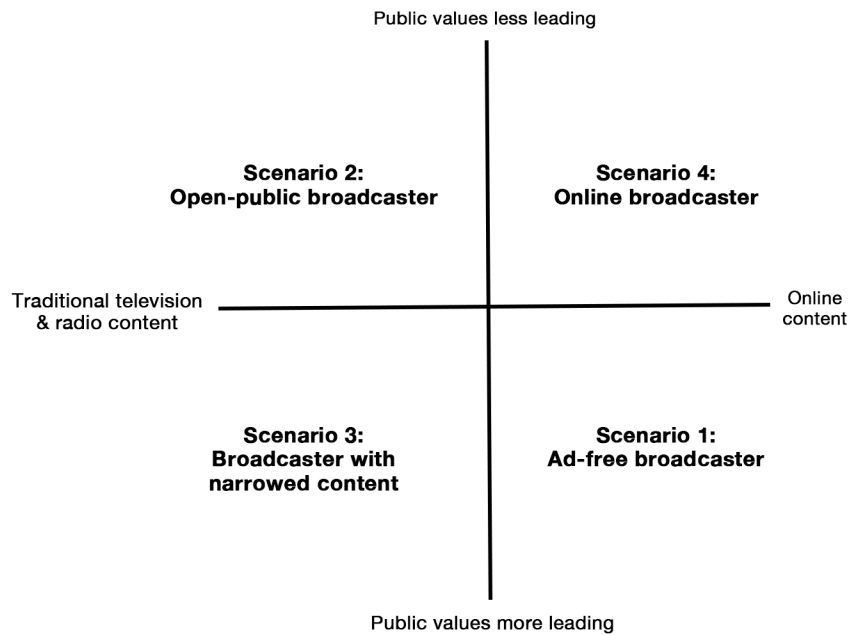**Ad-free broadcaster**

Public values more leading

Figure 1. Scenario Framework

If online content is dominant over traditional television and radio content and public principles are deemed important to distribute (scenario 1), NPO would be an ad-free broadcaster which would

result in less reason for commercial media to blame NPO for unfair competition. In this scenario NPO would be a non-profit institution. However, an ad-free broadcaster would also lead to a decrease of the budget. However, if online content is less dominant and public principles are deemed unimportant to distribute, NPO would be an open public medium (scenario 2). NPO would then not be seen as a closed fort but as a media service where new broadcasters may freely join existing broadcasters. I do not aspire this view, because a non-profit broadcaster is more likely to produce content that serves citizens on an educational, critical and informational way than a commercial broadcaster would. When public principles become more leading and television and radio content overrules online content, we can speak of NPO as a broadcaster with narrowed content (scenario 3). In this prospect, amusement programs will not be part of NPO anymore. This could be an interesting direction to take, since NPO's level of value may become higher. However, chances are high that a narrower range of media content results in the loss of viewers and users. Finally, the fourth scenario is when NPO will be an online broadcaster (scenario 4), where public values are less leading but online content overshadows television and radio content. In this scenario NPO has to strengthen its online policy to withstand the dominant position of popular social media. Opponents of this view argue that such a scenario is not realistic, because television nowadays still serves as a prominent medium (Takken, 2018) and placing content on online platforms undermines the recognizability of the content being publicly funded. They discuss that NPO's content should be noticeable as content of a public medium.

In this chapter it has become clear which public values are relevant for NPO, VPRO and Tegenlicht. NPO primarily stands for transparency, equality, democracy, independency and comprehensibility. VPRO on the other hand, marks the importance of accuracy and independency. When we look further and identify how Tegenlicht presents itself, we can state that the pillars of innovation and accuracy are embodied in the program. We now also know that platforms play a role in the distribution of those public values. Also, in this chapter we have discussed the debate around NPO and the digital media age. NPO's future has been discussed and it is clear how the prominence of public values may shape the future of NPO programs. Four different scenarios have been set out that give a better perspective on future developments of NPO. It is important to point out these different scenarios, since these perspectives on broadcasters in the digital age indicate if and how we should rethink the definition of public service media. The two axes, media type and the importance of public values, decide the scope of that discussion.

Now that we have shed light on NPO as a public service media institution, discussed the public values of NPO, VPRO and Tegenlicht and pointed out the debate around NPO and the new media age, it is time to step over to the role that platforms play in the transmission of public values. Do Tegenlicht's platforms contribute to the transmission of the brand's public values? Or do the technical structures of such digital platforms complicate the conveyance of public values? In order to make the role of platforms in the transmission of public values clearer, I will delve into the discourse of platforms and public values in the next chapter.

2. PUBLIC VALUES IN A PLATFORM SOCIETY

In this chapter I will delve into the discourse of the public values of platforms, that will help me better understand if and to what extent the public values of Tegenlicht and of the news sector in general are at stake in the struggle over a networked society. I will take the theory described by Van Dijck, Van Poel and De Waal in *The platform society: Public values in a connective world* (2016) as a basis to analyze the participatory possibilities of platforms (2.1) and to connect these to the notion of public values (2.2).

2.1 The platform revolution

To analyze the affordances (which will be explained in the next chapter) of Tegenlicht's platforms it is necessary to clarify the term 'platform'. I am interested in the different forms of participation that are made possible by platforms, since I consider participation to be an example of a public value. In this study I define platforms alike Van Dijck et al (2016) explain it: "An online 'platform' is a programmable digital architecture designed to organize interactions between users—not just end users but also corporate entities and public bodies. It is geared toward the systematic collection, algorithmic processing, circulation, and monetization of user data" (2016, 4). Van Dijck et al (2016) mention three different mechanisms of platforms that shape the scope of life, whether that be private or public spheres. These mechanisms are labeled as "datafication, commodification and selection" (2016, 32). These mechanisms will not form an essential part of this study, since I will mainly focus on how and to what extent platforms contribute to the distribution of public values. Nevertheless, they will indirectly recur in the analysis. Datafication is explained as "the ability of networked platforms to render into data many aspects of the world that have never been quantified before" (2016, 33). Examples of datafication is the capturing of user interaction such as likes, comments, tags and tweets, but also of GPS-locations and search results. Commodification deals with the transformation of online and offline objects into tradeable commodities, objects that in former times were not quantified. Lastly, selection is explained as "the ability of platforms to trigger and filter user activity through interfaces and algorithms" (2016, 40).

In the case of Tegenlicht, among the used platforms are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. A few years ago, Tegenlicht did not communicate via online channels. What we now see, is a shift from what normally has been called passive participation (but as I will show later on is a form of

cognitive interactivity) into an interactive use of media due to the establishment of platforms, in specific social media. Society is subject to platformization and this development is visible in different sectors, also in the news sector where Tegenlicht is part of. Social media platforms can be seen as a disruption of traditional television and radio journalism. For example, in former times a Tegenlicht viewer was only able to watch a television episode to consume news, while viewers are now also able to see and contribute to Tegenlicht content on several social media platforms where and whenever they want to. This "platformization of society" as Van Dijck et al (2016) call it, denotes a recent transformation of the internet and creates the possibility for individuals to retrieve more agency in contrast to consuming traditional television content. The theory by Van Dijck (2016) indirectly discusses the concept of participation, however not extensively enough. Therefore, I will need to step over to Henry Jenkins, Mizuko Ito and Danah Boyd (2016), which focus on the notion of participation.

Henry Jenkins, Mizuko Ito and Danah Boyd (2016) describe the growing agency of media users as participation culture, a digital culture with a low barrier for individuals to express themselves artistically, to engage civically and where people think their contributions matter. The concept of participatory culture is useful for my analysis, since the term enables me to describe consumers of Tegenlicht content as producers. However, I find the concept of participatory culture rather optimistic about the level of agency of media users. For, there are differences in the degree of participation. For example, the level of participation from a viewer that weekly likes and comments on Tegenlicht's social media content differs from the level of participation from a viewer that weekly attends events of Tegenlicht. Jenkins' theory is thus interesting, but not comprehensive enough, since the theory does not shed light on levels of participation. Since I am specifically interested in the different levels of participation that are made possible by Tegenlicht's platforms, I am going to introduce Salen and Zimmerman's (2004) model on theorizing interactivity.

