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AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY PROGRAMMING AND THE PUBLIC MEDIA

This first chapter of Part III concentrates on analysing key television and audience reception theories. In an age of growing media commercialisation and audience fragmentation, the issue of what counts as ‘quality’ programming and content in both public and commercial broadcasting has become increasingly difficult to define. Thus, following up the discussions in previous chapters, I evaluate here the types of genres associated with the PSB tradition, such as news, current affairs and drama, and begin to problematise the whole debate on what is understood by quality. News and current affairs, for instance, are considered to be ‘quality’ genres, and one could easily claim that their predominance in British PSB has been very much responsible for its general success both home and abroad.

The crux of the argument here, which also provides the guidelines for the online audience survey conducted for this research, has already been set out in the introduction: can the public media offer better quality information and debate, contributing to wider cultural emancipation and increased levels of education? Differences in the conception and understanding of what characterises the public and commercial media are explored in the last section amid the interpretations of some of Ofcom’s audience research findings as well as those of the UFRJ survey. I have thus intended here with this survey to explore more the attitudes and understandings of what the public media in Brazil should be about, and how the younger generation are negotiating media messages across both public and private platforms.

In the previous chapters, I outlined some of the major changes that have contributed to place European public service broadcasting in a ‘crisis’ of

identity. I have also looked at the social, political and economic changes which have occurred in Latin America, and the ways in which this has led to new conceptualisations of the role of the media and public communications in a democracy. Before initiating some of these debates, there is a need to look at some of the key theoretical perspectives concerning television and audience theories, including the uses and gratification approach and the shift away from the passive to the active audience research tradition (Morley and Silverstone, 1991; Hall, 1999).

I also investigate the relationship of television with the public sphere, political participation and public debate, stressing how the medium of television is being significantly reshaped in the light of digitalisation, commercial pressures and due to changes in audiences' consumption habits. This last part of this chapter provides a brief critical assessment of key audience reception studies in a comparative perspective, highlighting some of the findings of studies carried out by Ofcom, and presented in *The Ownership of the News* (House of Lords, 2007/8),¹ on what audiences expect of the PSB and their views on 'quality'. This is followed by the responses provided by the UFRJ survey.

I further discuss how 'quality' has played an important role even in the international success of the BBC. Similar questions are asked in the survey in an attempt to understand how audiences perceive the emerging public media platform in Brazil, and how they consume commercial media texts as well as their relationship to commercial broadcasting. The state of Latin American commercial and public broadcasting, and the diverse types of relationship that it has constructed with audiences, as well as the position that private broadcasting has occupied in the construction of the Brazilian national identity, are pursued further in the following chapter.

Global and Local TV Cultures Television and Audience Theories

The contemporary television audience experience has become much more interactive and multidimensional than it was during the 1950s. It is much more complex and diverse than the early or classic images of the 'alienated mass audience' or the 'passive couch potato' stimulated by the cultural industries that were put forward by the Frankfurt School theorists. Active audience research theories and perspectives have played a role in providing a more complex theoretical and empirical framework for understanding audience behaviour, contributing to a depiction of the contradictory ways in which individuals receive and interpret media messages. They have assigned wider powers to viewers, rejecting simplistic assumptions of audiences being

passively and ideologically manipulated by 'evil right-wing corporate TV executives and producers' (Hall, 1999; Livingstone and Lunt, 1994; Morley and Silverstone, 1991; Lull, 2000).

The shift to the active audience tradition has occurred in the context of the changing nature of the mass media worldwide since the 1980s, brought about by the proliferation of new technologies, the expanding interactivity of the internet, media commercialisation and the entry of cable and satellite in the television market. This has been accompanied by – and some would say is also a consequence of – the social, political and economic transformations that have affected European societies since the 1960s. As we have seen, these changes have provoked a retreat into the private sphere and an embrace of individualistic lifestyles.

These factors have contributed to pose new challenges to the role that television occupies in democracies, encouraging debates on the ways in which people watch television and on how individuals make sense of the media material that is presented to them. Debates have thus arisen that question if this process is determined by the identities and communication repertoires that individuals are socialised into as a result of their membership of particular groups (Schroeder *et al.*, 2003: 8), as well as asking how audiences are able to find means of empowering themselves by overcoming their subordination through an active resistance to dominant media messages (Hall, 1999; Fiske in Curran and Gurevitch, 2000).

Kellner, in *Television and the Crisis of Democracy* (1990), has attempted to offer a synthesis of the key television theories and diverse ideological interpretations of the relationship that the medium has with society and the individual. Since its emergence in the 1950s television has provoked heated controversies. It has been viewed from both extreme pessimistic and optimistic perspectives. Adorno and Horkheimer from the Frankfurt School conceptualised the medium of television as being not only part of capitalist societies but also, through its focus on entertainment messages and its tendency to trivialise important political discussions, as reinforcing the ideology of the conservative status quo. The viewer was thus vulnerable to 'manipulations' by the media, having no capacity or will to resist its 'alienated' messages.

The culture industry theories put forward by Adorno and Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School had an enormous impact on the media studies field but have lost ground with the fall of the modernist project and the shift towards postmodernist perspectives as well as the expansion of the audience research tradition. This move towards philosophical relativism, discursive resistance and postmodernism has also been seen as an intellectual consequence of

the rise in politics and economics across the Atlantic of Thatcherism and of neoliberal politics in the aftermath of the 'defeat' of socialism in Europe from 1989.

Entertainment was seen in a negative light by Adorno (1950) in *The Authoritarian Personality*, being seen as mainly a vehicle used by the cultural industries to manipulate the consciences of the population and provide them with escapist and fantasy material that would boost individualistic attitudes and undermine collective action (Curran and Seaton, 1997: 267). It was also closely connected to the idea of the 'hypodermic needle' and the injection of particular capitalist values into the mindset of passive audiences. Entertainment was thus constructed in sharp opposition to 'serious' news and 'high' culture, which was seen as enlightening and authentic art in opposition to mass culture, perceived as a 'low' form of cheap and mass-produced art for easy consumption and dismissal. We can see how these perspectives have influenced Habermas' critique of the decline of the public sphere amid the rise of the mass media and of the cultural industries during the course of the twentieth century. Habermas himself was considered one of the last theorists of the Frankfurt School.

