

DIGITAL FIRST! REINVENTING ISRAELI PSB AND MANUFACTURING LEGITIMACY ONLINE

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Abstract: KAN, the new Israeli public service broadcasting corporation, was established in 2015 to replace the declining, 40-year-old, PSB. This unique situation constitutes an intriguing case study for exploring several interrelated academic and professional contemporary discussions: transforming PSB organisations into public service media and adapting their public mission to the digital age; political pressure on PSM organisations and their struggle for independence; and PSM's legitimacy in a challenging media environment. This paper identifies the strategies employed by KAN to manufacture legitimacy and consolidate the organisation's existence solely via online outlets, and the relation of these strategies to core PSM values.

Keywords: digital platforms, public service media, Israel, political pressures, media independence

1 Introduction

A new Israeli public broadcasting corporation called KAN was established in 2015 to replace the existing 40-year-old IBA (Israeli Broadcasting Authority). This unique situation constitutes an intriguing case study that relates to the decline and eventual demise of a traditional public service broadcaster, followed by the inception of a new, digitally-oriented organisation designed to operate in the contemporary media environment. The analysis of these developments contributes to questions such as the core values and legitimacy of public service media in times of transition.

KAN's founding was mandated by a new public service broadcasting law initiated by Israeli lawmakers nevertheless it encountered fierce political opposition from the beginning, mainly from government members seeking control over the public media service. During a transition period that lasted for more than a year, KAN was forced to operate without access to broadcasting channels (radio or TV), and was therefore compelled to rely entirely on online platforms and social media.

The hostile political and public environment obliged the new corporation to work hard to earn sufficient legitimacy as a public service media provider. This paper explores the various strategies employed by KAN's managers and staff to manufacture legitimacy and ensure the survival of their organisation solely via online outlets, and analyses the relation of these strategies to core PSM values.

2 Methodological Remarks

This paper is based on semi-structured interviews with six employees of KAN (the new Israeli PSM) conducted during the summer of 2018. Most of the interviewees are content producers and editors, and they include one manager. Due to the vulnerability of the organisation and its employees, I was asked to maintain the anonymity of the interviewees, and I met with them in various cafes and not in the KAN offices. Only in one case was I allowed to record the conversation; the other interviews were documented in notes. In order to further understand the strategies employed by KAN in its struggle to survive, I also collected and analyzed all the short videos published by KAN on social media from May 2016 (when it first started posting on its Facebook page) until 2017, when the organisation began to broadcast on TV and radio. In addition, I closely read most of the social media content published by KAN during this period as well as most of the journalistic articles and media interviews regarding the new Israeli PSB, along with relevant reports and official publications.

3 Public Service Media in the Digital Age

The digital age poses many challenges to legacy media such as TV and radio, and forces public service broadcasting companies to prove their relevance and legitimacy in even less favourable conditions than before. Not only do they have to continue to compete with commercial media, but they also have to adapt to the heavily populated digital mediascape¹ to avoid becoming marginalised in a networked society occupied by streaming giants such as Netflix.²

In the changing mediascape, public service television is threatened by a general decline in viewers of linear programming, particularly a decline in young audiences.³ Digital technologies afford more plurality of provision and a diversity of opinions,⁴ and enable innovation, all of which are especially attractive to younger audiences.⁵ Furthermore, younger media users do not necessarily recognise the importance and values of PSB.⁶

Some scholars claim that public service media can employ digital media to bolster its legitimacy by involving and activating citizens and promoting the core public service values of free and universal access,⁷ while at the same time preserving the values of distinctiveness, diversity, creativity and innovation.⁸ One way to achieve these goals is for public service broadcasting to transform itself into public service media, utilising various digital platforms in order to reach its audience. This transformation, however, faces numerous challenges, such as funding, definition of goals, and most importantly, gaining social and political legitimacy in a media environment that has become increasingly commercialised and digitalised.⁹ Moreover, the transition to PSM is also a shift in the orientation and identity rooted in the broadcasting and mass media mentality.¹⁰ Typically, PSM is based on the legacy of PSB, with its feet in the broadcasting world.¹¹ In the case study examined here, however, Israeli public service broadcasting was completely reconstructed, with the digital division being the first to be recruited and the first to start operating, while TV and radio followed later.