Salen and Zimmerman (2004) present four modes of interactivity. The first mode of interactivity is cognitive interactivity, which can be described as psychological participation between an NPO program and a viewer watching that program. This type of participation mainly explains the cognitive processes a viewer undergoes when watching content. For instance, when watching an eco-travel program, a viewer might start contemplating on how eco-friendly he or she travels the world. The second mode of interactivity is functional interactivity, which refers to the structural interactions with the materiality of a technology. For example, this type deals with the response time after a user clicks a button on an NPO website. The third mode is explicit interaction

that for example deals with playing a game on an NPO website or listening to an NPO podcast. Finally, the fourth mode of interactivity is beyond-the-object-interactivity, which deals with the participation beyond a single designed system and within the culture of the object. An example in the context of public broadcast media would be when NPO hosts an event about sex education that results in a more inclusive level of sex education on high schools.

The aforementioned concepts provide a good framework to analyze interactivity and recognize participation. But again, they can be considered too optimistic about the agency of media users. What if NPO profits from the potentials of interactive media, using their authority to hold down rather than to empower grassroots participation by viewers? NPO might provoke interaction in their media to control their dominant position as a broadcasting institution, hence creating the pretension of participation by evoking user engagement. NPO might embrace the participation because they want to boost their market share in a highly competitive (social) media system, something Axel Bruns refers to as 'harvesting the hive' (2008, p. 32). Platforms might appear as a replacement of top-down with bottom-up and are often considered an empowerment for the user. Yet, it is important to understand that social media platforms complicate the distribution of crucial public values that are akin to the journalism sector. To understand how platforms complicate and pressure the realization of such values, it is needed to delve into the concept of public values.

2.2 Public values

In this study public values are to be understood as values that an organization provides to a society in order to contribute to the common good (Moore, 1995). Van Dijck et al (2016) discuss the notion of public values mainly through the lens of platformization. Public values that they mention are for example fairness, independency, democracy, collectivity, accuracy and transparency (3). According to them, public values are engraved in all platforms, which make them biased. This leads Van Dijck et al (2016) to argue that the values that are engraved in platforms may clash with the norms and values of the social structures in which the platforms are implemented. In that case, there is only the pretense of certain public values. Take Facebook, for example, that presents itself as a digital tool to help "build a global community" (Zuckerberg, 2017) and therefore considers itself to serve among others the public value of collectivity. Also, Facebook also allow users to not only consume but produce content. Therefore, it could be stated that a social medium

like Facebook also seeks to distribute the public value of participation. But what the social medium does not communicate are the public values engraved in its digital architecture. While platforms may appear to realize public values for the common good, the boundaries of a platform's architecture may undermine the realization of certain public values. The platform ecosystem can thus be moored in paradoxes. So, what happens when a brand such as Tegenlicht uses Facebook as a platform to spread out content? On the one hand, we have the public values of Tegenlicht. It would be sufficient to state that Tegenlicht as a news brand seeks to carry out the public values of journalistic independency, comprehensive news coverage and accuracy. On the other hand, we have the (less visible) public values of Facebook as a social medium. These public values may clash in the disadvantage of social structures (like Tegenlicht) that implement these platforms. A platform may strengthen or weaken the distribution of Tegenlicht's public values. Consider the digital architecture of Facebook, in which the platform mechanism of 'selection' leads to users becoming isolated in filter bubbles, as Pariser (2011) argues in the book *The Filter Bubble: What The Internet Is Hiding From You*. Parises states:

> "The basic heart of the new Internet is pretty simple. The new generation of Internet filters looks at the things you seem to like – the actual things you've done, or the things and people you like – and tries to extrapolate. They are prediction engines, constantly creating and refining a theory of who you are and what you'll do and want next. Together, these engines create a unique universe of information for each of us – what I've come to call a filter bubble – which fundamentally alters the way we encounter ideas and information." (2011, "Introduction")

What Pariser (2011) underscores, is that social media platforms often show targeted content, as a result of algorithms that lead to personalized content. By using these algorithms, social media platforms hope to maximize the amount of online interaction. However, this maximization of user engagement might conflict with the values of accurate and comprehensive news coverage. Also, the low threshold to contribute on social media platforms can result in the circulation of fake news, which conflicts with the public values of accuracy and comprehensive news coverage. Thus, social media platforms like Facebook do not only affect news organization's authority over the selection of news but also undermine the status of professional journalism. As a result, professional news institutions such as Tegenlicht are therefore pressured to post content that is produced to invite as much engagement as possible. Tegenlicht might feel the need to produce sticky content to

compete against the abundance of media on social media platforms. Sticky content is to be considered as memorable and catchy and is aimed at holding attention as long as possible (Gladwell, 2000). And although statistics of television viewers and radio listeners have always been part of news sector's strategies to reach audiences, there is a substantial difference in the preciseness of data analytics of social media platforms. These can mostly generate data in a more exact and faster way than older methods for profiling (Nieborg & Poell, 2018).

During this chapter, we have analyzed the interactive possibilities of platforms and connected these to the notion of public values. We have delved into the concept of 'platforms' and explained different mechanisms of platforms, "datafication, commodification and selection" (2016, 32). Also, we have shed light upon theories regarding participation, since participation is considered a public value during this study. We have shed light upon different levels of participation, by mentioning four modes of interactivity by Salen and Zimmerman (2004). Further, we now know that public values are engraved in platforms and that they may clash with the norms and values of the social structures in which the platforms are implemented. Now, I will explain the method that will be used during this study. Subsequently, I will perform the analysis.

3. METHOD

In this chapter, I will explain the method that will be performed during this study. Since I will focus on the discourse of public values of public service media in an era of platforms, it is useful to explain discourse analysis as a term in 3.1. In 3.2 I will explain my central method, which will be a critical discourse analysis. However, a critical discourse analysis drives me to choose a supportive method to analyze the first dimension of the method. This supportive method will be an affordance analysis, which I will explain in 3.2.1. This method allows me to shed light on levels of participation by looking at affordances, affordances that are linked to platforms that Tegenlicht adopts. Finally, in 3.2.2 I will point out the second and third dimension of the CDA method, which respectively consists of interviews and the wider context in which NPO exists.

3.1 Discourse analysis

I am inspired by the work of Norman Fairclough (1992; 2013), who argues that the concept of discourse is to be considered as a particular way of talking about the world. From Fairclough's perspective the term discourse is used to make a connection between texts and their social purposes. Fairclough is not so much interested in texts exclusively, but in how texts produce power relations. His aim is to uncover social identities and social relations by delving deeper into the linguistic-discursive dimension of social and cultural practices. In his book *Language and Power*, Norman Fairclough (2013) introduced the critical discourse analysis in which power, ideology and discourse are fundamental concepts. This study does not directly address power relations. However, since NPO's public values might be undermined because of a platform's architecture, we can regard this as a form of power. The method does not only encompass written and spoken communication, but also visual elements such as images and videos. Also, Fairclough stresses that discourse is both constitutive and constituted by social practices.