As Kellner (1990: 6) notes in his synthesis of television theories, television has been defined by radicals across the social sciences as being part of 'an ideological state apparatus' (Althusser, 1971), as an instrument that 'maintains hegemony and legitimates the status quo' (Tuchman, 1974), and as a propaganda machine that 'manufactures consent' to the existing sociopolitical order (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). According to the hegemony model, different groups of the population compete for the power structures of society, attempting to impose their agendas on wider society as a whole through struggle and negotiations. Hegemony is never established but is always subject to negotiation and contestation, with the ruling classes seeking to smooth out class contradictions and incorporate, or co-opt, new groups.

Television is nonetheless seen as a site of struggle for various academics like Kellner (1990). Notably, the evolution of cultural studies and of audience research has emphasised the capacity of the individual to 'resist' dominant meanings, to 'negotiate' their own readings and through this to reject material that endorses the views of the establishment (Hall, 1999; Morley and Silverstone, 1991). However, negative understandings of the role of the media have been applied to television by a wide range of literature coming from US political communication scholars since the 1970s. The 'media malaise' theories (Norris, 2000), as we have seen, have tended to assign blame on the medium for the decline of voter turnout. This stance has also been adopted by the right in their criticisms of media violence and sex.

One could make a link between the critiques made by the Frankfurt School with the more conservative attacks on the role of the media in assisting in the 'degradation' of morals and family values. Kellner (1990) argues that conservatives on one side claim that TV is a liberal medium that subverts traditional values, and erodes respect for authorities by exposing scandals and fostering disrespect for the system as a whole. Liberals on the other hand criticise it for its domination by business elites and for its conservative tendencies.

Regarding the negative influence of television on society, Norris (2000: 42–3) refers to work by Michael Robinson, who used simple cross-tabulations of the 1968 American NES survey data on internal political efficacy scores and presented evidence based on the differences between those who relied solely on TV for information and those who relied mainly on TV and some other news medium. The author concluded that those who relied 'solely on TV had less confidence that they could have an effect in the political system', whereas 'those who relied more on TV were considered more confused and cynical'. In spite of the critiques concerning the negative effects of television, there has been no real consensus in the literature on the exact nature of the impact of television viewing, or its supposedly ill effects, on audiences. Thus studies have challenged the 'media malaise' theories and have been critical of findings that outline a highly negative TV impact, as has the work by Norris (2000).²

Kellner (1990) nonetheless sees television as immersed within the corporate logic. He acknowledges, however, that television has contradictory social functions, sometimes reproducing conservative values and other times promoting liberal change. Assuming a similar position defended by Hallin (1994) in his study on the media coverage of the Vietnam War, Kellner (1990) recognises that elite conflict on specific issues will culminate in this debate being reproduced in the media. Taking into consideration the complexities of the ways different individuals make sense of the media, and how television can contain within itself both progressive and reactionary tendencies, as well as the fact that the media are only one among many sources of influence on an individual's opinion formation and sense of self, it seems more plausible to see television as being a site of contested struggle. Above all, it is a vehicle which can open spaces and offer access to subordinated groups, or various other even non-political groups, to articulate their positions and ideas. It can thus assist in social and political change, and the whole purpose here is to evaluate how it can be better explored for progressive public service purposes.

Having said this, our current reality of increasing media commercialisation does give some credibility to the Frankfurt School theories. In spite of their limits, which I have criticised elsewhere (Matos, 2008), these theories should not be easily dismissed but understood in regards to the capacity of certain sectors of the mainstream commercial media to serve only the forces of the status quo, to undermine serious journalism and current affairs in favour of entertainment formats in order to reach large audiences.

As Curran (2002: 238) points out, and as Table 5.1 clearly demonstrates in the analysis of the discourses, aesthetics and styles which characterise private and public television, entertainment does not necessarily need to stand in opposition to 'serious' journalism, quality programming or politics. For media entertainment can articulate various social values and identities, which can 'strongly influence political positions' (Curran, 2002: 238). It is also clear from Table 5.1 that both 'serious' and 'entertainment' genres (e.g. talk shows, sci-fi) are shown on both private and public television. Thus (especially) quality entertainment can be enlightening.

What is deemed problematic is a heavy entertainment diet purposely undermining the media's democratic civic and encouragement of in-depth analyses and political debate. Such a style is generally associated with a more paternalistic and populist understanding and addressing of the public (Curran, 2002: 239), and is usually defended by more conservative sectors. Taking these factors into consideration, the table below attempts to list

Table 5.1 The 'private' versus 'public' dichotomy

<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>
Right/Conservative/Centre/Left – the consumer	Centre/Left/Liberal/some conservatives – citizen
'Objective' and informational journalism	'Objective'/public/'serious' journalism
Talk shows/Sit-coms/reality TV – American programming, some content from other countries	Realism in films/documentaries/reality TV – 'arty' and European programming, some US material
Advertising/aesthetic of consumerism – self/intimacy/the private sphere (e.g. sci-fi/horror)	'Quality' aesthetic/Challenging material – collective/the public sphere
Dreamy/fantasy/'escapism' texts – occasional 'serious' material (e.g. news)	Historical material//in-depth analyses – some entertainment (e.g. soaps, drama, sci-fi, horror)

some of the core values, beliefs and programming content associated with both commercial and public broadcasting media. These points are developed further in this chapter.

As I highlighted in the previous chapter, a pressing issue that emerges with expanding commercialisation in broadcasting is the precise impact that this has on political news and the current affairs genre. Is commercialisation contributing to a reduction in the availability of political information? This is a question that can be explored in a further research project, but some trends can be examined here. To start with, various studies and scholars have demonstrated that there has been a decline in television viewing. This has occurred in response to shifts in media consumption patterns, especially of younger sectors of the audience, many of whom have moved to the internet, as we shall see.

The House of Lords Select Committee report *The Ownership of the News* (2008) indicated a fall in the viewing of television in the UK, mainly among the younger strata of the population. Other research work has produced similar results, underscoring a fall in viewing which includes also socially excluded and ethnic minorities. These groups have begun to turn away from PSB (Tambini and Cowling, 2004: 173). The contestation of such facts has contributed to critiques concerning the supposedly 'elitist' nature of PSB, placing further pressures on UK broadcasters to invest in more entertaining programmes capable of catering to younger audiences who are drifting away from public service broadcasting.

