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# GERMAN PUBLIC TELEVISION, SOCIAL MEDIA AND AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

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**Abstract:** This article discusses how social media affect German public service broadcasting (PSB) in terms of PSB's efforts to reach younger audiences in the digital age. Since social media plays a significant role for younger media users, German PSB is attempting to merge television with social media (commonly referred to as social TV). Social TV, however, has the ability to develop into fairly integrated multiplatform application systems that are driven by the logic of social media. One example is the content network funk, launched by ARD ('a consortium of public broadcasters') and ZDF ('second German television') in 2016. The content network's shows demonstrate a changed television-audience relationship within the social media environment. I will analyze this changed television-audience relationship in terms of the way it addresses audience engagement due to its policy of participation.

**Keywords:** social TV, German public service broadcasting, public television, social media, multiplatform, audience participation

## 1 Introduction

Social media's spread, and the rise of its cultural influence, shape norms and rules for public communication.<sup>1</sup> They also affect the production, distribution and consumption of TV content. Television executives are constantly challenged by digital and social media to find new ways for TV to carry on in a networked multimedia environment.<sup>2</sup> In Germany, according to recent studies by the ARD ('a consortium of public broadcasters') and ZDF ('second German television'),<sup>3</sup> social media in particular are challenging television, since platforms like Facebook, YouTube or Instagram have a considerable impact on people's everyday lives and media culture.<sup>4</sup> As Frees and Koch write, 90.3 percent of the German population is online, while the daily use of the internet (of at least 196 and a maximum of 353 minutes) in the younger and middle age groups reaches nearly 100 percent (97.7 percent in the age group fourteen to nineteen, 98.0 percent in the age group twenty to twenty-nine, and 96.1 percent in the age group thirty to thirty-nine).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the entertainment-related use of content on social media is gaining in importance as well.<sup>6</sup> The television medium,

in contrast, is losing ground, especially among younger media users.<sup>7</sup> The smartphone as an “indicator and motor of mediatization”<sup>8</sup>, most associated with our everyday practice of being online, has become the preferred device that younger media users use to access content on the internet.<sup>9</sup> It accelerates the variability and flexibility in computer-mediated communication and constitutes the driving force for a very high daily range of networked online communication.<sup>10</sup> To inhibit television’s crisis of validity, TV executives are trying to merge the “lean-back medium of television” with the “lean-forward mode of on-demand web and mobile use, in which users engage in diverse, highly personalized and individualistic forms of participation”.<sup>11</sup> In this context, the structural convergence of television and social media results in the phenomenon of so-called social TV, commonly described as a form of “computer-mediated interpersonal communication over distance or over time”, which creates “the impression of watching TV alongside a group of friends”.<sup>12</sup> However, the phenomenon of social TV itself has changed over the years from “single screen manifestations” and various “second and third screen applications”<sup>13</sup> to recent examples that prioritize social media over television like the funk<sup>14</sup> content network as I will discuss below.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, beyond common understandings of social TV as a second screen that emphasizes the interpersonal communication of the TV audience, more recent developments in social TV tend to push towards networked conditions of content production, distribution, and consumption within a multiplatform digital environment.<sup>16</sup> The content network funk, for instance, was launched by the German public broadcasters ARD and ZDF in 2016. The network combines public service broadcasting (PSB) with social media platforms and apps due to its ‘online-only’ approach to the internet, and particularly social media. As ZDF director Thomas Bellut has put it, funk challenges German television and its creative staff to produce content that young people are interested in, and to show it to them where they are looking for it – on the internet.<sup>17</sup> Considering social media’s participatory nature, the changed relationship between television and participatory audiences needs to respect both television’s and the audience’s demands and expectations.<sup>18</sup> Funk’s method of combining TV and social media enables audience participation within defined aspects of its production process, thus *addressing* the audience as *collaborators*,<sup>19</sup> due to the network’s policy of participatory practices. The audience’s engagement, on the other hand, is motivated by a particular rhetoric of communion and interactive involvement.