3.2 Critical discourse analysis

The critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2013) will be taken as a central method during the study and will be performed on the basis of Tegenlicht's platforms. A major advantage of using the CDA method is that it enables me to analyze content in relation to webs of other content and in relation to its social context. The method does not solely analyze content in isolation, because

the CDA approach assumes that the use of language is a communicative event consisting of three dimensions as seen in Figure 2, namely text, discursive practice and social practice. However, to perform the first part of CDA it is needed to perform a supportive method, which in this study will be a an affordance analysis. I will explain the supportive method in the next subchapter.
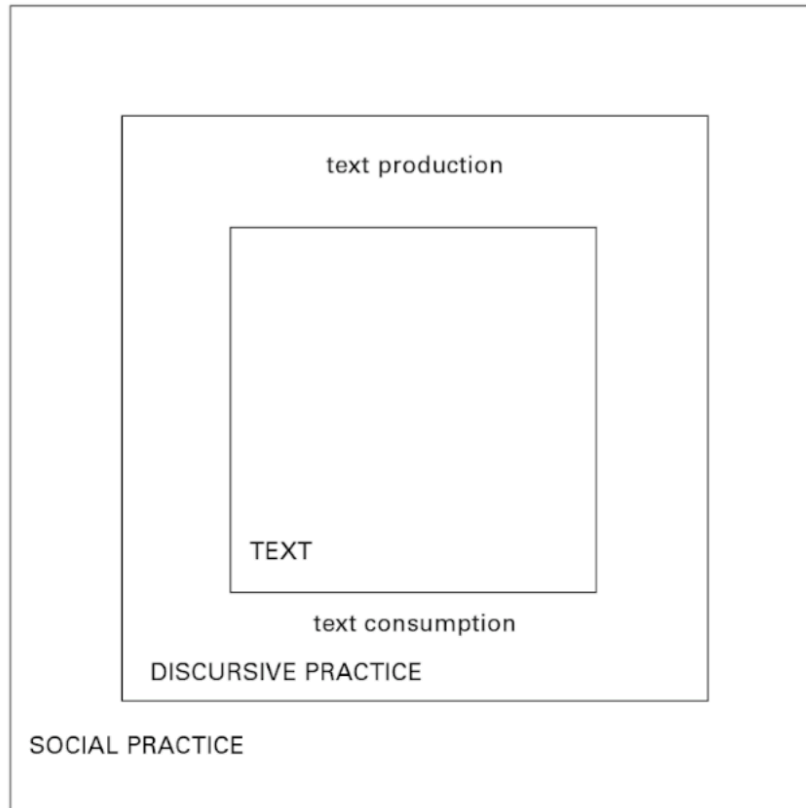
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│  SOCIAL PRACTICE                         │
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Figure 2. Fairclough's three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis (1992b: 73)

CDA assumes that the analysis of a communicative event should focus on the linguistic elements of a text, on processes that relate to the production, distribution and consumption context and on broader social practices to which the communication belongs. The first dimension, text, considers the formal elements of the linguistics. One can think about the vocabulary, grammar, syntax and the coherence of a sentence. The second dimension, the discursive practice, considers how a text is produced and how it is consumed. During the examination of this element, the production and consumption processes, where content has gone through, is investigated. The analysis of the third dimension, the social practice, involves two aspects. It is not only important to understand in what discursive networks the practices belong and how these discourses are distributed and regulated

across texts. Also, the economic and institutional conditions to which the discursive practice belong is important to acknowledge.

It is important to note that during this study the CDA method will be used for the analysis of platforms. In specific, this means that the first dimension will not be performed as described above. Instead of analyzing formal elements of linguistics such as vocabulary, grammar and syntax, I will study texts in more general sense by looking at the participatory possibilities of platforms.

3.2.1 Dimension 1: Affordance analysis

The first part of CDA initially deals with the formal linguistics of a text, such as vocabulary, grammar and syntax. However, since my research object revolves around the affordances of platforms where these texts exist, I will focus on affordances of various types of content that Tegenlicht produces: on television, on online platforms and via events. Important to note, is that these platforms have their own unique affordances. This also means that each platform deals with its unique public values. Also, it must be acknowledged that each platform puts at risk the element of independency, since platforms deal with editorial control and capture users' data for commercial purposes. I have chosen Tegenlicht as a case-study for this study, since the brand distinguishes itself from other NPO brands. The brand is unique for hosting events (Meet Ups) in addition to social media content and television content. I do not consider Meet Ups as a platform during this study. But while this study primarily focuses on public values and platforms, I will still incorporate these offline events in this work. Similar to television content and platforms, Meet Ups also represent public values. Therefore I regard the Meet Ups as a transmedia concept, In this study, I will thus look at the affordances of all media types, including offline events.

My starting point is the work of James Gibson (1977), who originally coined the term 'affordances' to describe the actionable properties between the world and an actor. Donald Norman (1999) later appropriated the term in the context of technologies and in specific of interactions between technologies and humans. Norman is mainly interested in how possible actions of humans are made perceivable by a technology. According to Norman, good technological designs are only usable as intended. An affordance analysis examines a website's enclosed assumptions about the correct use, looking at functionalities, page layouts and menu options. For example, the method examines which options or functionalities are foregrounded and how they are explained. In order to analyze Tegenlicht's content, I am going to look at platforms

on the basis of different types of affordances. Stanfill (2015) differentiates between four types of affordances: functional, cognitive, physical, and sensory affordances. A functional affordance concerns what a website can do; a cognitive affordance has to do with how users know what a site can do; a sensory affordance enables a user in sensing (hearing, feeling, seeing, smelling); physical affordances concerns physical and purposeful actions or mandatory utilities.

During the analysis I will group types of Tegenlicht's content on the basis of Stanfill's (2015) affordances. In order to say anything about the actual degree of participation, I will discuss these affordances on the basis of Salen and Zimmerman's (2004) model of interaction, which I have explained in section 2.1. It is for example interesting to examine which platforms the brand uses to connect to their audiences. The type of media might say something about the degree of participation. For example, a webpage will most likely establish less engagement than a social media post or mobile app. When a platform provides interactional use, it is useful to unravel the types of interaction. What can users do with the content on a platform? Does the technical infrastructure enable users to share, like, tag or comment? And what kind of activities does the infrastructure restrict? In other words: what types of interaction are not made possible by the platform?

3.2.2 Dimensions 2 and 3: Interviews & the wider context

Since texts do not exist in isolation but are created in relation to a discursive network, it is important to delve into the production, distribution and consumption context of content. By analyzing these discursive networks, I will be able to learn more about the discourse of Tegenlicht's content. This context will be analyzed in the second dimension of CDA and is studied through conducting interviews with representatives and viewers/users of Tegenlicht's content. During the interviews I will ask about the processes which the content undergoes before it is published. Also, I am interested in their point of view on NPO's media course and in their media strategies. I am not only interested in whether a brand stimulates participation, but I also want to look for the overall messages that editors seek to communicate through their content. It may be the case that no single message can be pointed out, but that each platform communicates its own message. If so, then I would like to know why the social media managers choose to do so. And since content or the discursive practices of content are related to certain socio-historical conditions that determine these processes, it is needed to look at the wider social practice in which Tegenlicht's content is

established. This third dimension of CDA will focus on the wider context of platformization in the public broadcasting industry and explain what these shifts could mean for the future of public broadcasters and public values. In this part, I will zoom out and discuss the broader context of digital developments in the broadcasting industry. Here, I will make an attempt to argue what new media developments mean for the future of linear television and for the dissemination of the news sector's public values such as journalistic independence, the promise of trustworthiness and qualitative content.

4. THE PLATFORMS OF TEGENLICHT

In this chapter I study the platforms of Tegenlicht through a critical discourse analysis, consisting of three steps. In 4.1 I will analyze the affordances of Tegenlicht's platforms by performing a supportive method of CDA, which is an affordance analysis. Secondly, in 4.2 I will delve into the production, distribution and consumption context of Tegenlicht's platforms by conducting interviews with producers and consumers of the brand. Thirdly, in 4.3 I throw light upon the social practice in which the content exists. Here I will discuss the wider context of digital developments in the broadcasting industry. What do the shifts mean for the future of television and what do these in turn mean for the dissemination of public values?