Television thus competes for the attention of viewers with various other media and leisure activities. This gives the genres associated with entertainment (e.g. talk shows, sit-coms, fantasy, sci-fi; see Table 5.1) an advantage over 'serious' television material (e.g. historical narratives, documentaries and in-depth reporting). Table 5.1 mixes some identifiable genres (talk shows, reality TV) with some of the aesthetics, style, discourses and characteristics which can be seen as belonging to either the commercial (private, 'intimacy') or public television (i.e. the 'public'). However, as Table 5.1 reveals, there is much overlap between the types of programmes and genres that are explored by both private and public broadcasters. As we shall see in interpreting the findings of the data provided by Ofcom, as well as the survey, sophisticated viewers in a multi-media age are appreciating more a mixture of both fantasy 'escapist' texts (e.g. sci-fi, horror) with historical material or quality drama.

As Bignell and Orleber (2005: 59–60) point out, the word 'genre' comes from the French *genre*, meaning 'type', and can be defined as the sharing of expectations between audience and programme makers. Genre is thus

negotiated between texts, institutions and audiences. The latter can identify the conventions that distinguish one kind of work from another, and evaluate this according to the features of the text itself. Moreover, at the end of this chapter, evidence from audience research conducted by Ofcom reveals that genres associated with entertainment, such as drama, still constitute a key part of the television experience for many sectors of the audience. Nonetheless news still plays an important role for both private and public broadcasting or media, in spite of the decline of civic communications or 'serious' journalism, as we shall see throughout this book.

TV News and the Public Sphere

In Part II I examined certain studies (Curran *et al.*, 2009) which found a strong connection between public knowledge and citizenship ideals with the type of media offered to the public. As discussed previously, the public sphere liberalism perspective also assigns a public sphere role for the media in Western societies, connecting it to the ways in which the media can not only provide unbiased and accurate information but can also serve as a civic forum. Part II stressed how the Habermasian perspective on the public sphere, which was developed in association with the growth of newspapers from the seventeenth century until the first half of the nineteenth century in Europe, has provided a good model for re-thinking the relationship between the media, democracy and the public interest. It is possible to say that this paved the way in much of Europe for the development of a tradition of rational and public-committed print journalism, aimed at 'enlightening' and fostering debate among a (mainly elite) decision-making public.

With the emergence of television from the 1950s onwards, the predominance of the visual and the image has taken over the fascination with the printed word. In such a new, visually electrifying, fast-paced reality the argument about the relationship between the media and the public sphere is turned on its head. Commercial television, with its perhaps (natural) inclination towards entertainment due to its privileging of the image, as well as its focus on personalities and politicians who have gradually had to adapt to the television logic in order to win audiences and woo voters (Meyer, 2002), was largely overlooked by intellectuals until the 1980s. It was, and still is, accused of promoting political apathy, contributing further to the decline in civic engagement (Postman, 1990). Another important factor in this debate is that the medium of television has been structured around the living-room space, with the television schedule being designed by commercial broadcasters to suit the needs of the nuclear family (Morley and Silverstone, 1991), which one can claim is a conservative premise.

Two key points emerge here. First, the medium of television is of a different nature to that of print media. We therefore must discuss its educational, cultural and informational potential taking into consideration the nature of the medium. Second, there is increasing blurring of the boundaries between the private and the public sphere within social and political life and, as shown in Table 5.1, it is not much different on television. Quoting Findahl (1988), Dahlgren and Sparks (1991: 58) have emphasised that it is not the case that television cannot transmit knowledge but that there is difficulty in transmitting in-depth analytical information to a large audience. This evidently puts more pressure on both television and audiences.

Researchers have further highlighted how contemporary viewers have been constructing new relationships with television as well as with other media (Tambini and Cowling, 2004), both in developed countries and also in developing ones. It is such issues which need to be addressed before one can quickly 'blame the messenger' (i.e. television) for the rise in political cynicism and the social ills present in most societies around the world (Norris, 2000).

Writing within the British context, Livingstone and Lunt (1994: 1) argue in the introduction to their book *Talk on Television* that the broadcast media offer 'new opportunities for the public to debate ... political, social and moral issues on television'. It is these new opportunities upon which we must focus when we think about the interweaving of the medium of television with the public sphere. As Livingstone and Lunt (1994: 15) assert, Habermas has argued for four dimensions of modern social life: these divide into the private versus the public and system-integrated versus socially-integrated. The economy is part of the private domain (i.e. the family) while the state is part of the public. According to Livingstone and Lunt (1994: 18), 'the mass media ... address both the family and public sphere and have complex relations with both economy and state'.

Drawing largely on the Habermasian conception of the public sphere, Livingstone and Lunt (1994: 10) describe how Habermas sees the media as helping to create a society of private individuals, making the formation of a public rational-critical opinion a difficult task. For Habermas, they note, the media assist in the creation of a pseudo-public sphere, producing passive spectatorship rather than stimulating genuine public debate. Such a perspective is clearly influenced by the Frankfurt School theories, which have lamented the loss of 'rationality' with the expansion of the mass media and consumerist culture.

As Dahlgren (1995: 61) further contends, the historical development of 'publicness' is part of the core of Habermas's analysis of the public sphere.

Regarding the categories of the 'public' and 'private', it can be said that television has contributed to a blurring of those boundaries in contrast to the print media, as television is a vehicle that tends to demand one's adaptation to a certain aesthetic and style. Thus a politician will work on his presentational skills to 'look good' on television, attempting to summarise complex political issues in a couple of 'sound-bites' (Meyer, 2002).

Barnett (2003: 43) further stresses how the 'domestication of media technologies' and their grounding in everyday life, in both spatial and temporal contexts, changes the relationship between what is considered public and private. Broadcasting has thus been crucial in reshaping the relationship between the public and private, 'developing new forms of intimate publicity' (Barnett, 2003: 43).

Thompson (1990) has depicted the public/private distinction by stating how the first is anchored in liberal political philosophy, and equates the public with the state, whereas the second is derived from both the legal and political field. The latter is put in practice by the media, and is mainly associated with 'publicness', or what is accessible to a larger citizenry (in Dahlgren, 1995: 60). In his discussion of the role of broadcasting in the UK, Barnett (2003: 45) notes how Scannell (1996) argues that 'broadcasting makes the world of public events available in a regularised way', acting as a medium where private life and public events are intermingled.