My argument proceeds as follows: First, I briefly use funk as an example to discuss the convergence of TV and social media. Here I will follow recent approaches of social TV that prioritize social media over TV. I see this in terms of media-integrated systems of convergence, designed to meet younger audiences on social media, and I emphasize funk’s audience-oriented approach. Second, I investigate the changed social TV-audience relationship within the funk content network due to the network’s policy of participatory practice, and its address of audience engagement by means of phatic communion.<sup>20</sup> In so doing, I will analyze the funk show *Die Frage* (2016-), which presents video reports and web documentaries on YouTube, in greater detail.

## 2 Integrated Systems of Social Media and Television

The convergence of television and social media into different forms and functions of social TV is rapidly evolving and continuously changing. Usually, social TV has been described as an additional function of television that emerged from audience activity and the phenomenon of users’ everyday media practice of using various second mobile media screens.<sup>21</sup> Since its advent, social TV has appeared in different forms and has assumed various functions. Early forms merged television and communication tools into a single device to enable “people to socially interact parallel to watching” television “in stationary contexts”. Schatz et al. call these early manifestations “social TV 1.0”.<sup>22</sup> The rather common understanding of social TV as “the combination of television with the real-time experience of social media”<sup>23</sup> by means of interpersonal pre-, parallel, or follow-up communication on social networking sites in relation to particular television content<sup>24</sup> have been characterized as “social TV 2.0”.<sup>25</sup> However, as Moe, Poell and van Dijck have put it, “we are moving from the development of ‘second screen’ applications to integrated systems of watching”.<sup>26</sup> From this perspective, social TV no longer appears as a mere addition to TV, but as a phenomenon of technological upheaval and media-cultural convergence. It is transforming television structurally, by means of a combination of what van Dijck

and Poell call the “platform apparatus of social media”<sup>27</sup> and the so-called “television apparatus”,<sup>28</sup> based on the dynamic leveling of media logics.

Recently, Stollfuß has characterized these transformations as a new stage of “social TV 3.0” that “refers to the flexible and dynamic harmonization of television’s media logic and the logic of social media, amalgamating TV’s cultural form with the infrastructure of social media’s connective environment. This is taking place in the face of a change in policy by television executives who are impelled to align themselves with the social media culture.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, the structural relationship between TV and social media has changed; television has become a “conceptual supplement” to social media. Executives now take a strategic approach to participation in order to legitimize TV content and reach younger audiences on social media in particular.<sup>30</sup> From this perspective, the merging of social media and television results in a new stage of social TV: a media-integrated system of convergence now relies on the structural and conceptual combination of what has been called the “television apparatus” and the so-called “platform apparatus” of social media.

Essentially, the concept of the TV apparatus understands the medium of television as a network of human and social actors. These include technology; social and cultural practices; economic and political conditions surrounding different public versus commercial institutions; and TV’s program architecture, consisting of scheduling, established genres, communicative rules, and formal conventions. It distributes content relative to the particular formation of the audience, who receive TV content in their domestic context. Since it functions as mass entertainment, information and education, and is capable of engaging with the audience (as citizens and also as target-group-specific customers), television has a considerable effect on people’s everyday lives.<sup>31</sup>

The platform apparatus of social media, on the other hand, “always mediates users’ activities and defines how connections are taking shape, even if users themselves can exert considerable influence over the contribution of content”.<sup>32</sup> Van Dijck and Poell characterize social media’s platform apparatus across socio-economic and algorithmic aspects. In this way, social media’s platform apparatus harnesses “users’ creative or communicative contributions” as they are induced by a platform’s algorithmic mechanisms to create a “flow of communication and information”.<sup>33</sup> Social TV, therefore, entails “braiding the conversational and creative strengths of networked platforms with the mass entertainment and audience engagement abilities of broadcast networks”.<sup>34</sup>