4.1 The affordances of Tegenlicht's platforms

To study the affordances of Tegenlicht's platforms, I will group the content on the basis of the affordances Mel Stanfill (2015) points out: functional & cognitive (4.1.1) and sensory & physical (4.1.2) affordances. First, I will look at the functional as well as the cognitive affordances: affordances that concern what a website can do and affordances that have to do with how users know what a site can do. Second, I will look at the sensory as well as the physical affordances: affordances that enable a user in sensing (hearing, feeling, seeing, smelling) and affordances that concern physical and purposeful actions or mandatory utilities. In order to say anything about the actual degree of participation, I will discuss these affordances on the basis of Salen and Zimmerman's (2004) model of interaction.

4.1.1 Functional and cognitive affordances

Functional affordances are regarded to be what interfaces can do and cognitive affordances have to do with how users know what a site can do (Stanfill, 2015). When we look at the functional affordances of Tegenlicht's platforms we can state that it's legitimate to view the NPO brand as an example of participatory culture. Let me explain why. In addition to traditional television broadcasting, the brand hosts a range of interactive platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. In contrast to cognitive affordances of television content, Tegenlicht's platforms enable more than solely cognitive affordances, also described as psychological interactivity (Salen and

Zimmerman, 2004). Tegenlicht's online platforms also enable functional interaction, since the platforms enable structural interactions with the materiality of technologies such as clicking and scrolling on a social media account. Tegenlicht's online platforms also enable explicit affordances since consumers are able to comment on content and have their voices heard. The online platforms of Tegenlicht thus make room for more affordances in contrast to Tegenlicht's television content, since users of online platforms can become contributors of discussions and possibly bring up new topics. A major advantage of platforms – in contrast to classic television and radio broadcasting – is the ability to quantify data such as clicks, comments and watch time. This characteristic of datafication enables Tegenlicht to gain insight into the consumption behavior of its users and therefore adjust its media strategy.

Some platforms are in essence different from traditional television broadcasting because they are based online, but do not afford its users to interact with content. In specific, Tegenlicht's newsletters, podcast episodes and web articles. For example, their web articles do not afford to respond to content directly, because the infrastructure is rather solid. Interestingly, Tegenlicht has found ways to enable explicit interaction by implementing a plug-in that affords website users to directly comment on website content. The tool is named Disqus and is shown on the bottom of every webpage. What is striking is that viewers give their opinion on topics, but Tegenlicht not always responds to these comments. If the brand would get into conversation with the Disqus-commenters more often, the community might feel more connected.

Another example where Tegenlicht has made possible explicit interaction is on the page of the Bi-annual Pioneer Election, a special Meet Up in which five finalists present an idea concerning a Tegenlicht topic to a jury and to the Tegenlicht audience. These five pioneers attempt to come up with solutions and ideas for the future and construct initiatives with which they improve their neighborhood or city. Not only a Tegenlicht jury but also the community is allowed to vote and comment on the idea they think is best, as seen in Figure 3. The brand therefore created a page which affords its community to vote on an initiative by clicking on a person. By involving the public into the voting process the community is being engaged. This form of interacting seems to transcend the simpler interaction on for example Facebook and Twitter, where a user's involvement primarily restricts itself to liking and sharing posts and giving comments. We could even state that the voting process of the Bi-annual Pioneer Election is a form of *beyond-the-object-interactivity* (Salen and Zimmerman, 2004), since the process deals with participation beyond the web page and within the culture where the winning pioneer has found solutions for.

Figure 3. Comments on Tegenlicht Pioneer page (Tegenlicht, 2019)

To shed light on the cognitive affordances, I will make use of the distinction between *spreadability* versus *stickiness*. Malcolm Gladwell (2000) coined the term stickiness to refer to content that people find interesting and want to share with others. Where the stickiness model focuses on adding up isolated members of an audience, the idea of spreadability acknowledges the social ties between people. In the context of public broadcasting media, an example of stickiness would be that a Facebookpage invites as many followers possible to like a specific post to benefit the analytics. Spreadable content on the other hand, is produced in easy-to-share formats such as share-buttons and embed codes. An example of spreadable content would be Tegenlicht's weekly events that are produced by viewers of the brand.

The Tegenlicht platforms mainly seem to consist of spreadable content, since the content facilitates users to 'spread' the communicated messages. Figure 4 is an example that shows that Tegenlicht aims to open up a discussion and therefore seeks to make its content spreadable. On the figure we see the Tegenlicht webpage that received the highest amount of Disqus-reactions. The article on the left, concerning the future of health care, received 23 comments in comparison to a general amount of 3 comments.

Figure 4. Comment plug-in on Tegenlicht website (Tegenlicht, 2019)

A possible explanation for the high amount of comments is the title used in the article: "Share your concerns about healthcare." The active word 'share' encourages users to actively think about the topic and form opinions about it. Also, the line 'Discuss along' on top of the Disqus-tool motivates people to share along their thoughts. Other than concentrating the attention of website users on the hyperlink that directs to the television program at the bottom of the page, the linguistical elements explicitly encourage users to start a discussion.

As said before, the online platform's functional affordances allow users to interact with content and to form discussions with fellow viewers. But does Tegenlicht also anticipate on these functional affordances, making them more apparent and therefore act on cognitive affordances? Not as much as they could. Tegenlicht does not seem to use Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as a platform for spreadable purposes as much as possible as Figures 5, 6 and 7 show. These social media posts are mostly directed towards trafficking users from the social media platforms to television or website content. Figure 5 says "watch 'Challengers of the democracy' via bit.ly/uitdagersgrillo". Figure 6 shows a post that links to a web article. On Figure 7 we see a

description of a YouTube episode, that says "this minidocumentary of Tegenlicht Kort is a modification of the episode 'Smart cities' of VPRO Tegenlicht". The brand thus does not take full advantage of the interactive potentials of the platforms and therefore of the spreadability of the content.

Figure 5. Tegenlicht Facebook post

Figure 6. Tegenlicht Twitter post

Figure 7. Tegenlicht YouTube post

Also, it can be noted that discussions underneath Tegenlicht's Facebook posts rarely exists out of genuine discussions. The viewers of Tegenlicht hardly comment on each other and Tegenlicht neither does as seen in Figure 8. For the brand it might be fruitful to respond to these comments more often, especially since Facebook affords this type of explicit interaction. The Disqus-section of the web page about health care described in the first paragraph reflects how fruitful it may be for Tegenlicht to invest more time in using imperatives and actively inviting the community to deliver input.
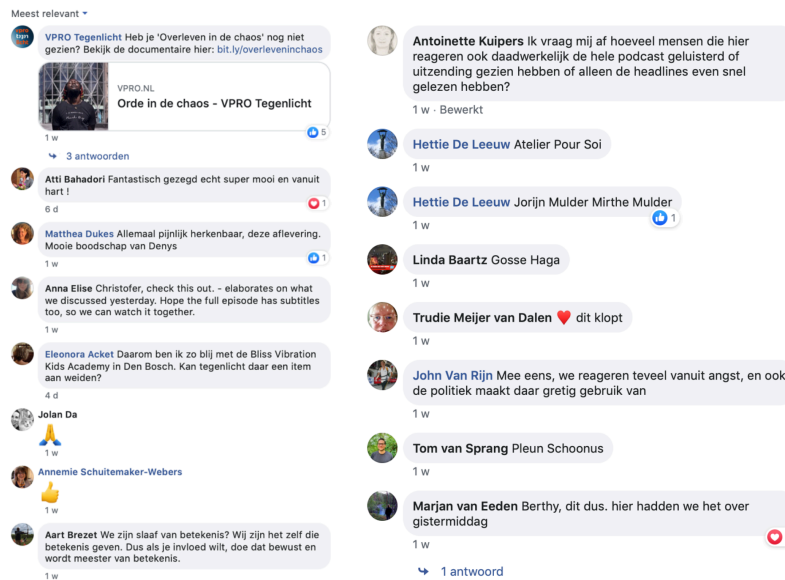

Figure 8. Facebook comments under Tegenlicht post (Facebook, 2019)

However, in some cases Tegenlicht does respond to a platform's functional affordances, by explicitly asking questions as seen at the Twitter post in Figure 9. On this Twitter post, the affordances of explicit interactivity are made more explicit than on Facebook and YouTube.