In addition to the commercial, technological and social challenges they face, public service media organisations struggle for independence and legitimacy even in places where the public service media ethos is strong.¹² Indeed,

throughout the years of its existence, public service broadcasting in Israel was subject to a range of pressures: competition from strong popular commercial channels; prolonged political oversight; and in later years, the added demands of the digital arena. The old PSB organisation (IBA) appears to have been unable to adapt to the changing media environment and had only a meager and outdated online presence,¹³ a fact that contributed to its growing irrelevance and eventual decline.

4 Public Service Broadcasting in Israel

Following a long political and public debate about the need for television in the young state of Israel,¹⁴ educational broadcasts commenced in March 1966. Israeli educational TV was supervised by the Education Ministry, and was initially watched mostly in schools around the country.¹⁵ At the same time, in order to prepare for the establishment of a general public TV channel, employees of Israeli radio were trained in various TV skills, and several were even sent for a few months of training at the BBC in London.¹⁶ The inaugural public TV broadcast of the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA) took place on 2 May 1968, Israel's 20th Independence Day.¹⁷ Public service broadcasting in Israel was fashioned on the European model, especially that of the BBC. Its goal was to serve the public and be independent of political or commercial influence, to educate the citizens and enrich the culture, to represent all sectors of Israeli society and to give expression to a range of opinions, tastes, interests, traditions, preferences and beliefs, as well as local subcultures, minorities and languages.¹⁸ The IBA played an important role in the process of social and national unity in Israel, a country of immigrants, helping to form a cohesive society.¹⁹

The main financial source of Israeli public broadcasting was licence fees, augmented by radio advertising and limited non-commercial advertising on television.²⁰ For over twenty years, the public service channel was the only broadcast television channel in the country (except for educational TV).²¹ From its inception, the public channel suffered political pressures, silencing of criticism, political appointments and economic sanctions from the government.²² However, since it was the only available channel, it enjoyed high viewing rates.

The flaws of the IBA were displayed prominently in the early 1990s, with the introduction of commercial TV in Israel. The new players on the field gained overwhelming popularity, and the public channel gradually lost most of its viewers.²³ Over time, it became clear that public television was failing miserably to compete with commercial channels due to organisational difficulties, corruption, lack of effective management and intense political involvement, along with negative public sentiment, especially in regard to the obligatory licence fee.²⁴ During the years of its operation, the government appointed no fewer than 13 different committees to investigate the situation at IBA and offer recommendations for improving its functioning.²⁵ More than once, the conclusion was reached that a major overhaul was required for PSB to fulfil its duties and earn back public legitimacy.²⁶ Between 2009 and 2013, a series of agreements were signed with the numerous workers' unions at IBA as part of a 'reform plan', with one of the expected outcomes being the loss of 700 jobs. However, the plan drew considerable criticism, and even IBA's management, responsible for implementing the reform, expressed doubts and questioned its plausibility and benefits.²⁷ Eventually, in 2013, following prolonged discussion of the reform and its delayed implementation, the Israeli Minister of Communications appointed another committee to examine the state of PSB and shape the future of public media in Israel. The committee recommended dismantling the old organisation and establishing a new PSM corporation.²⁸ The government accepted the recommendations and announced the closure of IBA and cancellation of the licence fee.

While the decision to abolish the licence fee gained the Israeli public's enthusiastic support, the closure of IBA met with lengthy and emotional protest by its long-time employees. Eventually, following numerous delays and postponements, the IBA broadcasts ended abruptly with a final tearful newscast on 9 May 2017.



Video 1. Tearful IBA Employees at the Last Newscast.