Social media platforms have become dominant driving forces in a connective media cultural world. They have “penetrated the heart of societies”, thus “affecting institutions, economic transactions, and social and cultural practices”.<sup>35</sup> In doing so, social media platforms infiltrate given institutional structures and force certain institutions to reorganize.<sup>36</sup> In that sense, social media platforms affect the structural conditions and cultural operations of the cultural industries in a sustainable way. As Nieborg and Poell claim, the “penetration of economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions of digital platforms into the web and app ecosystems” have already changed the production, distribution, and circulation of cultural content.<sup>37</sup> As cultural content has become more and more “platform dependent”, thus influencing the cultural and institutional “autonomy” of certain forms of content productions<sup>38</sup>, platform-aligned content appears “increasingly modular in design” and reworked due to constant user feedback.<sup>39</sup> From this perspective, the convergence of social media and television nowadays is changing similarly, since TV-related content on social networking sites has to be structurally aligned with the “platformization”<sup>40</sup> of content production. The notion of social TV is thus understood here as a convergence that rearranges the structural relationship between TV and social media by means of a media-integrated system, but which is fundamentally social media-driven and platform-dependent. Even though it is still related to the operations of content production, the cultural and institutional complex of television plays only a minor role.

### 3 Funk as a New Form of Social TV

One example of such a media-integrated system of social TV in the realm of German PSB is the content network funk. The online network is financed by the television and radio license fee as determined by the Broadcast State Contract.

Funk exists outside the regular TV schedule, and thus exclusively as a bundle of more than 60 content channels on social media platforms and apps like Facebook, Snapchat and YouTube, and on the network's own website. As ZDF writes on their website in outlining funk's mission statement, media usage of people between the ages of fourteen and twenty-nine has changed significantly. Moreover, "new and innovative media formats occur instead on third-party platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Snapchat, while traditional linear television is diminishing in importance for the younger target groups. ARD and ZDF are reacting to this by launching funk".<sup>41</sup> The network includes formats such as *follow me reports* (a vlog-style documentary channel on YouTube about a variety of different social and cultural issues, ranging from live action role-playing games and cosplay to homelessness); *Datteltäter* (a political satire web series on YouTube about cultural stereotypes and prejudices between ethnic Germans and Muslims); or *Der Wedding kommt* (a comedy web series for Facebook and YouTube about three young women on their way to a party in Berlin who contemplate facets of life such as love, politics and friendship).

Furthermore, the network doesn't only offer online content in support of a flexible and more individualized way of viewing audiovisual material on different web platforms and social media apps. Funk also relies on user participation and direct communication between media professionals and users: "We invite all of you to discuss our content and our new ideas in development".<sup>42</sup> For instance *iam.serafina*, a fictional, scripted reality soap opera on Snapchat about different issues in the everyday life of a twentysomething, integrates user comments sent to the main character Serafina (portrayed by Franca Serafina Bolengo) into the storytelling concept of the web series, creating a narrative that fits the interactive environment of Snapchat. The video reports and documentaries that the *Y-Kollektive* group of young journalists makes for Facebook and YouTube, to name a second example, are conceptualized to involve users in follow-up discussions on Facebook. In addition to written statements on user comments below each report or documentary, the journalists also provide short video clips with personal comments, after first posting the video on Facebook. And the YouTube channel *Die Frage*, to name a final example, also provides content with the option of user participation and discussion.

In the "age of conversation", as Durham Peters writes, "communicative styles have evolved from sender-oriented to audience-oriented".<sup>43</sup> Thus television meets its audience on a level of engagement that seems to give it greater potential for influence.<sup>44</sup> Of course, the active/passive binary has long been discussed in the context of television and cultural studies to show that the television medium is not inherently passive.<sup>45</sup> The audience and fans have been actively involved in various forms of communication around certain TV productions. However, with the shift toward a culture of participation,<sup>46</sup> the role of the audience – entrenched in TV executives' *image* of the television-audience relationship – has changed. Media professionals have begun putting more effort into reaching their audience within a multiplatform environment, and into engaging them with TV-related content.

In Germany, this changed communication process in the context of social TV appears particularly audience-oriented, since there is a pent-up demand in the context of PSB. As Buschow and Schneider describe it, social TV's progress is taking place as a result of PSB's "crisis of legitimacy": "While they communicate their public value to the stakeholders – and thus their contribution to the common good – *they fail to include the audience*, which increasingly takes an active role in this communication".<sup>47</sup> The German PSB audience has thus been framed as a "neglected stakeholder" who is "represented by committees 'on trust' or via market research methods".<sup>48</sup> Consequently, German TV seems to reassess its strategy of addressing audiences. Rather than continuing to pursue a one-to-many approach to mass media communication, TV refocuses on its audience through a rather one-to-one approach. This takes the form of direct interaction, and deeper audience engagement in an online environment.