Figure 9. Twitter posts of Tegenlicht (Twitter, 2019)

What also becomes clear, is that Tegenlicht expands its television content with other platforms. However, a large part of the online content cannot be consumed without having seen the television content. Social media content is often directed towards linking users to the website and in specific to online television episodes. It can therefore be stated that Tegenlicht's platforms do not offer new independent narratives, because a large part of the content cannot be consumed without having seen the television content. Each television episode ends with a reference to Meet Ups: "Would you also like to participate in discussions about pioneering on the countryside? Then visit our Meet Ups at Pakhuis de Zwijger, in Amsterdam. And listen to our two-weekly podcast Future Shock or visit our website vpro.nl/tegenlicht." However, when analyzing their website content, it is notable that a large share of articles is centered around television content in specific. This is seen in Figure 10, where the importance of the television episode can be derived from the sentence: "Why do we increasingly experience that world as chaotic? We asked director Daan Veldhuizen who made an episode about it." In this example the content is a continuation of the last television episode and consists of an interview with a director of *television* content. Web content does therefore not form its independent narrative from television, while television content does form a narrative independent from other content.

Figure 10. Online article (Tegenlicht, 2019)

We also see a lack of independent narratives in Tegenlicht's podcast series. The series starts off with an introductory audio segment:

> "In this podcast we would like to give you an insight on the production process of Tegenlicht, show conversations with producers, researchers and sometimes with people who had a role in the episode. To tell you something about how we work, why we choose the topics we choose. But certainly, also to further deepen these topics. The topic will often be the most recent or upcoming episode." (Tegenlicht, 2019).

As the quote shows, the podcast is 'an insight on the production process of Tegenlicht's television program and can therefore be considered as background material, where viewers can get a sneakpeek of the television production process. Also, as the description in the examples of Figure 11 show, the episodes clearly refer to the 'episode' and to 'directors' as professions in the context of television content. I find it interesting to see that the makers preferred words like 'director' above 'podcast-host'. And wouldn't it be more sufficient to describe the podcast episode as an independent narrative? In other words: to use independent media narratives as a strategic style. Putting less focus on television content while creating other media narratives and by taking into account the affordances of each medium might be more fruitful for Tegenlicht. When a frequent

podcast listener who is unfamiliar with Tegenlicht television content comes across the Future Shock-series on its podcast-app, the content might not be as understandable as desired by the producers. In my opinion if Tegenlicht would publish content in a medium-specific way – by making use of a platform's functional affordances – users would be more stimulated to profit most of the affordances.

Figure 11. Podcast episodes of Tegenlicht (Podcast Luisteren, 2019)

Tegenlicht's YouTube platform is mostly an archive of shortened television content, hence not broadcasting a new narrative. It is noticeable that on YouTube Tegenlicht primarily creates content out of existing television content, except from the playlist called 'Interview directors'. This playlist consists of short interviews with editors that discuss the topic of the upcoming television episode of Tegenlicht, as seen in Figure 12. Interesting about this content is that it is created exclusively for YouTube, which makes the content unique. In other words, Tegenlicht uses YouTube as a platform for new narratives. However, Tegenlicht does not act upon YouTube's functional

affordances by asking questions or explicitly inviting YouTube users to share their ideas. Also, the playlist still revolves around television content, because the videos are to be seen as a preview to television episodes which becomes clear in the description of the playlist: "Interviews with directors of Tegenlicht about the episode they made." For Tegenlicht it would be interesting to not center around the television episodes, but produce content which is created for the medium-specificity of YouTube. Hence, producing content independently from television content.
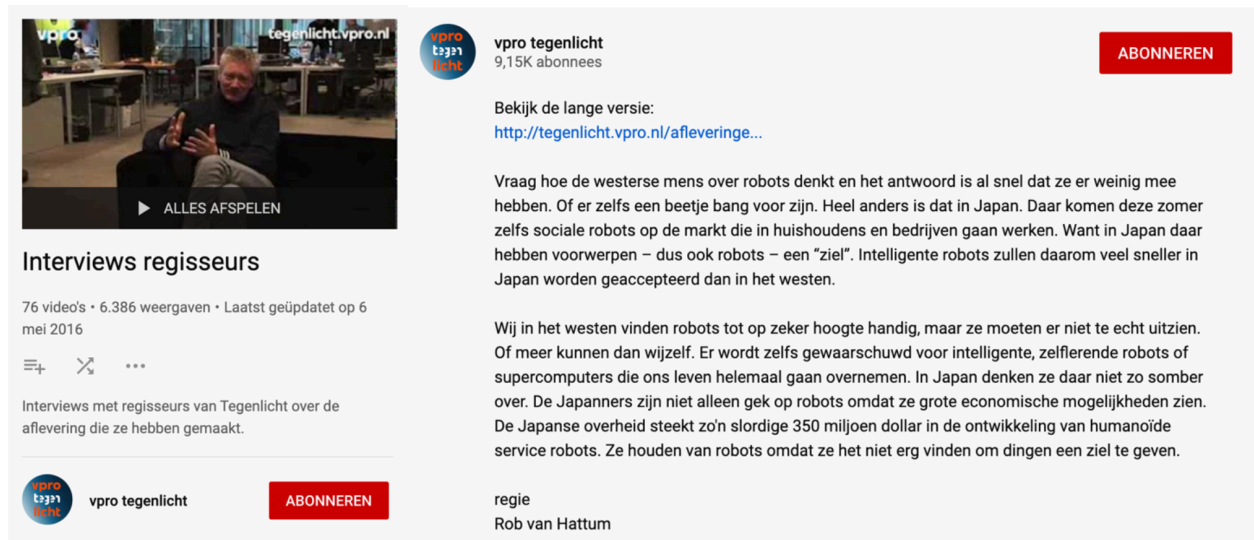

Figure 12. YouTube playlist of Tegenlicht (YouTube, 2019)

4.1.2 Sensory and physical affordances

Sensory affordances cover the ability for a user to use their senses and physical affordances concerns physical and purposeful actions or mandatory utilities. Since Meet Ups invite attendees to listen, speak and see and to physically be present in a specific setting, I will delve deeper into these events during this section. From the perspective of Axel Bruns, (2008) Meet Up consumers can be named *produsers*, since Meet Up audiences are able to act as active contributors in the production process of NPO content, where they can speak up and discuss about topics. Except for the official Meet Up held in Pakhuis de Zwijger, Amsterdam, most Meet Ups are organized by viewers and facilitated by the VPRO. The possibility for users to contribute to Tegenlicht content is especially found during Meet Ups. Of course, one could state that users are also able to contribute to the social media content, since users can comment on content. However, as we have seen before, content on Tegenlicht's social media platforms is not revolved around the

contributions of users. The content of Meet Ups on the other hand, is almost completely dependent on the contributions of viewers. Interesting is that Tegenlicht escapes from the restrictions of platforms, by organizing events.

I would also like to state that of all platforms, Meet Ups in specific have a high potential to create participation outside of the single events. Meet Ups have the ability to generate *beyond-the-object interactivity* (Salen and Zimmerman, 2004). I will explain why. First, Meet Ups may lead to the creation of initiatives such as municipal workgroups. Whether new political decisions or actions are indeed being taken as a result of these workgroups is a question unanswered. To investigate whether this really is the case, further studies would be required. However, the chance of such decisions and actions to be taken in the future is much higher than compared to participation on Tegenlicht's social media platforms. Nonetheless, the Facebook comments on Figure 13 are good examples that indicate that the community nevertheless has the will to be engaged in political, social, technological or economic issues outside the context of Tegenlicht. If initiatives or ideas presented by the viewers would be appropriated in Tegenlicht's content, that would give the community a more active role.