Livingstone and Lunt (1994), referring to authors such as Scannell (1991: 10), describe how in the UK there has been a shift from an earlier authoritarian model of broadcasting, which could be classified as more 'elitist/paternalistic', perhaps more associated with the Reithian tradition, and closer to the Frankfurt School ideal of what the media should be in a society, towards a more populist and democratic style. One could say that the latter is more similar to both American and Brazilian broadcasting, although it can be considered as being more inclusive in relation to the former. If compared to the North and South American media systems, the UK model can be seen as being still more committed to educational programming and cultural emancipation.

The opposition between public and commercial media is grounded, as Livingstone and Lunt (1994: 22–3) stress, on elitist and participatory forms of democracy. According to the authors, it wrongly equates commercialisation with an emancipatory rhetoric and the illusion of involvement. The former however controls who has the authority of speech. As the authors (1994: 22–3) add, neither model permits the full realisation of a critical public sphere. Thus the realistic stance is to defend the co-existence of both models, for both can have complementary objectives (Curran, 2000).

Television can thus transmit knowledge and information only within the limits of its own 'essence' as a medium built on the fleeting image. It can thus summarise complex debates and popularise expert knowledge and target a mass audience (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994). It can make complex information accessible to wider public information, and it can also serve as a space for dialogue between nations. Thus television, with its emphasis on informality, conversational style and stress on a friendly talking approach to discuss hard news and current affairs, is opposed to the more in-depth and impersonal nature of the print media. It can also mingle both the public with the private, enhancing accessibility and modifying the boundary between these two categories (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994; Dahlgren, 1995).

In order to construct a progressive potentiality for television, including either the private or the public media platforms, be it on a global or national level, we need to keep in mind the nature of the medium of television. Thus the capability of television to foster international dialogue and national development, or to mediate different conceptions and forms of global citizenship, or to function as a vehicle for cultural emancipation and educational advancement, is subject to and limited also by its very nature. This acknowledgement should not be cause to dismiss the potential of the medium but should instead be a reason to define realistic working agendas for television programming and/or policy. It is thus to the nuances of the relationship between commercial broadcasting and globalisation that I now turn.

Television and Globalisation

Globalisation is seen to have changed the nature of the previously strong relationship that existed between the media and the state. The expansion of new technologies has had a major role in intensifying the globalisation of communications in the late twentieth century, mainly through the deployment of sophisticated cable and satellite systems. We saw in Part II that the dispersion of 'multiple public spheres' into wide audience groups has been a consequence of the expansion of global communications. The media are thus undoubtedly an important site of globalisation. However, most media systems still remain largely national in character.

Straubhaar (2007: 223) talks about how there are examples of global or media cities in countries like China and Mexico, which produce across transnational cultural-linguistic markets that share their languages and cultures. National television is still the most common experience for most people. Most television exports in countries like the USA, Brazil and Mexico make more money in their national home market than in exports (Straubhaar, 2007: 223). Media institutions are also in their internal regulation policies

by domestic decisions. The national domain still has importance in shaping the economic policies associated to the media (Schlesinger, 2001: 104), as discussed in previous chapters.

The most prominent argument regarding the weakening of the powers of the state has been in regard to broadcasting. Global media are no longer tied to national boundaries but span the world and pursue audiences whose consumption patterns converge. Thus global TV, through programme distribution and technology, cuts across nation states. As Schlesinger (2001: 105) asserts, the European landscape is dominated by Murdoch's News International, the Luxembourg-based CLT, Germany's Bertelsmann and Italy's Mediaset, global media companies.

In their discussion of the predominance of global media corporations in a small number of developed countries, Herman and McChesney (2004) developed a three-tier model of global media based on Schiller's revised understanding of cultural imperialism as being 'transnational cultural domination'. They indicated a shift away from American hegemony towards transnational capitalism, presenting a picture of globalisation as a process driven 'from above' by giant media corporations supported by deregulation policies of various states. According to McChesney (1997), media systems had been primarily national before the 1990s, but a global commercial media market emerged in full force by the twenty-first century.³

As we have seen, the main features of this growing convergence towards the liberal American model are a weakening of government intervention and a decline of the state's role in communications. There has also been a move towards market regulation and commercialisation, accompanied by the 'crisis' of the public service broadcasting tradition in Europe. Thus from the mid-1990s onwards, the global picture has become much more complex, with transnational media co-existing with domestic media and competing for audiences (Sreberny, 2000: 115).⁴

Critics have argued that a global media system is not replacing national communication media, as there are still distinctive differences between political systems and cultural particularities which prevent complete homogenisation. However, the expansion of cable and satellite television has placed pressure not only on public service broadcasting but on also content and programming due to the economic drive to reduce costs, maximise profits and fund the development of expensive technologies.

Nonetheless, one should not confuse the expansion of global media, and the threat that it poses to public (or state) media, with the defence of nationalism and cultural identity. It is also problematic to endorse fears that these organisations are automatically eroding national identities. This stimulates

sentiments of racism, xenophobia and increased fear of anything 'foreign'. A reversal of the current global media scenario to return to the predominance of the national public media that characterised much of the 1970s is evidently unsustainable, both economically as well as a result of international flows between First and Third World countries, the growing cultural exchange between countries and international migration, not to mention the development of diverse cultural tastes of audiences and sophisticated consumption habits, which, as we shall see, cut across national borders.

What can be realistically pursued is a better and more progressive role for both the public and commercial broadcasting, with both promoting international dialogue between countries at a time of increasing tensions. Thus a progressive role for the global (private) and public media like the BBC is to promote a cosmopolitan disposition or an ethical conduct, what Arendt has labelled as 'worldliness' (Chouliaraki, 2006). As Chouliaraki (2006) states, in her discussion of the Arendtian concept, the key towards cultivating a cosmopolitan public culture is to develop what she calls a reflexive distance from the society of intimacy. Evidently, the latter sentiment has more to do with the type of consumerist/individualistic life of the self (i.e. the culture of narcissism, to use Lasch's 1979 term), which many claim is the dominant identity or personality type that highly commercial television addresses itself to.⁵

Internationalisation can be a progressive as well as a repressive force (Reeves, 1993). The impact of cultural exchange flows, such as Western models, values and cultures on one hand on less developed nations, as well as the influences of Bollywood films and of the ideas of developing countries on the developed world, can be forces for positive influences on a given country. They can assist either in advancing democratisation, as in the case of Brazil, or in contributing to make a society more open and tolerant, as in the UK. Brazilian journalism and media, for instance, benefited in the contemporary era from, among other things, the influence of American journalistic values, which functioned to slowly contribute to the gradual expansion of professionalism and objectivity in the reporting of politics (Matos, 2008).