Yet the conceptual relationship between the audience and the television medium, long predominant, is shifting with the media cultural practices of audiences that are linked to converging technologies and multimedia applications.<sup>49</sup> Television's means of addressing the audience needs to be reevaluated and adjusted within a multiplatform system that combines "mass media and personal media"<sup>50</sup> such as social networking sites. Social media is particularly provoking television since platforms and mobile media apps like YouTube, Facebook and Instagram seem to be replacing it as the defining medium of everyday media culture, especially among younger media users.<sup>51</sup> With funk, German PSB apparently hopes to respond to these developments, and to adapt to the expectations of younger

digital natives. The audience is invited to engage with the network's content by collaborating within defined sections of a social TV show. Given that it is difficult to describe all of funk's content in more detail here, I will discuss the show *Die Frage* to provide an idea of its use of audience participation.

#### 4 Funk and Policy of Participation in Social Media: The Case of *Die Frage*

*Die Frage* is a YouTube channel produced for the PSB content network funk that presents video reports and web documentaries in thematic sections of four or five episodes. The channel currently has more than 261,000 subscribers and 37,500,000 views, and is comprised of more than 150 videos. The videos cover a variety of different issues such as transgender, sex workers, prison life, mental disorders, esotericism, cultural prejudices, etc. *Die Frage* deals with aspects of everyday culture and social life, intending to encourage reflection and discussion among the target group of younger audiences from fourteen to twenty. While most of the topics are ones the host wants to discuss with his users, the show also accepts proposals submitted by the audience. For instance, the episodes on sex workers ('Darf ich für Sex bezahlen?'), transgender issues ('Wie ist es trans\* zu sein?'), death ('Wie komme ich mit dem Tod klar?'), mental disorders ('Muss ich Angst vor der Psychiatrie haben?'), religion and faith ('Wann wird Glaube zu extrem?') were produced following user questions on specific subjects. "Many of you send me messages asking me to do a documentary on transgender issues", Bartlewski says at the beginning of the first episode of that series; he and his team decide to follow up on the audience's proposal (Figure 1).



Figure 1: *Die Frage* (2017), 'Mein Leben als Transmann | Wie ist es trans\* zu sein? Folge 1/4'.

Bartlewski (and now Seibert)<sup>52</sup> also introduce the other first episodes on other documentaries that have been produced following user comments. Additionally, the episode on mental disorders was produced in reaction to the Facebook message of one user, a young woman named Jennifer, who asked Bartlewski about that topic. She subsequently appears in the documentary, talking about her own history of mental distress. "I'm headed for Jenny's", Bartlewski says in the video. "She sent me a message asking me to do a video on mental disorders. I had previously had almost nothing to do with them" (Figure 2). And for a planned documentary on online fraud ('Netzabzocke'), the show posted a video appeal for research assistance: "Hey guys, I need your help. I'd like to find out who's scamming us on the internet. [...] If you've had any experience with that, please write a comment, or message or mail me. I promise I'll find the scammers" (Figure 3). The *Die Frage* audience is invited to participate in the decision-making process, or even to become part of an on-screen episode (as in the case of Jennifer, in the segments on mental disorders).