5 Constructing a New PSM

In July 2014, a Public Service Broadcasting Law²⁹ was passed by the Israeli parliament. It called for the establishment of a new PSB corporation that would follow the guidelines outlined in the official report. The main aims defined for the corporation were to generate relevance for the audience while ensuring quality, to give visibility to a broad range of opinions and local culture, to strive for innovation and to afford wide access to content.³⁰ It is apparent that this definition of goals and values, intended to restore the legitimacy of PBS in Israel, was inspired by the European public service ethos.³¹

6 Digital First

In order to create a contemporary PSM, one of the main goals of the new organisation, as specified in the Public Service Broadcasting Law, was to “promote innovation in content... and technologies”³² in order to make it relevant to the contemporary media environment. On its website, the new corporation described its agenda in the following words:

The new Israeli broadcasting corporation was born in 2015 but was designed to be effective and relevant in 2025 and beyond. The media environment is constantly changing and the public is consuming media mainly online...Therefore, the new public corporation's main principle is 'Digital First'. We are principally an Internet corporation with a presence in linear radio and TV...The Internet is live around the clock and does not 'open' at 8 p.m. The Internet is 'on the air' on numerous devices...which is a typical way to consume content these days. But when designing and constructing a new PSM corporation, it affects the organisation's structure, the employees hired and the content itself.³³

Thus, KAN's managers intended the organisation to be digitally oriented, or what they called 'Digital First': 'We plan to produce quality content even for those who do not watch TV. Come, it will be interesting'.³⁴ KAN's leaders declared their intention to construct a media organisation focused on digital platforms, and indeed, its very first content was published on its Facebook page four months before the intended inaugural TV broadcast.³⁵ As CEO Eldad Koblentz

explained: 'We have identified the digital arena as a place where we can excel fast. Creating a creative digital language is something only a public service organisation can do'.³⁶

KAN's vision of itself as a digitally oriented organization, most likely stemmed from pragmatic considerations, such as the desire to attract a wider audience. Nonetheless, from a normative perspective it strove to give universal access to its content and to become relevant in the digital mediascape, in accordance with the new law. This was also the main reason for establishing a digital entity before it ever commenced broadcasting, a decision that was reinforced when reality proved to be even more challenging than expected. Intense political pressure caused numerous delays in KAN's broadcasts, leaving the new corporation without access to broadcast channels for more than a year. KAN therefore decided to take full advantage of the neglected digital arena and commenced producing and posting content online, making it not only 'digital first', but actually 'digital exclusive'. To paraphrase its guidelines, KAN, unwillingly, became 'an Internet corporation with [no] presence in linear radio and TV'.

7 The Struggle over KAN

As soon as KAN was officially created, the new public service media corporation was subject to tremendous political pressure. This situation was quite unexpected, since the closure of IBA and the establishment and structuring of KAN were initiated by the government with the support of Prime Minister Netanyahu. However, when it became clear that the newly enacted PSB law was designed to give the public broadcaster greater independence from political influence, the prime minister claimed to regret the whole initiative.³⁷ After the fact, politicians sought ways to control the corporation, and even threatened to dismantle it altogether. Minister of Culture and Sports, Miri Regev, publically divulged their motives, saying, 'What's the point of a broadcasting corporation if we don't control it?'³⁸

KAN had to fight for its survival, dodging a series of bullets. First, commencement of its broadcasts was postponed time and again. This was followed by efforts to abolish the new organisation and reinstate the old feeble IBA. The struggle surrounding the media corporation was intense and continued even after its TV and radio broadcasts were established. The government's intention to close it down encountered resistance from, among others, the creative artists' unions, who wrote to the communications minister expressing their frustration:

We were amazed to find out last week that once again the government and your office have intentions of closing the public service broadcasting organisation...The scandalous farce led by the government, the establishment of the PSB corporation followed by the attempt to close it or limit its independence...Despite everything, the corporation was created, started broadcasting with improving ratings and became a source of multiple original Israeli creative work. And now once again you are discussing closure of the corporation... The abuse to which the employees of IBA and KAN have been subjected is repeating itself under your leadership.³⁹

Part of the government's attempts to weaken KAN involved the suggestion of splitting it into two separate companies: one that would produce and broadcast the news and factual content, and one that would produce all other content. However, on 15 May 2017, the Israeli High Court of Justice issued an injunction against this proposed amendment to the PSB Law, postponing any split.⁴⁰ Other threats were also operating behind the scenes, such as pressure to hire members of the ruling Likud party and allegations that certain KAN employees had a left-wing agenda.⁴¹

In June, 2018, Prime Minister Netanyahu decided to abandon his effort to weaken the corporation by splitting it in two, fearing EBU sanctions that might jeopardise Israel's hosting of the Eurovision song contest in 2019.⁴² Various political developments, including the criminal investigations conducted against Prime Minister Netanyahu and more recently his inability to form a government after the general elections in April, 2019, as well as EBU's support of the young