Figure 13. Facebook comments under Tegenlicht post (Facebook, 2019)

Second, during the Meet Ups the community has the chance to ask questions and give opinions about the topic. Viewers have the chance to get in contact with like-minded people in person and

share their ideas and initiatives verbally. For example, on the 16th of September I attended a Meet Up in the Centrale Bieb in Utrecht regarding the topic Countryside Pioneers together with approximately thirty guests. In the beginning, we watched the episode altogether and subsequently five 'pioneers' joined the stage to talk about the sustainability of the countryside's food production, which was the topic of the episode. Afterwards, all of the guests were able to have some drinks at the bar and further discuss the topic.

4.2 The production, distribution and consumption context

In the following part I will delve into the production, distribution and consumption context of Tegenlicht, since texts do not exist in isolation but are created in relation to a discursive network. In 4.2.1 the production context will be examined on the basis of three different webpages that highlight the brand and on the basis of interviews with three staff members of the VPRO, of which two work for Tegenlicht in specific. The distribution context is also explained on the basis of interviews with these staff members and will be discussed in 4.2.2. Finally, in 4.2.3 I will discuss the consumption context of the brand by interviewing two consumers of the brand.

4.2.1 The production context

Tegenlicht is part of the VPRO as a public broadcaster which is divided into three disciplines, with the *Hoofdredactie Media* on top. The Hoofdredactie Media is responsible for radio, as well as for television and online content. On their website they claim:

> "This is a next step into the development of VPRO's multimedia course, with which the broadcaster will reach its public even better, through different platforms. We will focus on the ongoing rejuvenation of VPRO and will, more than ever before, seek out for our audiences on the places and platforms they are present." (VPRO, 2019).

The editorial office of Tegenlicht exists of online editors, television editors (researchers and makers as they call it), a production team and an editor-in-chief. In total, the team consists of over thirty colleagues, which is made clear on their website (Wij zijn VPRO Tegenlicht, sd).

What is interesting, is that the editor-in-chief is less involved with the online expressions than the online compiler, who is responsible for the online expressions and corresponding strategies. In order for the brand to express itself in a more multimedial way, it is advisable to at least appoint one editor-in-chief that guards the messages being communicated on all of the brand's platforms. However, it must be said that the Tegenlicht team is slowly developing into a more multimedial staff. For example, during the first television season of Tegenlicht there was only one online editor, who focused on managing the website's content. Nowadays, the editorial team has expanded its staff with online editors. The team's goal is to work story-first, where the staff members first brainstorm about topics during editorial meetings. During these meetings they decide whether a story will fit for television or online content such as a podcast episode or a web article. But it turns out that in practice the objective to work story-first is hard to achieve. The online and television editors regularly discuss topics in a later stage, when an episode has already been aired. Nonetheless, the online and television editors pursue into co-creations:

> "It's written on paper like that, but in practice it doesn't always work out like that. However, we pursue to operate crossmedially. For example, when one of the directors shot an episode, he discovered another storyline which was interesting for our website. Sometimes, directors even write articles." (Van Alphen, 2019)

Interestingly, the television editors are named researchers and makers, which cannot be said of the online editors. Also, it is apparent that the job descriptions of VPRO seem to contradict the goal to work story-first. In order for the brand to reach this goal, it could be interesting to cut out the distinction between online and television editors and simply use the description 'Tegenlicht editors'. Actually, the team has already done so by hiring a maker who produces both television and online content:

> "We once hired a person with experience in the magazine sector. In the beginning he was part-time involved with television research and part-time with social media management. Now, it turns out that this colleague enjoys producing podcasts over producing for television content. However, not everyone is employable for multiple functions. Not every person has a talent to both write, do research and edit videos." (Romeijn, 2019)

According to the editor-in-chief, the online editors should attend all television meetings to genuinely create cohesion, which is not the case right now. However, the online team decided to relocate their meetings from secluded rooms to the open department in the presence of television colleagues: "For television researchers it is not mandatory to join our online meetings, but now they can at least give suggestions and say: 'Hey, I read this yesterday. Isn't this something you guys could work with?'" But there is also another factor at play that challenges the goal to work story-first: "We are bound to people who have been working at the company for years. These people are in permanent employment." (Romeijn, 2019). At BNNVARA this is also the case. There, the broadcaster desires to develop staff's online skills by offering internal social media courses. Also, a team has been commissioned to specifically train television editors to become employable for tasks concerning online media. This might be a fruitful step for VPRO to take.

Meet Ups

Exemplary of this study is the participative nature of the Meet Up events. Therefore, I distinctly want to elaborate on them. Meet Ups are held in different cities throughout the Netherlands. However, there is only one official VPRO Meet Up which is co-created with Pakhuis de Zwijger in Amsterdam. The other Meet Ups are organized by volunteers and are being facilitated by the VPRO. Thirty-six Meet Ups are being organized on a regular basis, but in total over seventy cities have hosted a Meet Up at least once. Moreover, these volunteers are being invited over by VPRO twice a year to attend courses regarding public relations and moderation. Also, they attend a so-called *warming up*: a meeting in which the upcoming episode topics are being presented. Interestingly, Tegenlicht viewers can participate with the brand's content by not only engaging with social topics but even by hosting a Meet Up. Eventually, new Tegenlicht content arises from these Meet Ups:

> "Once there was a Meet Up in Pakhuis de Zwijger, where lawyer Roger Cox came to speak about his case against the state. He was the first lawyer to file a case against the state concerning climate change and win. Our team was impressed when they saw him speak during a Meet Up. Afterwards, our director decided to follow him for over a year and we produced the episode The Case Against Shell." (Van Alphen, 2019)

> "When one of our researchers attended a Tegenlicht Meet Up in Groningen, he got in conversation with Christiaan Triebert from the investigative group Bellingcat. That

conversation led to an interesting new episode called Digital Citizen Detectives." (Romeijn, 2019).

It is interesting that Meet Ups eventually lead to the production of episodes, because it usually works the other way around. Also, a Meet Up about the green hydrogen revolution has even led to the creation of municipal workgroups (Van Alphen, 2019). It is legitimate to claim that NPO's brands rarely produce content as a result of input or events created by viewers. And even though the municipal workgroup as a result of a Meet Up is just one example, it demonstrates the potential of offline events created by a public broadcaster. For, the example shows that content is able to reach the political domain and put something in motion. According to Zoë, this is seldom the case with social media discussions:

"Viewers who attend a Meet Up put on their coats on a rainy Wednesday and get on their bicycle to get in contact with like-minded people. The offline connection and these moderated discussions will last longer. On online platforms people are only having shallow and heated discussions without providing any solutions for the future. As a public broadcaster you don't want to interfere with these polarized discussions." (Van Alphen, 2019)