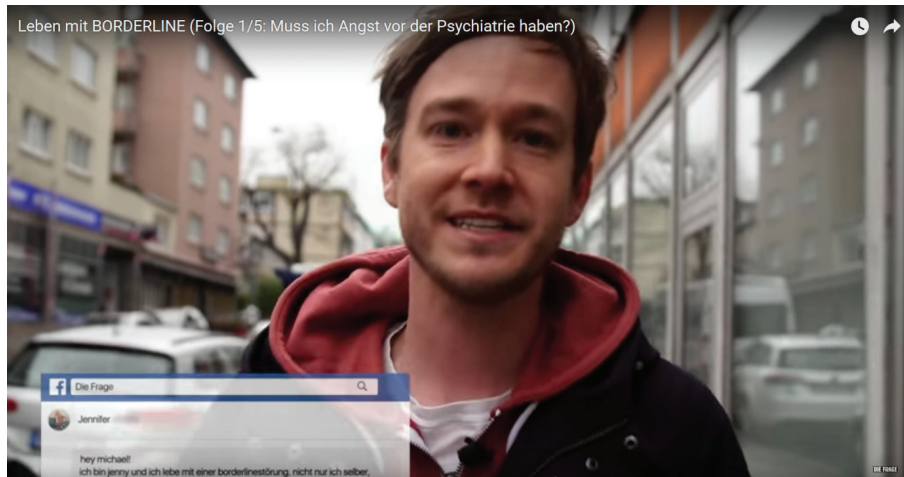


Figure 2: *Die Frage* (2017), 'Leben mit BORDERLINE (Folge 1/5: Muss ich Angst vor der Psychiatrie haben?)'.



Figure 3: *Die Frage* (2017), 'Helft mir bei meiner nächsten Recherche | Netzabzocke - Die Frage'.

*Die Frage* invites its audiences to be collaborators as part of a television-audience relationship that is now on social media and “positively highlights interactive involvement” as it is part of the discursive formation of digital technologies.<sup>53</sup> The culture of participatory media has given rise to collaborative communities where users – or perhaps “producers” – work together to create content in a “networked, participatory environment”.<sup>54</sup> Funk’s show *Die Frage* utilizes this idea of collaborative communities by appealing to the audience to take part in the show’s decisions, thus engaging them as collaborators. This means of engaging the audience occurs in terms of a precondition for participation. Dahlgren writes that engagement characterizes the “subjective disposition that motivates [the] realization [of participation]”.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, engagement needs to be motivated by a specific way of addressing the user, thus offering possible participation in the funk network.

However, forms and strategies of participatory practices in the context of media production always touch on the relation of power. Based on Carpentier’s differentiation between the sociological and political dimensions of participation, my understanding of participation is connected to a political idea.<sup>56</sup> The dynamics of participatory practices in the show *Die Frage* in particular, rely on a mode of participation that Pateman describes as “partial participation”, characterized as “a process in which two or more parties influence each other in the making of decisions but the final power to decide rests with one party only”.<sup>57</sup> Even if the audience is placed in a position to

participate in funk's decision-making procedures (e.g. to negotiate the subject of an upcoming documentary), the final decision on whether or not to use users' ideas rests with the professional staff.

From this perspective, the policy of participatory practices as discussed here does not refer to an equal partnership of media professionals and audiences within an environment of shared content. The policy of participatory practices in the case of *Die Frage* refers to the address of users by media professionals, inviting them to engage with the content. Producers assume these users have the skills and access to allow them to use digital technologies and engage with the content on social media. Thus, the notion of participatory practices has its roots in an attempt by media professionals anticipating a form of digital media interactivity to allow audiences to engage in activities outside certain routines and workflows within professional media processes.<sup>58</sup> This is absorbed into media professionals' communication strategy in terms of a rhetoric of involvement, the result of an attribution of the audience as collaborators.<sup>59</sup> In the case of *Die Frage*, the audience is constantly addressed as collaborators, giving them the impression that they have influence on the decision-making process, and thereby engaging them in the content. But participation never occurs as "a process where each individual member of a decision-making body has equal power to determine the outcome of decisions".<sup>60</sup> The policy of participatory practices aims at encouraging partial participation in a networked social media context that is nonetheless still anticipated and orchestrated by the media.

Additionally, *Die Frage* also utilizes aspects of community related socio-cultural dimensions within a networked and participatory environment. The addressing of audiences in the episodes always takes a personalized and subjective approach. The host constantly breaks the fourth wall and shares his impressions, attitudes, and opinions, in order to open up discussions on YouTube. Moreover, he posts video statements in response to user comments, emphasizing them to highlight the audience's involvement in the process. He also makes personal statements, rendering his own thoughts and feelings: "I'd like to thank you. Thank you, in capital letters and with five exclamation marks! It was really amazing to read your comments. [...] It was very intense and helpful for me to write you", he says in a video statement about the episodes on mental disorders (Figure 4).



Figure 4: *Die Frage* (2017), 'Q&A - Muss ich ANGST vor der PSYCHIATRIE haben?'.