PSB, appear to have been crucial to the reincarnation of PSB in Israel. Nevertheless, the organisation and its employees state that they had to wage a fierce battle for survival. They were required to resist the attempts to control it while at the same time fighting for its legitimacy, and indeed its existence, in the political, public and legal arenas.⁴³

8 KAN's Fight for Survival and Legitimacy

This hostile environment forced KAN to work hard to resist external pressures and at the same time earn sufficient legitimacy in a unique situation: a PSM organisation with no access to broadcasting channels. I have identified four strategies KAN employed, strategies that echo core values of public service media defined by Donders and Van den Bulck⁴⁴: universal access, diversity, distinctiveness, creativity and innovation:

1. 'Tower and Stockade' – Online resistance to political threats to dismantle KAN
2. 'Breaking the Silence' - Direct reply to criticism and delegitimisation
3. 'So what do **you** want?' – Forming an alliance with the public
4. 'Fresh and Cutting Edge' - Highlighting the corporation's distinctiveness and innovation

The following is an elaboration of each of these strategies.

8.1 'Tower and Stockade' – Online Resistance to Political Threats to Dismantle KAN

In mid-2016, KAN started establishing its online presence in preparation for the approaching date of its first broadcast, scheduled for a few months later. As one interviewee explained: 'The original purpose of the digital operation was to introduce the organisation to the public, to establish it in the audience's mind and to create a brand'. However, when the broadcasting date was repeatedly postponed and KAN had to struggle to ensure its future, the online presence became an expression of resistance. 'First we built a website so we can come across as a formal media service and mainly for visibility purposes, and at the same time we started posting on Facebook'.

This 'online only' phase was supposed to last two months. However, as the broadcast date was put off more than once, it persisted for over a year. During this time, establishing a strong online presence was perceived by KAN as a way to gain legitimacy for the new organisation. Indeed, the head of the digital division stated in a journalistic interview: 'We want to show that we already exist'.⁴⁵

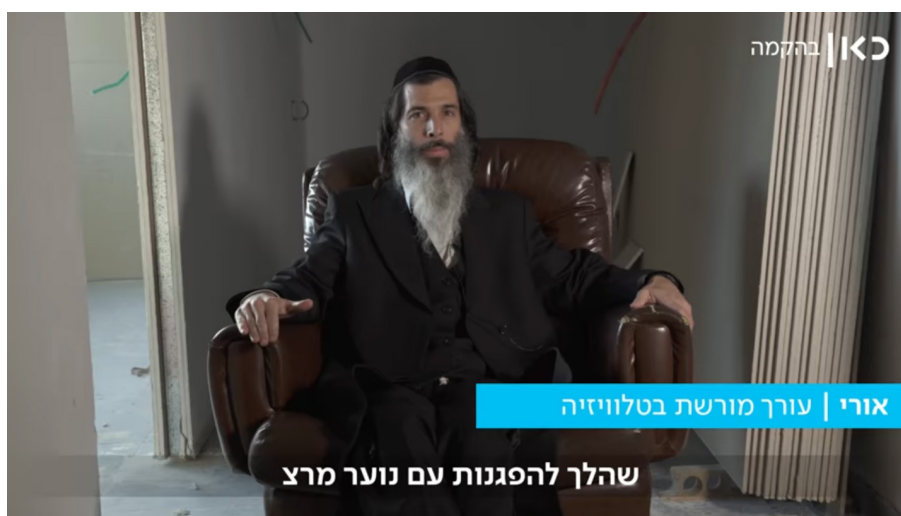
In the words of an employee in KAN I interviewed: 'We felt like the "Tower and Stockade" of the new public service organisation'. 'Tower and Stockade' (in Hebrew: *Homa U'Migdal*) is the name of an operation carried out between 1936 and 1939 in which 52 settlements were founded by the Jewish residents in Palestine during the British mandate in response to the Arab Revolt and the restrictions imposed by the Mandatory authorities on the construction of new Jewish settlements. First, the guard tower and defense stockade were erected, usually overnight, in order to confirm the existence of the settlement as a *fait accompli* (according to an Ottoman law still in effect at the time, an illegal building could not be demolished once the roof was completed); the other buildings were constructed later.⁴⁶ 'Tower and Stockade' was used here as a metaphor to allude to both the national mission of the Jewish pioneers and their resistance against a hostile and restricting government. The KAN employee spelled this out explicitly:

Tower and Stockade, we felt it's all on us, if there will be a new corporation or not it all depends on us. We produced tons of PSB content and poured it online. We had to justify our existence, to earn legitimacy.

