

PUBLIC TELEVISION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES
AND NEW STRATEGIES FOR EUROPE

Petros Iosifidis



Public Television in the Digital Era

Technological Challenges and New Strategies for Europe

Petros Iosifidis

City University, London

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Public Television in the Digital Era

Also by Petros Iosifidis

EUROPEAN TELEVISION INDUSTRIES

(with J. Steemers and M. Wheeler)

To my daughter Eftihia who always inspires me

Preface

The European television industry is undergoing profound technological, economic, socio-cultural and regulatory changes. These changes open up new opportunities for businesses to expand and converge and offer viewers a vast array of TV offerings at a national or even international level. However, these developments present a formidable challenge for public television (PTV) broadcasters, who for a number of decades enjoyed a monopoly status and were tasked to preserve the national culture, language and identity.

The aim of this book is twofold. First, it examines the way technological developments and the internationalisation of the television industry affects these guardians of the public interest. Secondly, it focuses on the policies pursued by PTV broadcasters in selected European countries in response to the challenges that confront them in the era of digital convergence. The changes in the European television landscape force public channels to rethink their position toward new digital technologies, organisational structures, and programming policy and scheduling. In order to illustrate the difficulties but also the opportunities that arise during this period of change, the book analyses specific activities and strategies undertaken by public channels in the main areas examined (reorganisation, programming and technology) in three large and three small European countries (Britain, France, Spain, Sweden, Ireland and Greece). Information has been gathered partly from secondary, but mainly from primary sources (interviews).

This volume intends to fill a growing need for research that would address contemporary developments in television and the public service institutions that operate within the sector from a European perspective. The international nature of developments in the field of television has made it necessary to develop a comparative approach among national situations with local variations and use this experience to arrive at workable suggestions concerning the role of public channels. The discussion of public television across Europe moves

from the more general and theoretical Part I to the more specific and empirical Part II, which includes six case studies. The text is addressed to scholars and students in Sociology and Media and Communications Departments across Europe and intends to develop discussion and stimulate thinking in the field.

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Part I

General Overview