As Bartlewski (or now Seibert) reflects personally on user comments, he frames himself as a member of the show's community, thereby reducing the 'communicative distance' between himself and the show's audience. For the same reason, he also emphasizes user comments that refer not to the topic of the latest video, but to the host personally. User 'DanniLovesBeauty' writes for example, "I'd like to tell you I think it's very good and courageous that you're addressing these topics so openly. It must be emotionally exhausting, right? How do you deal with that issue when the show is over? Does it affect you, or can you leave it behind?" (Figure 5). After reading the user's comment aloud, he discusses his feeling about the topic of mental disorders: "I have thought about this a lot. Sometimes I can't forget it and can't sleep".



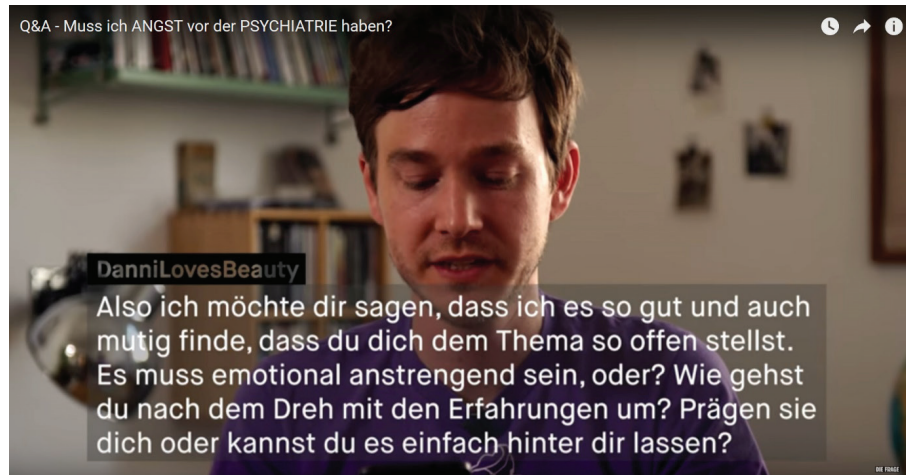


Figure 5: *Die Frage* (2017), 'Q&A - Muss ich ANGST vor der PSYCHIATRIE haben?'.

Bartlewski finally says that, due to the many 'valuable' viewer comments, the *Die Frage* team has decided to produce an extra episode on the topic. This will tackle people's everyday lives following their discharge from a mental hospital. Again, Bartlewski meets Jennifer, the young woman from the first episode, to talk about her experience upon leaving the hospital.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, Bartlewski posted video responses to selected user comments on other issues such as esotericism and fetishism. On the subject of sex workers, Bartlewski and a sex worker called Orinta respond to audience comments together, in a 40-minute live session on YouTube.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the subjective, personalized approach of *Die Frage* is also emphasized on the show's trailer:

"Hi, I'm Michael [...] and I'm interested in people. [...] I'm also very curious. [...] I have major questions that don't have easy answers. [...] I'm also interested in social taboos. [...] I guess I'm often underestimated by other people. [...] I've experienced a lot of things [...] you don't see every day. [...] I have a very long list of issues that I'm still interested in [...]. Whenever society says it has no problem with a certain issue, I'm particularly interested in finding out whether that's really true" (Figure 6).



Figure 6: *Die Frage* (2016), 'Die Frage Reporter Michael'.

The trailers to introduce Frank Seibert as the new host<sup>63</sup> as well as to inform the audience about Bartlewski's reasons for his withdrawal (he became a father)<sup>64</sup> are following the same subjective and personalized approach. This 'getting closer' approach between TV professionals and the audience updates the idea of 'phatic communion' that had already

been adapted to TV and was transferred discursively within television studies as part of the TV apparatus.<sup>65</sup> In terms of “linguistic use”, the phatic communion occurs as a “mode of action” that “serves to establish bonds of personal union between people”.<sup>66</sup> However, phatic communions do not necessarily serve “any purpose of communicating ideas”,<sup>67</sup> but instead constitute a process of communication as such. In doing so, phatic communion does not necessarily emphasize the exchange of meaningful information between actors (though of course phatic communication can be meaningful in many ways), but primarily expresses *sociability and social relations*. In terms of mediatized social bonds within “networked sociality” though, social relations tend to be rather “ephemeral” – though very “intense encounters”.<sup>68</sup> According to what Miller describes as “phatic media culture”, the mode of action that characterizes phatic communion evolves into the establishment of bonds between actors in terms of a “sense of connection to an ever-expanding social network”, and thus a mediatized operation of the platform apparatus of social media – it is all about being “in touch”.<sup>69</sup>