Writing about democratisation communications in 'Third World' countries, Reeves (1993: 106) makes a point that I endorse, which is that, despite the disturbing impact of Western cultures in much of the world during the times of colonialism, the current opposition to outside influences is largely grounded on religious, moral and cultural values and is largely coming from European countries. It is in its essence a conservative critique, and not an effort to undermine new forms of neocolonial exploitation of developing countries.

In Chapter 6 I explore these issues further in engaging with the relationship that has been established between Latin American commercial broadcasting and Latin American and Brazilian cultural and national identities, and the ways in which this has largely been constructed around consumerist and entertainment aesthetics. This is contrasted with the type of beliefs associated with the public media platform. First, however, it is pertinent to critically assess some of the merits of British PSB, engaging particularly with the intellectual debate on what constitutes 'quality' content and programming, and how this it is understood in a more entertainment-driven reality like the Latin American and Brazilian one.

BBC and the Tradition of Quality Journalism

A central issue that must be addressed in any debate on what public service broadcasting should stand for in a democratic society is how to define 'quality' programming, and how best to offer this to vast segments of the population in both an informative and entertaining way. In this chapter I have already traced some of the roots of this debate in media studies to the impact of the Frankfurt School's theories on the mass media, stressing concerns over the decline of authentic forms of art and their substitution for mass-produced cultural formats. As we have seen, our contemporary 'postmodern' reality is one which these divisions between 'high' and 'low' culture have become increasingly blurred. There are thus difficulties when one wants to establish the boundaries between 'elite' and 'popular' culture, and much anxiety on how to provide 'quality culture' for a mainstream audience without 'boring' them.

Two questions arise from this debate. First, what exactly constitutes quality, to whom and by what criteria? Second, is it possible for PSBs to encourage public appreciation for 'quality' programming that can both enlighten and also contribute to raising cultural levels? As Bignell and Orleber (2005) note, there is much controversy among academics and professionals on how to judge quality. Critics have defined it differently (Brusdon, 1997:134–6), referring either to the public service function, to aesthetic criteria, to professional expertise or even to categories such as 'experimentation'.

As discussed in Part II, diverse ideological and political positions assign specific roles for the media in its relationship with society. This is no different with the issue of 'quality'. Bignell and Orleber (2005: 119) state that in the television industry 'quality' refers to 'the lavishness of budgets, the skill of programme makers and performers ... and seriousness of purpose'. Nonetheless, more conservative right-wing perspectives tend to equate this with programme popularity, market success and competition

between media outlets, whereas left liberals base a product's worth on a series of factors. These range from language sophistication to the professionalism of actors and/or journalists, as well as to the value to society of the types of messages that are being articulated in a programme's discourse (e.g. criticism of forms of oppression).

Thus, for conservative market liberals, 'quality' is judged by ratings. The popularity of a programme can be seen as already an indication that the programme has quality, whereas public sphere liberals and others understand 'quality' as being associated with the impartiality criteria, high production costs of a programme, accurate information, and challenging or original texts. Most importantly, 'quality' is strongly connected to issues of class and social position, in other words, to hierarchy and to the position that an individual occupies in a society. Bourdieu (1984) claims that the cultural products regarded as the best are those preferred by the wealthiest segments of the population. These cultural items thus work to validate the 'superior' tastes of the elites. As we have seen, the Frankfurt School theorists lamented the decline of authentic art, or 'elite' culture, and its commodification and standardisation by the cultural industries.

The dichotomy of 'quality' versus 'quantity' – in other words, whether 'quality' should be sacrificed in favour of more of the same type of entertainment genres, and/or a wider variety of channels to choose from – has remained central to assessing the role that PSBs have had in the UK. Some British PSB successes have been programmes judged as being of a high quality standard. These have included the export of British comedies, like *Monty Python*, all around the world, as well as screen adaptations of classic English literature (e.g. Jane Austen and Charles Dickens) and the distribution of high quality documentaries worldwide. Moreover, the BBC World Service and News have played an enormously influential role in British foreign policy abroad.

The debate on 'quality' programming in the UK was first triggered by the Peacock Report's advocacy of deregulation in broadcasting in the 1980s. The Communications Act 2003 required Ofcom to ensure that news and current affairs programmes broadcast on the commercial public services were of 'high quality'. In terms of defining 'quality' in television, however, the report on quality by the Broadcasting Research Unit (1989) rejected the association of quality with 'highbrow programmes', and attempted to address the complexity of the issue. It argued that a particular programme may be of poor quality, and that each programme should be judged in the first place by criteria peculiar to itself (in Franklin, 1989: 97–9). For the Broadcasting Unit, quality is not a standard that can be codified.

Because of increasing commercialisation and competition, the understanding of what constitutes 'quality' and the role that the media have in promoting it has been ever more questioned. Quality has been insufficiently defined even by the standards of Ofcom. According to the Communications' report of the House of Lords, 'Ofcom should develop a mechanism for holding companies responsible if their news falls short of quality thresholds' (House of Lords, 2008: 91). Further on in this chapter, I discuss the views of segments of the Brazilian audience and of academics and journalists regarding quality, further interpreting some of Ofcom's audience research findings.

McNair (2007) states that a key challenge facing public service broadcasters today in the UK is to define what exactly current affairs – which has always enjoyed an influential and high-status position in British broadcasting – should be all about. Various authors (McNair, 2007; Barnett, 1998) have detected a growth of documentaries and factual programming, but the main cause of concern has been with the quality of the current affairs material. According to McNair (2007: 155), 'audiences for current affairs programmes on UK PSB have tended to vary from 3–4 million for strands such as Panorama (BBC1)'. Thus what is deemed 'difficult' current affairs is being squeezed out of the TV schedule especially at peak time to be replaced by celebrity and reality TV shows. McNair (2007), referring to Winston (2002), adds that the percentage of news items devoted to politics was 21.5 per cent on BBC1 in 1975, falling to 9.6 per cent in 2001, while the percentage of stories on the crime genre increased from 4.5 to 19.1 per cent.