Without access to broadcasting channels, PSB's main distribution outlets, KAN utilised Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to distribute content and prove that they were already a meaningful production organisation. It was hoped that these online outlets would make KAN as visible as possible in the public and media spheres, and define its existence as irreversible. Prior studies point to new media, including blogs, Facebook and Twitter, as platforms for expressing employees' resistance within organisations by highlighting their creativity and authorship.⁴⁷ In this case, however, employees and managers joined together to use digital media to highlight their creativity in order to resist outside pressure on the organisation.

8.2 'Breaking the Silence' - Direct Reply to Criticism and Delegitimatisation

The new corporation faced fierce criticism regarding the political agenda of its staff. Politicians led a public campaign claiming that KAN's employees were all left wingers who opposed the right-wing government,⁴⁸ an obvious attempt to subvert the corporation's public legitimacy. Replying directly to these allegations, KAN posted humoristic videos showing the wide variety of convictions, opinions and ethnic origins of its workforce, thus adhering to the PSB value of diversity. In a video posted on social media entitled 'I Am the Corporation You Don't Know', KAN introduced its employees and highlighted the diversity of their backgrounds and political agendas.



Video 2. KAN – I am the Corporation You Don't Know.

This video was produced and released long before KAN started its broadcasts. Its message was clear: We haven't even met yet and you already know who we are and what our beliefs are? As explained in an interview with a manager at KAN:

We made genuine efforts to recruit our employees from different groups in Israeli society and we were criticized for being 'smolanim' (left-wing) even before anybody knew who our workers were... This is why we decided to produce the video and show their faces.

Another video addressed the political criticism of the corporation. It showed KAN's employees participating in a relay race, passing the microphone from one to another. They run as fast as they can and jump over numerous hurdles representing antagonistic quotes from politicians, such as 'What's the point of a broadcasting corporation

if we don't control it?', 'KAN's employees all belong to "Breaking the Silence" (*Shovrim Shtika*, a controversial opposition organisation in Israel), and 'They're all spoiled affluent kids from Tel Aviv'. The race ends with KAN's TV presenter picking up the microphone and saying: 'We are KAN [here in Hebrew], going on air'. This video is a clear act of defiance against the politicians threatening to close the new PSM corporation. It presents criticism of it as hurdles that can be overcome on the way to the establishment of public broadcasts.



Video 3. KAN – We are Going on Air.

One of my interviewees revealed that at some point they realized that the negative campaign against KAN was orchestrated through fake Facebook profiles and paid talkbacks, saying: 'We understood that there was an organised, financed attack against us on social media'. In response, the digital division produced a video about fake profiles in which they 'explained that lately there are a lot of negative paid talkbacks and fake Facebook profiles attacking us and we want the public to know how to identify them. A day after the video was posted online these talkbacks stopped'.



Video 4. KAN – Negative Campaign Against Us.

But this was not the sole purpose of the video. While it does explain how to identify fake profiles, more importantly it draws attention to the negative digital campaign against the corporation and hints at its organisers and source of funding. In fact, it states explicitly:

Lately we have noticed that we are swamped by fake profiles. It is no secret that we are at the center of a public debate. Some support the corporation and some are against it, and that's fine. But what is really a shame is that 'someone' is using dozens of fake profiles against us... We ask ourselves if the operators of these fake profiles are paid for doing it and by whom [a long pause]. You pay, I pay, we all pay.
[End of video]