4.2.2 The distribution context

The episodes of Tegenlicht are distributed on the Tegenlicht and NPO website, but on commercial media channels such as YouTube and Netflix they cannot be consumed by Dutch people. Tegenlicht episodes on YouTube are only accessible by an international audience. And the more viewers on NPO Start, the better for the competition with YouTube and Netflix. In the Netherlands the YouTube content is geoblocked by NPO, as seen in Figure 14. The reason is that NPO wants its Dutch audience to consume content on NPO Start (Romeijn, 2019).
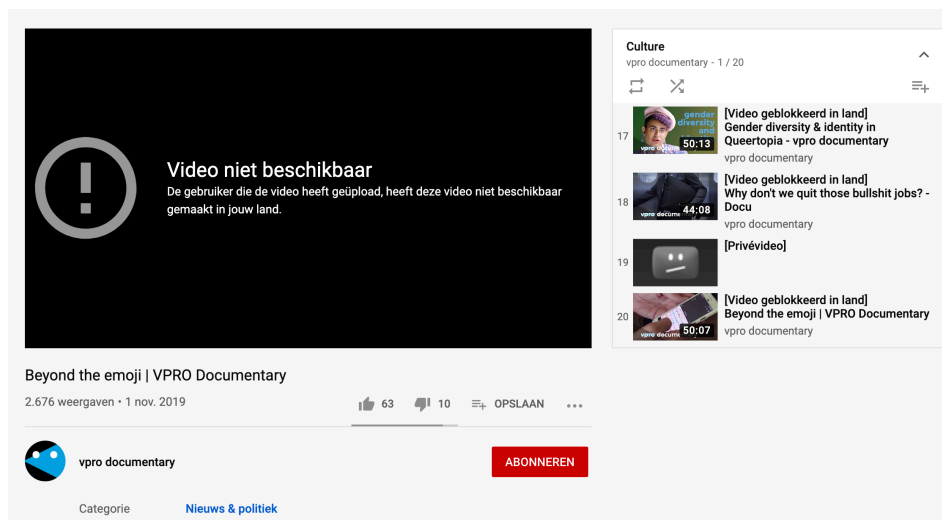
Figure 14. Geoblocked videos on VPRO's YouTube channel (YouTube, 2019)

The content on the international YouTube channel of VPRO has millions of views. When VPRO published a video of the new silk road through China the video gained millions of views, while the episode was broadcasted on television three years ago (Romeijn, 2019). This clearly tells something about YouTube being a fruitful platform for the brand's visibility. But of course, this amount of views goes hand in hand with a proper management of the videos. Tegenlicht has appointed a special online team that chooses the videos' titles, thumbnails and descriptions etcetera 'to prevent content to end up in the YouTube-graveyard' (van Alphen, 2019). Also, VPRO sells episodes to international partners such as Al Jazeera, the British Broadcast Corporation (BBC), the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR2) and the Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroeporganisatie (VRT). VPRO sells these episodes to gain a wider audience, because they think it is important to spread the broadcaster's values outside of the country (Romeijn, 2019). In fact, Tegenlicht is the bestselling brand of NPO in international countries. What is interesting, is that NPO recognizes and embraces YouTube when it comes to international visibility, but when it comes to visibility in its home country NPO does not embrace YouTube. NPO should consider taking advantage from the participatory possibilities that YouTube introduces. Former online editor of Tegenlicht, Jasper Koning (2019), shares this opinion:

> "Those videos all have to be on NPO.nl. A website that doesn't support playlists and doesn't enable a user to add videos to a 'watch later' list. No wonder of course: YouTube has hundreds of programmers working on the website's improvement. You do not want to compete with YouTube using public money. Instead, you have to embrace it as a powerful

force where you can find lots of new audiences by providing them properly selected and worthy content." (Koning, 2019)

4.2.3 The consumption context

To examine the consumption context of the brand, I have interviewed two consumers of the brand. One of the consumers, Herman de Roos, was invited for an interview by phone, after I found out via Meet Up event pages on Facebook that he regularly visited the events. De Roos is a relatively active Tegenlicht consumer, since he not only attends Meet Ups, but also volunteers in the production process of some events. The second consumer, Sofia de Hoog, had visited the same Meet Up that I visited in Utrecht and regularly consumes content on Tegenlicht's platforms. To interview both of them, I formed a set of main questions on the basis on two different themes: platform choice and motivation of consumption. Sometimes subquestions followed upon the main questions. The main questions are listed in the appendix.

<u>Platform choice</u>

When comparing discussions during Meet Ups and discussions being held on online platforms, interviewees have a strong preference for the former. Herman de Roos (2019), one of the volunteers and frequent visitors of the Meet Up in the city of Amersfoort, barely engages in discussions on online media, because he finds it difficult doing so since online communities consist of many different groups in society. He tends to send more superficial messages in order to reckon with people's different backgrounds. On the one hand, he considers the diversity of online users as a positive thing because the level of participation can be quite high on a quantitative level. But on the other hand, he deems the online discussions to be rather shallow and not solution-oriented: "On social media you only read about what is going wrong in the world. Misery here and there. But during the Meet Up I heard about a project of a man who created a foodforest in Leusden and I thought: 'well, luckily some good things happen in this world too.'" (De Roos, 2019). Sofia de Hoog, who visited a Meet Up in the city of Utrecht, shares this opinion.

> "Online you often see two opinions that conflict, two extremes. You often only read messages of people who want to express their view, but who are not willing to find a well-

grounded center. They do not look for a solution. The only thing they do is ventilate." (De Hoog, 2019)

While De Hoog experiences a negative feeling while reading discussions on social media platforms, she experienced a positive feeling after visiting the Meet Up in Utrecht. During the Tegenlicht event De Hoog was inspired by speakers and guests. According to her, it is interesting to recognize that Meet Ups attract certain type of people, while social media communities seem to exist out of a diversified group. De Hoog says that people who visit a Meet Up are the type of viewers that are actually willing to find solutions and possibly already set up projects themselves. That seems to be the power of a Meet Up. So, discussions on social media platforms are considered fleet, while Meet Ups are seen as constructive conversations.

According to De Roos, other brands of the public broadcasting system often leave you with lots of questions after a television broadcast: "Okay, what can I do now? The episode left me inspired, but what now?" Additionally, Tegenlicht consumers think that Meet Ups would become more fruitful if the connection between people would withstand. Of course, visitors of a Meet Up have the possibility to exchange ideas and thoughts with interested people. But De Hoog mentions she already lost this inspiration the next day: "Although I left the event with a positive feeling, I quickly lost the motivational energy. Afterward you end up in the daily grind." Of course, this does not mean that the average visitor experiences this loss of motivation. However, this example shows that it may happen.

Motivation of consumption

When asked why the interviewees consume content of Tegenlicht or NPO, the opinions were similar. Interviewees indicated they strongly prefer NPO content because of the relatively high social value. De Hoog does prefer commercial content sometimes, but only on certain occasions:

"Sometimes I do watch commercial content, but only for entertainment purposes. It demands less energy from me. I guess you could consider it a quick escape from reality. But overall, I prefer to watch NPO 1, 2 or 3 over content of commercial broadcasters, because I think publicly funded content is of higher value and more neutral. Commercial

42

programs are created with the purpose of gaining money through 'light' topics. I recognize that when I watch these programs." (De Hoog, 2019)

De Hoog relates publicly funded content to a higher level of engagement, focus and to a specific type of interest. Other than commercial content, publicly funded content requires more mental energy and participation. The motivation to watch NPO and Tegenlicht content thus stems from a will to engage in civil matters. This motivation could also be ascribed to De Roos, who acknowledges the value of informing and transforming the way people think and their point of views instead of just broadcasting entertainment. For him there is no extra value in pure entertainment on broadcasters: "the commercial broadcaster just fills up people's mind with nonsense and it's what keeps them busy and consequently keeps them away from actual problems in the world." (De Roos, 2019).

4.3 Public values in a connected world

In this part I discuss the wider context of digital developments in the broadcasting industry. What do they mean for the future of television? Tegenlicht is a good example that shows that the role of traditional television and radio as media platforms has changed. Where television and radio used to be key platforms in broadcasting mass-centered content, nowadays major networks seem to be affected by the emergence of hundreds of specialized themed channels and streaming platforms such as Netflix, NPO Start and Disney+. In addition, social media platforms also provide a space to consume content. Taken together, these transformations clearly disclose that not only the production, but also the distribution and consumption of television is changing. But is it still legitimate to talk about 'television'? Should we ask ourselves the same question as Bruno Felix and Femke Wolting (2000) asked themselves in a VPRO documentary: "Is it the end of TV as we know it?". Interestingly, some of their predictions came out. For example, the media industries have indeed fragmented and transformed into an on-demand experience as they foresaw. New types of interactivity have emerged, since media consumption is no longer bound to solely watching content, but nowadays viewers can also become participants. However, the value of contributions of course differs on each platform. But there is a far more important question to ask ourselves here.