Another feature of PSB which is also associated with 'quality' is news impartiality. This aspect has helped to differentiate PSB from heavy commercial television channels like Fox. Most certainly, impartiality requirements constitute a core part of the PSB ethos. There is also fear that beyond the digital switchover these regulatory requirements, which have served to guarantee wherever possible fair, accurate, quality and challenging news and reporting, will cease to exist. Ofcom has already opened up the debate on the need or not to preserve impartiality on the grounds that it is likely to become less enforceable in a digital environment, and that it can be a barrier to diversity. Not surprisingly, in June 2007, the BBC Trust produced a report which stated that impartiality is a defining BBC 'quality' (2007: 94).⁶

Thus one common argument in favour of persevering with the educational, cultural and informational role of PSBs is that the commitment of public service broadcasting to produce programmes of high quality is unlikely to be fully endorsed by the market media. This element is perceived

as an incentive for viewers to get accustomed to more challenging programming, and not always to choose the easier option – the lowest common denominator. As the argument here goes, good quality programmes need to be out there, available for the public to choose if they want to watch them or not. They should be accessible to all, and are more than necessary in the current context of increasing audience fragmentation and undermining of a unified (mediated) public sphere. PSBs thus need to continue to privilege education and information programmes, investing heavily in the coverage of current and international affairs, and offering whenever possible innovative programming, thus balancing both (quality) information and entertainment.

Undoubtedly, the decline in international news and the national identity ‘crisis’ in Europe, followed by the economic recession which has engulfed European countries since 2008, and combined with the rise of anti-immigrant feelings, racism and xenophobia, are recipes for the creation of an inward-looking nation. These elements could trigger a retreat from the positive aspects of globalisation and encourage a regression towards naive nationalistic sentiment. The Communications report of the House of Lord (2008: vol. 1, 25), also referred to this when it commented on the decline in the coverage of international news: ‘A reduction in investment in foreign coverage by television and newspapers is of particular concern as it has an impact on democracy’. Thus it is audience perceptions of the commercial and public media in Britain and Brazil that I investigate next.

Audience Responses to the Private/Public Debate in Britain and Brazil

How do audiences make meanings from TV texts? Do audiences read messages similarly across the globe, or are they subject to influence by their social groups, education, locality and the ways in which they relate to cultural products as a result of globalisation? As Livingstone and Lunt (1994) point out, audience reception research theorists (Ang, 1985; Corner, 1991; Liebes and Katz, 1990; Livingstone, 1991) argue that viewers play an active role in the construction of meanings, obtaining various forms of gratification (Liebes and Katz, 1990). Different research traditions emphasised particular approaches to decoding media messages and to viewing television. British cultural studies stressed the resistant consumer-viewer perspective anchored in the private domain (Hall, 1980), while other theories focused on the citizen-viewer as participating in the whole democratic process (Corner, 1991; Curran, 1991).

We have seen that news remains a highly valued genre in spite of questions over its decline in overall quality and the 'crisis' of international news. Nevertheless, drama and soap operas are also genres watched by most audiences worldwide (Schroeder *et al.*, 2003). Schroeder *et al.* list three key trends in regards to television viewing, mainly the privatisation, individualisation and globalisation of the TV experience (2003: 227). The concept of privatisation refers to the changing practices of consumption; individualisation refers to the transformations in the social viewing of television, such as the trends towards special interests and fragmentation. Meanwhile, globalisation is connected, as we have seen, with international television flows, the impact of foreign influences and the growing imports and exports of TV products.

Before examining Latin America and Brazil, I wish briefly to discuss key contemporary trends in television viewing in the UK by looking at some of Ofcom's audience research findings. These were included as an annex to Ofcom's PSB Review 2008 Phase.⁷ The audience research reports which will be discussed here are 'Television audience perceptions of innovation and distinctiveness' (December 2007), conducted by Blinc Research, and 'Audience engagement: public consultation by the BBC Trust, Appendix C: summary of quantitative research', prepared by BMRB Media, which took place between 14 May and 3 August 2007.

Television was identified by members of the UK audiences as the main source in the country for world news and entertainment, according to approximately 70 per cent of viewers. The results showed a decline in viewing of the main PSB television channels, a growing popularity of PSB's digital-only channels and a focus on entertainment genres by various sectors of the audience, although there was a clear recognition of the value of PSB purposes and attention to factual programming. The industry also broadcast over 2.1 million hours of output in 2007. Channels within the 'entertainment, factual, children's, sport, news, leisure and music genres' registered over one million of those hours.

The four key functions of television were perceived to be (1) the provision of entertainment; (2) news and learning; (3) sociable activity; and (4) a tool for societal cohesion. The PSB purposes were also considered important by viewers, with older audiences rating this more important than younger ones (16–24), although the latter recognised the importance of trustworthy news and engaging content. The *PSB Deliberative Review* also identified that commercial digital channels could provide PSB content from overseas, which could assist in the understanding of different cultures.

According to the 2008 Ofcom audience findings, daytime output during 2003–7 for news, factual, sport and children's content accounted for 95 per cent of the hours in 2007, the same as 2003. Entertainment programming was predominant, however, during the peak-time schedules of BBC1, BBC2 and ITV1 in 2007 (2008: 12–15). Audiences for channels in the entertainment genre thus were shown to have expanded, reaching 20 per cent of the viewing share in all homes by 2008. Ofcom also pointed out that 87.6 per cent of television sets were connected to multi-channel television. Total television viewing thus stood at 3 hours and 38 minutes per person per day in 2007 (BARB). However, there was a decline in viewing numbers of the five main PSB channels, which commanded a 64 per cent share in all homes in 2007, down from 88 per cent detected in 2003 and followed by indications of a growing popularity of the PSB digital-only channels (BARB, 35).

The Blinc Research on audience perceptions of distinctiveness commissioned by the BBC Trust (December 2007) showed that audiences judge distinctiveness in regards to television by values such as talent, brand and the prominence of programmes. There was however a small perception that there had been a relative lack of distinctive TV on the BBC compared with what there once was. The disengagement with PSBs, according to the Ofcom findings, was higher amongst younger viewers. There was a pronounced drop among those under 44, and the largest was in the category of those between 16 and 24 years.

Although public television is much less developed in Brazil than in the UK, and the nature of commercial broadcasting in the country resembles more the heavier entertainment diet of American television, there are some similarities between Ofcom's results and some of the answers given by the UFRJ students in the survey carried out in Brazil (see appendix for full questionnaire). In regards to the UFRJ online survey, most students who answered the questionnaire claimed that they watched television on a daily basis (76 respondents or 51 per cent) or on average 3 to 4 times a week (17 per cent to 6 per cent respectively). Many respondents said that they seek television for both entertainment and information purposes. The use of the former objective slightly outshone the latter, however; the option 'leisure' was marked by 68 per cent (102 students).