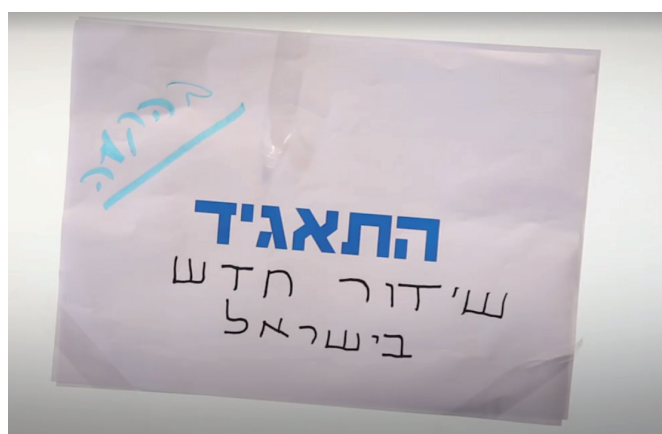
The claim that the public is funding the negative campaign hints that it is being orchestrated by the government and certain politicians. Thus, the video aims to educate the public not only about fake profiles, but also about political pressure and the delegitimisation of PSB. This leads us to the next strategy, since it directly addresses the public over the heads of the politicians.

8.3 'So What Do You Want?' - Forming an Alliance with the Public

PSB has to gain legitimacy not only in the political, but also in the public, arena. KAN sought to form an alliance with the public first by inviting the audience to participate in various shared decisions, and secondly by recruiting public support for its fight for survival. Last but not least, social media activity enabled users to engage with PSB content. The following quote from one of an interview I conducted shows how the organisation hoped to achieve these goals by means of the digital division.

The strategy was: let's get the public to participate, make them our partners. We asked them: What do you want us to be? What content do you want? How and where do you want your content? Using social media we asked: What should our name be? What do you suggest? We had a video where we hung signs with different names on the door and asked the public: What do you think?

Asking the public what they wanted was aimed at strengthening the users' partnership with the PSB organisation and highlighted the fact it belongs to the public and not the politicians.



Video 5. KAN – What Do You Think? What's Our Name?.

Thus, in its struggle to resist the strong pressure on it, KAN sought the public's support. As one employee explained: 'In some cases, when we faced harsh criticism, we let members of the public defend us. This was also a way for us to examine our relevance and legitimacy in the eyes of the public'. KAN's social media operators acknowledged the public's support and posted memes created by the users. The video appeared with the following text: 'Thank you for making us laugh during the hard days we are going through. You have given us strength to continue to create, to build, to dream and to go on with our struggle for an independent, diverse and high quality public media service.' Here the public is clearly framed as an ally.



Video 6. KAN – Thank You for Making Us Laugh During Hard Days.

Another way in which KAN invited the public to engage with it was to create audience communities around specific content, such as the World Cup and the Eurovision song contest. On specialized Facebook pages, people could ask questions and get immediate answers or post relevant content. As one member of the KAN staff told me: 'We don't treat them as viewers but as friends engaging together with the same content'. Another interviewee stated: 'We wanted to form communities of audiences around us with our support'.

Forming an alliance with the public was aimed first and foremost at strengthening the legitimacy of KAN. At the same time, it also created a coalition with the public against the political forces threatening the independence of the corporation.

8.4 'Fresh and Cutting Edge' - Highlighting KAN's Distinctiveness and Innovation

Distinctiveness is considered part of PSB's DNA. It is perceived as the ability to provide a distinct service in a commercial media environment.⁴⁹ In the case of KAN, however, its distinctiveness was stressed specifically in comparison to the old PSB (IBA), which was regarded by the public as anachronistic and unable to adapt to the latest technological developments. KAN highlighted its innovative properties, technological relevance and digital creativity as a way to demonstrate its distinctiveness. Moreover, innovation and creativity are core values of PSM.

In a newspaper article, KAN's work environment was described as young and trendy, in sharp contrast to the old IBA.

