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Who to serve and how? A discourse-theoretical analysis of public service broadcasting as a floating signifier²

Abstract: This talk starts by looking at the different discourses that articulate the notion of the public service, re-analyzing media models as hegemonic (and counter-hegemonic) projects, that fixate particular nodal points, such as public, service, society, culture and politics. Despite the complexities of these models, so-called mainstream media (models) have achieved a fairly high degree of hegemony, although we should not ignore the resistance organised by alternative and community media (models). In a second part of the talk, an analysis of this complexity (illustrated by a case study on Czech alternative mainstream media organisations) is combined with a reflection on how - despite this complexity - we can still uphold the juxtaposition of hegemonic mainstream media and alternative (community) media, which articulate public service in structurally different ways, showing this concept's nature as floating signifier. This is illustrated by a case study of a Cypriot community media organisation, CCMC, whose remit is aimed at dialogue, reconciliation and conflict transformation. In the final part, the talk will focus on the possibilities of creating multi-model landscapes, where publics are served in a wide variety of ways, and where media organisations ground their activities in contextualised articulations of public service.

Key words: *discourse theory, public service, meaning, Council of Europe, community media*

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