The other reasons for watching television included to be 'up to date with information' (12 per cent, or 18 students); 'professional reasons' (10 per cent, or 15); and 'to know about the situation of the country' (1 per cent). Most respondents revealed that their preferred programming consisted of news, soap operas, films and series, both national and American. In the question on the preferred television genre, most chose 'TV series' (56 respondents, or

38 per cent) and the general option, 'Arts and entertainment' (43, or 29 per cent), with smaller numbers for 'Documentaries' (12, or 8 per cent), 'Soap opera' (9, or 6 per cent) and 'Comedy' (5, or 3 per cent).

Curiously enough, the option 'Soap opera' did not score highly as one would think at first. This might largely be because TV Globo's audience is in decline due to the competition from other channels, the internet and also the saturation of some of its programmes with especially more demanding viewers. It might also be the case that many in fact do watch soaps, but given other options of entertainment programming they choose series and documentaries. However, the results showed that most like both entertainment and news and documentaries, with 52 per cent (or 77) saying that they liked both. The balance is tipped slightly more towards entertainment, which received 32 per cent (or 48), whereas news got 13 per cent (or 20).

Commercial television appeared as the main source of information for 87 per cent (129 respondents). Only 13 per cent claimed that it was not their prime source. Most students also like to read newspapers (104, or 70 per cent) and online news sites (129, or 87 per cent), with only 11 respondents, or 7 per cent, saying that they also obtain their information from both the public and commercial media. Thus the public media are not seen as a main source of information for sectors of the cultural and intellectual elites in the way that the BBC is seen in the UK.

When asked which television station they watch and if they prefer public to commercial TV, most respondents of the UFRJ survey said they watched TV Globo (97 respondents, or 65 per cent) and cable and satellite (99, or 66 per cent). Only 3 per cent (4) chose the public media option and a slightly higher number opted for the Brazilian public station options, TV Brasil (8, or 5 per cent) and TV Cultura (8, or 5 per cent). These received similar percentages to the small open commercial television stations, TV Record (7, or 5 per cent) and Rede TV! (4, or 3 per cent). Channels Bandeirantes and SBT appeared in a middle position, with 25, or 17 per cent, for the former and 18, or 18 per cent, for the latter.

The responses for favourite TV programmes were, however, quite varied. A popular TV choice was TV Globo's *Jornal Nacional* (38, or 25 per cent). The option of the 8 o'clock soap opera appeared with 13 per cent (20), although in the previous question concerning television genres, only 6 per cent chose soaps. Nonetheless, the quantity of different programming selected is just another confirmation of how contemporary global media audiences have become much more fragmented than before, not only in developed countries, but also in developing ones. Forty-seven per cent chose other programmes which were not included in the list. The

journalistic programmes which appeared here as options were *Roda Viva* and *Observatorio da Imprensa*, which received respectively 1 per cent each (1), as did the programmes *Reporter Brasil*, which is the main news broadcast from TV Brasil, and *Sem Censura*, the popular debate programme previously broadcast on TVE, whereas *Big Brother* scored 3 per cent (or 4 answers).

Among the preferred programmes freely listed by the respondents were films, popular national programmes or American series. Seven per cent wrote 'films' while others chose the TV Bandeirantes programme *CQC* (4 per cent);⁸ *Football* (3 per cent); *Friends* (2 per cent) and *House* (2 per cent). Other Brazilian programmes selected included *Jornal das 10* (2 per cent; a TV Globo news programme); *Jornal da Globo* (1 per cent) and the popular, long-running talk show, *Programa do Jo* (1 per cent). An interesting issue to observe was that the viewing of American series and programming has not superseded that of the national ones. Programmes such as *Jornal Nacional*, films, news, soaps and football appeared alongside or above American series.

Similarly to Ofcom's results, the UFRJ survey highlighted how audiences give importance to quality programming. Regarding the question on what attracted their attention to TV, the predominant answer was 'the quality of a programme' (58 per cent or 86) and in second place was 'information' (22 per cent or 33). Such answers endorse the fact that television, be it in the UK or in Brazil, is expected by viewers to be both entertaining and informative, while at the same time also offering quality programming. These values are strongly associated with the public media ethos, and signal to the fact that any project which aims at the strengthening of the public media would benefit from focusing on precisely these elements.

Regarding issues concerning the 'quality' of television, many showed a similar understanding to the general outline discussed above. Most chose the options 'the script and the in-depth information provided' (53 per cent, or 79) as well as the 'creativity and originality' of the programme (27 per cent or 40). The professionalism of the journalists and actors, and the type of language used, received 8 per cent, or 12, and 7 per cent, or 10 answers, respectively.

Most also recognised the importance of the role of the public media (71 per cent). Although a majority of the respondents of the survey did show a lack of interest in watching the public television stations, a significant 71 per cent of 149 people defended their necessity. Another 26 per cent, however, preferred the option 'it depends'. This seems to signal that many in fact do not understand what the public media are actually for, and would like to have more information about them. This interpretation is confirmed by the answers to a later question, about why the respondent is in favour of public

media. Here the main option selected was 'I would like to know more about it' in order to make a better judgement (33 per cent or 49). Most nonetheless do assign a role for the public media, seeing it as being a compliment to the commercial media (38 per cent, or 57) and/or a correction of market failure (20 per cent or 30).

Concerning the question of whether the public media can have the capacity of covering more politics in comparison to the commercial, 46 per cent said they needed more information to make up their minds. A significant 22 per cent said that they saw space for public television to cover more politics and elections. Nevertheless, some respondents did not see much difference between the coverage of politics and elections done by the commercial media in contrast to the public or were not sure. Thirteen per cent (20) said that they did not see much difference, while another 22 per cent (33) thought this was a new avenue for the public media to better explore.