The example of *Die Frage* shows that funk’s content uses this mode of action to approach a phatic communion in the realm of social media, thereby bonding media professionals and media users as collaborators on the show through direct address of the audience. As Bartlewski makes clear in an interview with Schulenburg for public radio’s ‘B5 aktuell’, the team of *Die Frage* considers itself a member of a community on social media since it shares content with members who are the show’s participatory audience. “Publishing a video within the community opens up discussions. This leads to further aspects which help us with our research on new topics. The video alone is not the end of the line; it continues with the YouTube discussion, now a two-way process”.<sup>70</sup> *Die Frage* takes the notion of phatic communion as a formal constitution in terms of an enunciation of sociability and social relations in a process of communication. This promotes a peer-to-peer relationship as a symbolic process of constant communication and self-reflexive practices and generates an ‘authentic’ atmosphere between the host and the audience. Arguably, this strategy harnesses what Papacharissi calls “affective publics” that are constituted by the platform apparatus of social media. Social media, Papacharissi writes, “facilitate feelings of engagement”, for example, by bringing together like-minded people to “strengthen group identity”, whereas discussions “between different-minded individuals reinforce in-group and out-group affiliation”.<sup>71</sup> Miller’s understanding of phatic media culture also emphasizes a form of strategic communication that makes emotional connections between actors on social media. In a “contemporary society in which compulsive intimacy has become a major way to overcome disembeddedness and the continual reconstruction of social bonds”, the sharing of personal information (self-reflexive practices, self-disclosure) works well to “build and maintain relationships” while emotional information appears instead as a commodity in a phatic media culture.<sup>72</sup>

Funk’s *Die Frage* uses this kind of ‘affective moving’ of the audience to promote an atmosphere of a community of like-minded individuals (including the host) that serves the participatory policy of the show. The establishment and maintenance of “emotional contact zones”<sup>73</sup> on social media seem to be effective communicative strategies for social television professionals trying to meet the demands and expectations of younger media audiences in a social media-driven environment.

## 5 Conclusion

By entangling the communicative qualities of social media with television’s ability to engage with its audience, social TV changes the television-audience relationship by means of a different form of addressing user engagement on social media. In order to reach younger media audiences on the internet and to meet their expectations on social media, German public service broadcasting has launched funk as a PSB-related online-only network of content. Funk’s shows such as *Die Frage* constitute an audience-oriented approach to social media by addressing its users as collaborators. Users are enabled to become part of the decision-making procedures related to parts of a production. The network show hence promotes a policy of participatory practices that certainly reduces the distance between the TV industry and media users, shifting the communicative practice from a one-to-many to a rather one-to-one approach. The participatory online environment gives the audience the impression of being part of a collaborative community that connects media professionals and users. Moreover, funk’s *Die Frage* motivates the audience’s engagement through the rhetorical functions of phatic communion to establish and maintain ongoing relationships.

The changed television-audience relationship in the case of funk and the network's show *Die Frage* results from TV's need to reach its younger audience via third-party platforms. Social media and the audience's orientation to the internet are forcing TV to further expand, and to incorporate the "flexibility and mobility of communication technology".<sup>74</sup> Since funk's online-only content exists exclusively on social media platforms, the show *Die Frage* illustrates how "platformization"<sup>75</sup> has affected PSB in Germany on an institutional and operational level. Public broadcasters must find new and innovative ways, establish new processes and practices, and create new platform-aligned and feedback-oriented content that fits the environment of social media. Social TV, as I argue here, has shifted towards social media-driven configurations of convergence, thus putting pressure on the cultural and institutional apparatus of television. Funk prioritizes social media and is subject to its platform apparatus, while the cultural and institutional complex of television plays only a supporting role in functional support. Increasingly, television is becoming aligned with social media – where the audience is already waiting.

## Notes

1. José van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 19.
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