On one side of the open work space a group of young employees is editing a video segment that will be posted soon on the corporation's very active Facebook and Twitter accounts. On these platforms, the corporation's employees try to prove that they are 'different', amusing and contemporary—the opposite image of the anachronistic perception of the old IBA.⁵⁰

KAN contributed to this image when it published a call for media content producers, stating: 'This is a chance to become pioneers with new ideas for digital content for the new Israel public media corporation...We are looking for creative people, young, fresh, talented and digital'.⁵¹

The Israeli corporation announced that it perceived its digital activity as a central component of its service since it strove to be 'leading, innovative and original'. Its very motto, 'Digital First', positioned it as a cutting-edge organisation as distinct from the older PSB. In the words of KAN's CEO:

We built [a strong digital presence] because I think we need to think ahead, of the future. We know that TV is an ageing medium, that its viewers are forty or even older. It was important for us to produce content for younger people. We knew we couldn't bring children and young people to TV so we went to them.⁵²

Moreover, as transformations in the media environment are said to entail a social obligation for innovation in the effort to reach new audiences, and particularly young people,⁵³ casting KAN as innovative and digital furthered its aim of establishing its legitimacy among younger audiences.

Recently, the popularity of KAN's content on digital platforms is celebrated by its managers on social media under a specialized hashtag, #breakingthepeoplemeter, which provides the following statistics:

Shabas# [a comedy series] already accumulated 3,677,034 viewings through digital platforms. Five times more than the 730,345 viewers of channel 11⁵⁴

Through this social media campaign, KAN proves not only its popularity among different audiences, but also its provision of universal access',⁵⁵ achieved by reaching audiences everywhere on all platforms. Moreover, it proves that it is innovative and contemporary, since it claims to defy the 'old' people meter rating measurements.

9 Conclusion

This paper touches on several interrelated issues in contemporary academic and professional discourse: The transformation of PSB organisations into PSM and their adaptation to the digital age; political pressure on PSM organisations and their struggle for independence; and PSM's legitimacy in a challenging media and political environment. PSB organisations in many parts of the world are struggling to remain relevant, and in particular, to attract younger audiences.⁵⁶ Based on a study of 56 countries, Damian Tambini concluded that the same problems can be found in PSBs around the world: dwindling political support, governmental interference and a declining audience.⁵⁷ Given the changes in the media world, most Public Media organisations feel compelled to transition from PSB to PSM. Nevertheless, these organisations generally continue to maintain broadcast-based distribution to which online activities are added. As other scholars state: 'We apply the term PSM to the multi-platform services that emanate from the established "broadcasting" corporations'.⁵⁸

Against this international backdrop, it becomes clear that although KAN faces similar challenges, it is also a unique case study. First, it is a completely new corporation. Secondly, it was configured from the beginning as a 'digital first' producer and distributor. Thirdly, it unexpectedly started out as a 'digital only' organisation with no access to broadcasting channels, and consequently a total reliance on digital online distribution, for over a year. In addition, KAN was under strong pressure from political factors seeking to control it, which led to a very real threat to dismantle it entirely. I have shown here how, under these hostile circumstances, a public service media organisation took advantage of its online platforms in order to withstand political pressure while at the same time attempting to manufacture legitimacy in the eyes of the public. These two goals are sometimes hard to reconcile, since organisations that do not comply with the rules or pressure imposed on them risk losing their legitimacy.⁵⁹ KAN's managers and staff had to juggle resistance and legitimacy, and navigate between the politicians and the public.

Looking closely at the online strategies explored in this paper against the background of the normative DNA of public service media,⁶⁰ it becomes clear that the core values of PSM resonate in KAN's struggle. It fought to remain **independent** from political control, **to reach as many people as possible** through various online outlets and social media, to display the **diversity** of its employees and expression of opinions, to promote **participation and interaction** with the audience and to highlight its **distinctiveness** as a **creative and innovative** organisation.⁶¹ Employing the strategies outlined here was meant to accentuate KAN's commitment to its public mission and its consequent legitimacy.

10 Epilogue: A Success Story?

At the time of writing, KAN broadcasts on two main TV channels (one in Hebrew and one in Arabic), and operates eight radio stations and seven additional online music channels. It manages to produce quality content and attract prominent talents,⁶² and staged the 2019 Eurovision Song Contest with great success. Moreover it is attracting large audiences on all platforms, especially online.⁶³

Overt political pressures on KAN have somewhat subsided, probably due to the uncertain political status of Prime Minister Netanyahu. However, there are still repeated attacks on the organisation in social media, as well as accusations of unfavorable coverage of the government resulting even in a suspension of a journalist for "mocking the prime minister".⁶⁴ It is clear that KAN will have to continue its struggle for legitimacy, and can expect further pressure from political sources in the future.

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Biography

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