Contradicting what one might expect, not everyone automatically saw the public media as necessarily more capable of being impartial. There was little consensus here. The responses varied significantly in this category between those who chose newspapers and those who opted for the foreign media, the internet and the public media. Forty-eight per cent saw the internet as having the capacity to be more impartial, with public media coming in second with 15 per cent. Newspapers received 6 per cent (9), commercial TV 5 per cent (8) and foreign media 2 per cent (3). Many chose to include comments in the space provided, with one mentioning the website *Transparencia Brasil*. Another wrote that it is 'not the media vehicle, but the integrity of the journalist'; another commented that the public media only 'engages in spectacles'. Another student claimed that television and radio as media had the potential to be more impartial due to their wider reach.

Respondents were divided on the question concerning the functions and purposes of the public media. Most chose answers which can be interpreted as seeing civic communications as having a role in democratisation. Many chose the options 'stimulating cultural diversity' (21 per cent); 'providing cultural and educational programming' (21 per cent); 'integrating groups in the national debate' (18 per cent); and 'contributing to national development' (17 per cent). The space thus envisioned for public media in their attempt to provide a more in-depth and detailed coverage of politics can be compared to the enthusiasm for and expectations of the internet regarding its capacity to stimulate debate.

In Part II I asked what distinguishes the BBC from other commercial broadcasters. The hypothesis that I have put forward is that the public

programming offered by public media is still distinctive from what is broadcast on commercial TV. Not only can viewers tell the difference but, as we have seen, they value public service purposes and content and they know how to spot quality programming when they see it. This is in spite of the difficulties in defining precisely what 'quality' is. Audience research conducted by Ofcom, as well as the online UFRJ survey, only confirms these premises.

In the case of Brazil, the issue of television quality programming has become central to fortifying the public media platform debate. During the re-democratisation period, with growth of educational levels, political liberalisation and a bigger middle class with wider consumption power, civil society began to demand investment in more factual, 'serious' and in-depth television programming, as well as more objective and analytical newspaper stories.

Sociologist and journalist Laurindo Leal Lalo Filho, professor of the University of São Paulo,⁹ has emphasised that the main dilemma of television in Brazil is the contrast between its high technical quality and its overall low content. Lalo Filho also sees little debate being explored on television. He defends an equilibrium between so-called 'mass' television taste with 'elite' aspirations:

With the help from the State, a television with high technical quality was created but with low content. The Brazilian in general does not see him/herself on television. Blacks and indigenous populations when they appear are ... treated in drama as subordinated or folk figures. Television is largely centred in the Rio-São Paulo axis ... Brazil is perhaps the only democracy in the world where there is no political debate on TV. It elaborates its news according to its own interests, gives its own opinion and does not admit debate. There are some interview programmes that explore politics, but there is no debate. What should be sought after is an equilibrium between the mass television taste and the restricted aspirations of small highly elitised groups ... Experimentation, innovation and an emphasis on reflection combined with emotion are actions that contribute for the production of less primary work ...

Journalist and academic Carlos Lins da Silva, former University of São Paulo professor and partner of the international relations think-tank, Patri,¹⁰ is an example of those members of the cultural and intellectual elite who are switching off the main commercial television stations. Many

are also moving away from Brazilian politics altogether, as we shall see in Part IV:

Since 2000, I have maintained the habit of not watching open television because ... its content did not please me anymore and even irritated me ... When we speak of 'quality' in television, we mean the programme that stimulates critical thinking in the audience, has technical and refined techniques, looks at themes which are relevant to society, and leads to pleasure as well as reflection in the audience. In regard to the Brazilian public media, I do think that the BBC is a good model that can be implemented in Brazil. I do not think however that there has been much improvement in the regulatory framework for television and radio broadcasting. This is due to the fact that there is lack of transparency and of participation of society in the judgement of the concessions ...

As Straubhaar (2007: 227) notes, people make sense of the media through a set of cultural identities based on particular spaces and places. Although audiences have a strong sense of local identity, people can identify with multiple cultures and various layers (Straubhaar, 2007: 230). Television viewing is thus subject to the impact of both global and local influences. Examples here are what Straubhaar (2007: 227) refers to as the formation of 'transnational', 'postcolonial' and 'culture-linguistic' audiences, all of which can include viewers located in the Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone worlds.

The issue of 'quality' in regard to Latin American and Brazilian television needs, however, to be assessed by considering the relationship that has been established between national and cultural identities and commercial broadcasting. It also needs to take into account the ways in which the public media pose a new challenge to understandings of the role of the media in democratic societies, while also helping build a different relationship to audiences, issues developed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Television since its origins has been a site of multiple functions and understandings. The history of broadcasting in the USA and in Europe has contributed to the development of a system grounded mainly on entertainment and commercial imperatives, focused on maxims such as 'the consumer is sovereign' and 'quality is what is most popular'. This contrasts with a more educational, cultural and informational role, one which privileges the view

of audiences as composing of citizens, and which has largely defined the ethos of public service broadcasting in most European democracies.

Regarding the question of whether the public media can offer better quality information, contributing to expand cultural and educational levels, we can see from the audiences' responses in both the Ofcom and the UFRJ surveys that various sectors of the public worldwide do value PSB purposes, although there is a slight preference for entertainment viewing during peak slots. They also fully recognise the importance of 'quality programming', although many have different understandings of what this precisely is and would like to debate it more.

I have examined here some of Ofcom's key audience research findings, and have compared what audiences in the UK expect from PSBs to the findings carried out by the UFRJ online survey on how segments of the Brazilian public engage with both the commercial and public media and how they watch programmes and negotiate texts. We have seen how audiences in Brazil do also see a role for the public media, either investing in more quality programming or functioning as a 'corrective' to the market.

Regarding the UK's PSB, the questions posed at the start of this chapter can be answered positively: yes, it does offer better quality information, especially if we contrast it with the British tabloid tradition. The answer is less positive in the Brazilian case, as we will see in the next chapter when assessing the predominance of Latin American and Brazilian commercial broadcasting over the public media.

This chapter has also investigated the current challenges that digital technologies and media convergence pose for traditional broadcasting, by stressing how questions of television 'quality', as well as other PSB purposes, including pluralism, diversity and impartiality, have become again issues of concern in an era where increasing commercialisation and proliferation of channels are starting to pose a real challenge to the continued existence of such values.

Part III looks at the development of Latin American commercial broadcasting, and the ways in which Brazilian television has assisted in the construction of a particular type of Brazilian national identity. It then engages with the deliberations on the place that the public media can have in the region, functioning as a counterweight to commercial broadcasting. Part III also deliberates on how the public media can pave the way for wider spaces for debate, facilitating the play of multiple, hybrid and complex Brazilian identities.