In the light of the evolving media industries it is more interesting to ask oneself what the shifts mean for the dissemination of public values. Journalistic independence and the promise of trustworthiness and qualitative content are key values in the production of public service media content. These values have come under pressure, since connective platforms have come to control productional and distributional conditions more and more. Hence, on social media users are potentially consuming content in their cultural and ideological filter bubbles (Pariser 2011). Where traditional news sources hire skilled editors to select content from a selective set of professional news publications, on the internet everyone can share news or content from any place and anyone possible. NPO's public values sometimes thus tend to end up in a varied mix of content, consisting of mainstream news, personal news of regular users and disinformation. Not only public service media are disrupted as a result of innovative new platforms such as social media. Other examples of industries are the taxi industry, the hotel industry and the music industry that have fallen under pressure of respectively Uber, AirBnB and Spotify. These shifts are a fact and how industries should deal with these transformations is a question further to be answered.

5. CONCLUSION

The main goal of the current study was to examine the discourse of the incorporation of Tegenlicht's platforms for the distribution of public values. In this study, it has become clear that NPO has to fulfill both democratic, social and cultural needs of Dutch society, by carrying out the public values of transparency, equality, democracy, comprehensibility and independency. VPRO and Tegenlicht underscore some of these values. NPO uses multiple platforms in addition to its traditional television and radio programs, to distribute these values. We also know that traditional television and radio content of NPO is being put under pressure, since the consumption of digital media is growing when it comes to younger audiences. On the one hand, broadcasters want to spend more money on digital innovation and on the other hand, the governmental board of NPO wants to limit content on online platforms. We have also discussed whether platforms will strengthen or undermine the realization of Tegenlicht's public values. It became clear that the ecosystem of a platform can be moored in paradoxes. On the one hand, Tegenlicht's platforms might undermine the realization of the brand's public values, since the digital architecture of a platform limits the possibilities for a user. Public values are engraved in all platforms and may clash with the norms and values of Tegenlicht. On the other hand, platforms might strengthen the realization of Tegenlicht's public values, since these platforms make possible more ways to distribute Tegenlicht's content. Hence, making the brand's content more visible. Platforms can also strengthen the public values of Tegenlicht, because they offer participatory possibilities to democratically engage in discussions that classical television broadcasting lacks. What is interesting is that Tegenlicht also organizes weekly events, Meet Ups, in addition to broadcasting television events and employing platforms. By organizing these events, Tegenlicht escapes from the restrictions of platforms. Meet Ups can strengthen the realization of Tegenlicht's public values, because we have seen that events have the potential to induce participation outside of the single events, participation that finds its way through the corresponding culture. Interesting is that the interviewed consumers of events regard real-life events as more solution-oriented than discussions on platforms. As said, Meet Ups escape from the limitations of platforms, but platforms are of great importance to make these events visible to viewers.

It must be acknowledged that this study is limited by the lack of information on other NPO brands and other public broadcasters. During the research only the brand Tegenlicht was taken into account. Therefore, the study is not representative enough to answer the research question.

To give a more proper response on the research question, it is needed to investigate multiple brands from multiple broadcasters, for example 3 op Reis (BNNVARA) and Radar (AVROTROS). Also, more interviewees should become involved in further research. Five interviews are not representative enough, but the structure and length of this thesis does not allow me to perform a comprehensive set of interviews. But in spite of the limitations, the analysis absolutely adds to our understanding of how and to what extent NPO is able to engage its viewers. Another limitation of this study is the absence of quantitative research methods when it comes to the intensity of participation. Further studies could consist of questionnaires as a research instrument, where viewers are being asked about their experiences with their favorite brand's platforms. Also, during the affordance analysis of Tegenlicht's platforms only a relatively small number of expressions were taken into account. Take the Facebook page as an example; the page was introduced in 2002, which is seventeen years from the time of writing. The Twitter page was introduced in 2009, which is ten years from the time of writing. Thus, there still is an abundance of media expressions available for analysis.

As said, NPO brands could realize their public values more strongly by hosting events in addition to television broadcasting and content on platforms. Of course, platforms play an important role in promoting events, but it is important to acknowledge the paradoxes of platforms. Many NPO brands lend themselves for such events. For example, BNNVARA's *3 op Reis* could organize inspirational sessions with discussions on sustainable travel and NTR's *Verborgen Verleden van Nederland* could organize discussions in and about historical places in the Netherlands. But of course, these events could take place in many forms. They can differ from the commonly television viewings and discussions. BNNVARA's hiphop platform *101Barz* could host rap contests for upcoming talent. BNNVARA's Spuiten en Slikken could organize sex education sessions on school, for example in the form of quizzes or games. NTR's *Het Klokhuis* could visit different places in the country with a pop-up educational museum for children. The list could go on. Let this become a journey from the couch, to the mobile screen and eventually to the nearest place in town. Let's meet.

<u>Recommendations</u>

Although it is not the main purpose of this study to give recommendations on Tegenlicht's content strategy, it might be fruitful for the brand to take some points of improvement into consideration. First, it could be fruitful for Tegenlicht to get into conversation with viewers more often. Tegenlicht could for example conversate with Disqus-commenters more often, since the community might feel more connected and more willing to comment in the future. On Facebook the brand could also invest more time in actively inviting the community to get in discussion. Second, Tegenlicht could benefit from its social media platforms more often, by making use of the functional affordances of the platforms more often. Now, social media posts are mostly directed towards trafficking users to television or website content. But why not take more advantage of the interactive possibilities of platforms and explicitly invite viewers to comment or share content? Then, platforms would not only function as an overlap of television content, but also as an addition and enrichment. Third, for Tegenlicht it might be sufficient to put less attention to television content while creating other media narratives. If the brand would publish content in a medium-specific way, content might reach a larger audience, since content would then be more standalone. For example, when a frequent podcast listener who is unfamiliar with Tegenlicht's television content, comes across the Future Shock-series on its podcast-app, the content might not be as understandable as desired by the producers.

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APPENDIX I

To examine the production, distribution and consumption context of Tegenlicht, I conducted interviews on three representatives of the brand. During the interviews I asked several questions, of which the most important are listed below. Sometimes a sub question followed upon one of the main questions, if the answer of the interviewee induced further curiosity. However, these subquestions are not listed below.

Production and distribution context

1. How is the VPRO structured?
2. Can you tell me something about the departments VPRO consists of?
3. Is there a distinction between television content producers, online producers and Meet Up producers?
4. What is the structure and magnitude of the Tegenlicht team?
5. Which types of media or content does Tegenlicht produce?
6. How many employees are responsible for each type of medium? For example, how many team members engage in the production of television content and how many engage in the production of online and Meet Up content?
7. What are the responsibilities of Tegenlicht's editor-in-chief?
8. What are the public values that Tegenlicht wishes to communicate?
9. To what extent do the communicated public values differ per medium?
10. How are the Meet Ups produced?
11. To what extent do Tegenlicht team members work together with viewers in the production of non-official Meet Ups?
12. To what extent – in your opinion – are viewers of Tegenlicht able to participate in the production of content?
13. Do you think Tegenlicht could improve its media strategy and how?

Consumption context

1. Which content of Tegenlicht do you consume or participate in?

2. How frequent do you consume or participate in this content?

3. What draws you to consume or participate in Tegenlicht content?

4. To what extent and where do you visit Meet Ups?

5. What draws you to visit Meet Ups?

6. Do you engage in discussions during Meet Ups?

7. To what extent do you meet like-minded people during a Meet Up? And for which purposes?

8. Do Meet Ups drive you to engage in certain actions afterwards?