Changing Media Ontology

'Petite histoire des normes communes'

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Upheavals & 'Existential Crisis' /1

- **Traditional media face an existential crisis.**
- **Horizontal network media face haphazardness, while suffering also from 'infoflation'**
- **The ICT media convergence, further, necessitates the promulgation of a veritable synthesis and an osmosis between the two cultures: the old and the new.**
- **This may be a task for 'new regulators'**

The Leap Forward /2

- **How do we go from an existential crisis and infoflation to sustainable communication?**

- **The ethos of the vertically organized / transmitting mass media, (point-to-multipoint) need to embrace that of the interactive, horizontal media (point-to-point & to-multipoint).**

- **So, telecomunications media and the Internet will give interactivity against gaining centralized visibility.**

Implications of Convergence /3

- **Why define the problem at hand as an existential crisis?**
- **Because the entity of audience changes or is under extinction:**
- **Therefore: 'mainstream' media need now to restructure, so as to:**
  - **establish new identities,**
  - **invent new roles,**
  - **create new, valuable, 'in demand service'.**

  This is urgent even presuming that old and new media were completely free-standing from state authority.

Intriguing Paradoxes /4

- **'Self-regulation'** and **'neutrality'** have been imposed in mass media and the internet.

- These permissive regulatory modes prevailed, largely, either de jure or de facto, both on the domain of mass media and on that of interactive network media.

- Yet, **media market forces** are **at a loss**, today. Why?

Converged & Universal Standards /5

- Standards regulation is nearly completed.

- In any case, it is no longer a contentious political issue, as in the past (1980s – 1990s f.ex.).

- Access and cross-penetration are achievable across networks, screens, modes and user practices.

What Role for Regulation? /6

- It is estimated that 240.000.000 domain names are in operation across the globe.

- The question is: how could national authorities be effective in '**regulating**' or monitoring such a plethora of entities?

- *Global regulation* faces the same practical, **legitimacy** and existential problems as does *global governance*.

Elusiveness of political intervention /7

- An inherent feature of the global domain is that traditional regulation is inadequate, while *global governance is* problematic. Meanwhile,
- **Interactive communications challenge the regime of representational schemata & politics**.
- The role of individual agency is soaring, which nevertheless, does not lead automatically to technology-aided democratic politics.
- **Proactive policies** are in demand in order to: [a] improve structures , [b] promulgate osmoses & value added, [c] safeguard the general interest.

Analytical Framework of 'Vast Interactivity' /8

- The magnitude of web agency activity may be captured by projecting it comparatively, applying Lasswell's famous 'question formula' to traffic of content and processes on the hyper-medium: Internet.

- A total *subversion* is observed between what applied in the *ancien régime* of mass communications media and what prevails today.

Lasswell's Formula in Past & Present /9

- This consists in five elementary syntactical components.

	1.	2.
1. WHO	ONE / A FEW	ALL / ANY
2. SAYS WHAT	EDITED CONTENT	ANYTHING
3. TO WHOM	MANY	ALL / ANY
4. VIA WHAT MEDIA	MASS MEDIA	INTERNET
5. WITH WHAT EFFECT	!!! ???	!!! ??? !!! ???

Multidirectional, All-Anything-All-/10

- The all – anything – all that we get in the first three replies of the 2nd column above, encompasses the *essence* of the 'unprecedented' transformations.
- Potentially all can say anything to potentially all.
- The shift is imposed by a ***de facto* predominance of horizontal communications.**
- This subverts vertical linear communicative processes, normal under the *ancien régime* of mass communications.

The Prevalence of Horizontality /11

- Horizontal structural frameworks presuppose popular communicative involvement and they are the outcome of it.

- Such frameworks work best with direct and massive interaction.

- This structure commands communication and interactivity of the "four AAAA" type: "**Anything, Anywhere, Anytime, Anyone**" (Doheny-Farina, 1996:113).

- Does'nt this entail the end of mediators?

Challenges to Regulation /12

- Given the plethora of message- and service providers and the mounting traffic of contents, among the most taunting problems is, <u>firstly</u>, that of difficulty to **regulate** or of the **colapsus of regulation** alltogether.

Shuttering of publics / audiences /13

- <u>Secondly</u>, due to an immensely accentuated competition for attracting and maintaining **_user attention_**, 'audience markets' tend to diminish or vanish.

- The problem of finding '**old type receivers**' is commensurate to increases in numbers of users / senders / speakers and, hence, of 'content supply'.

- Proliferation of content suppliers segmentalizes audiences and inhibits economies of scale. Segmentalization affects commercial exploitation of TV.

- For media marketability this is catalytic.

Lurking entropy / 14

- Such enormous scales of content growth result in yet another significant problem: ***infoflation***.

- Yet another related trend is that 'everyone' tends to speak / send, rather than listening / receiving.

- These elements impede options for constructing ***legitimacy***. This is the challenge in a world of massive and proliferating torrents of messages.

What is '**infoflation**'? / 15

- I introduce the **hybrid term** of *infoflation* by synthesizing the term of <u>information</u> with that of <u>inflation</u> in order to highlight a **new risk** and to alert about severe subsequent problems of **communicative** and social **entropy**.

- *Infoflation* entails low or no informative value.

What Options for Political Intervention? /16

- Four decades since the EU's initial involvement in communications policy, the socio-political, economic and technological environment has changed radically.

- Key present features:

- Reduction and decadence of political communication.

- Growing decline in the EU's popularity, reflecting trends towards disintegration.

- Advanced levels of alienation of citizens from their most significant public institutions / affairs, resulting in political ignorance and depoliticization.

Key features & trends /17

- Near-total commercialisation of national or trans-frontier broadcasting

- Growing popularity of the Internet and interactive communications systems that decentralize / democratise communication for users.

- Proliferation of supply channels of information which segmentalize markets for viewership, thereby, counteracting economic viability, let alone economies of scale.

- Such outcomes entail that TV is losing fast its tight commercial grip of the **central public sphere** - as a cash cow.

- Converse prospects emerge for the re-validation of this medium (TV) as a **political communication forum**.

Opportunities and Challenges /18

- Broadband on-line networks, in combination with new media and the wide-spread use of the Internet, generate a socio-economic and political structural transformation, based on this media landscape.

- Naturally, 'point-to-multipoint' and 'one-way mass media' as 'traditional TV', are obsolesced and are gradually being phased out.

- ICT-afforded **interactivity** has restructured irrevocably the **relation** between **senders** and **receivers**.

Shift in Relation between Senders & Receivers /19

- The **transformation** of the **economic role** of **TV** opens up space for its emancipation from commercialisation.

- It invites the reclaiming of this medium by polity, society and culture.

- TV remains still the most attended / popular medium worldwide.

- TV possesses always a **political centrality** and sui generis importance.

Central Visibility Plus Interactivity /20

- The shift in the function of TV may be an opportunity. TV can gain by converting into a veritable **public interactive agora** for dialogue and participation.
- Why and How?
- TV remains supreme in **centralising visibility**. Now it may emerge as a **reciprocal, inclusive** medium, by incorporating interaction, synergies, 'co-authorship' between producers and viewers/users.
- A converged multilaterally interactive TV, will for the first time ever realize *communications rights* in significant scale.
- Viewers-users-citizens, thus, acquire possibilities for **civic exchanges** and **creative initiatives**.

Publics as Stake-holders /21

- **Benefits** will accrue for citizens, from policy-induced synergies between TV and the Internet, notably regarding political communication.
- First, broadcast issues may originate from **more**, **varied** and **pluralist sources**, which are identifiable and accountable. TV is invigorated both by enriched contents, but also in terms of attracting new constituents with involving new *modi operandi*.
- Secondly, the synergy of these two media safeguards an essential role of a public electronic sphere, rendering both **universal participation** and **common central visibility**.

EU Integration Gains / 22

- Thirdly, the development of a **common transnational European public space**, may contribute to a new momentum for European integration, by involving citizens.

- Advanced TV holds still more potential for participatory communication, if technological options are fully exploited, and if media owners' fears are curbed and viewers' inertia overcome through intent public policies.

Reclaiming & Democratizing Politics & Publicity / 23

- <u>Fourthly</u>, the use of **interactive television** – through **synergies with digital interactive media-** for political communication objectives, can remedy the EU's deep **political crisis** and redress **EU citizens' alienation**.

- A public civic culture and politics may be reclaimed and democratised.

- If the common **EU media deficit** is a constitutive element of the EU's **democratic deficit**, then, the creation of a space for political communication can counteract democracy deficits.

Summing Up / 24

- Radically revamp regulation by sponsoring and boosting of '**Best Communicative Practices**', of the 'must carry type' of intervention! This may prove a path to a worthwhile media harnessing.
- The enemy of the present habitat is that of **communicative chaos** and of **infoflation**.
- A potential cure of it lies in creating / safeguarding new interactive political-communicative and cultural spaces.
- We can fight **entropy** only with **proactive policies**!