

EUROPE OUT OF THE PICTURE

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Abstract

The history of Europe in recent decades, in particular as regards the information and communication strategies of the European institutions for the Europeans in general, has been the story of a misconception that has greatly penalized the consolidation of the European project. This means that if, on the one hand, the European institutions have generally sought to promote and disseminate an idea of progress for Europe, their public media, including broadcasting media, which are heavily funded by the budgets of the Member States, collapse in general. In fact, this results from the subservience of public broadcasting media in general to the dictatorship of the audiences and market strategies, with the 'agrément' of the European Commission itself, contributing not to the affirmation of the Idea of Europe, but to its destruction and the emergence of times of political regression such as we are experiencing at this end of the second decade of the century.

Keywords: Europe, democracy, television, politics, regression.

"The sofa is up against the door, she's not leaving"
Iain Duncan Smith
Tory MP (22/5/2019)

The quote above from Brexiter Duncan Smith refers to the crisis arising from the resignation of British Prime Minister Theresa May on the eve of the European Parliament elections in the United Kingdom on 23 May 2019. The perfectly surreal nature of the current situation and of this quote are perturbing enough in themselves. Not only do they reflect the degradation of politics in Great Britain and the European Union, but they portray a schizophrenic image of Brexit itself.

They achieve this by way of a mordant satire of contemporary politics in real time, at a time when comedy is rapidly transforming into tragedy and into something that portends to be fatal to the European project.

It has long been foretold that the idea of a great European house has been slowly wafting away as the international order in consequence risks collapse. If we wanted to explain to an alien recently arrived on Earth, we could do so in a simplified manner, with two or three questions and one answer: What has led to the strong resurgence of the far right in Europe in recent years? Who supported the war in Iraq and triggered Islamic radicalism and the appearance of Daesh? Who mortgaged the concept of Europe and the European cultural identity? Who has been leading the European project in recent decades in its descent into caricature? There is a common denominator in these questions: The European Union.

Which leads us to a true paradox. Being pro-European today most likely means pulling support away from those who, while professing to hold the same position, have been spending the whole of recent decades governing Europe and simultaneously stifling it and even silently digging its grave. In Europe, today, particularly but not exclusively in the countries of the south, a serious democratic crisis took place during the years of economic crisis. Distrust in institutions has risen sharply as have negative opinions on the part of citizens of the democratic, social and political experience in the post-crisis period of 2007-2008 (Fernandes, 2019).

Might the only option for these European citizens be to opt for an active non-alignment intended to help save this European project from rigor mortis? Or is it already too late? Today we are witnessing the disintegration into new "superdiversities" and a potential interculturalism which are turning us into a community of strangers, even zombies, both European and non-European. The streets of Europe have been abandoned and the "community of destinies", solidarity and cohesive belonging have been deregulated (Giddens, 2014:8). All of this has led us to a sort of dead end whose final wall carries a plaque reading

"RIP EU". António Barreto's description (2019) of Europe as a "construction of nothing" seems to make sense to me.

For Barreto, in this strange community, the emergence of the new despotisms, "of irrational and nationalistic populism" is clearly seen: "Both will be able to demolish the Union and destroy freedom." Today, critics of this Europe without an idea, with neither head nor legitimacy, far surpass that predicted by George Steiner in 2004, in his essential reflection - *The Idea of Europe*. The future had been delineated: Europe has traded in its values and even worse, its cultural heritage, to the "despotism of the mass market and marketed stardom" (Steiner, 2005: 54). All we receive in return is the mere threat of the continual "weariness" that Edmund Husserl warned us that European man was subject to. The irony of the current situation, as Jan Zielonka (2018) pointed out, is that "those who have led to the chaos are being tasked with restoring order."

Fatigue

In fact, within recent decades, the West and Europe have allowed a political and social paradigm to arise that is equivalent to a kind of neural pathology: a society of fatigue (Han, 2010). Society is suffering from extreme levels of attention deficit regarding what is taking place. We have collective amnesia. We are depressed, made up of a community of strangers who are either engaged in mobbing, or are burnt out, who can no longer tell memory from forgetfulness, and cannot even recognize their own cultural heritage. In short, Europe tripped up at a crossroads, perhaps running the risk of engaging in assisted suicide without even realizing it.

Within the throes of death, something still stirs. The Other (the immigrant or the refugee) has ceased to be the stranger. Otherness is now seen, rather, as just different, more as "a burden to society than as a threat" (Han, 2010: 12). This late-modern, post-disciplinary contemporary society, anchored in production, work, and hysteria, has created its monsters, who live the paradoxical freedom of being recognised for their contributions to production, but that, in practice,

turn the individual into a productive subject, into a depressed and violent person, an *animal laborans*, an "exhausted soul" (Han, 2010: 21). The new economies of attention – ranging from media and political pollution to the toxicity of social networks, in addition to all the related multitasking, are nothing more than a regression based on hyperattention that bewilders and distracts, nothing but a fateful hyperactivity / passivity. In this context, time, the *vita contemplativa*, resonance, reciprocity, serenity, are the elements of deceleration, only they can avoid "the depressive fatigue of the Self" (Han, 2010: 47), its acceleration, or the "alienating fatigue" and the exhaustion of the system.

Kukutani (2018) cited Hannah Arendt and her work *Origins of Totalitarianism*, in regards to the resurgence of the beast in the monster's belly, the womb of the so-called western democracies, which had earlier been identified by Arendt when looking at the crisis of citizens' rights and by extension at the very concept of the late nineteenth century nation-state. From that point to the restriction of freedom, rights and pluralism, to the imposition of propaganda and bureaucracy as a form of domination, where administration gradually replaces or limits in a prophetic fashion the power and legitimacy of the executive, is one small step. Now is the time, above all, to reflect deeply and seriously, to think in an unfettered manner, without fear or preconception, about what is at the origin, where the monster is truly born, where it is recycled and reborn. This place is the state of deregulation, of iniquity, of the spread of corruption and of special interests, of corrupted information and data, of the kidnapping of the field of mediation and of the media, in short, the field of the failed democracies, the belly where the beast reproduces once again.

This cyclical rebirth of the monster, and the potential horror associated with it, takes place when the populist fiction overrides the precarious (dis)equilibrium of Western democracies. It comes about in a well-publicized fashion and lending a certain amount of legitimation to proto-totalitarian political models that are continually rising up throughout the world. It invokes narratives that are unrecognizable by civil experience, yet are propagated by the media and now, especially, by social networks, and which are dragging societies back to the

unpredictable. Among the various causes contributing to this reversal are, in particular, a progressive weakening of the media as the traditional guardians of information, the marked diminishment and precariousness in the field of journalism along with the rise of the algorithmic model of gatekeeping, the associated phenomena of polarization and political regression, as well as the yielding of civil virtue to fatigue.

There is no doubt that democratic fatigue (Appadurai, 2017) has taken root. The question that arises, at a certain moment, especially in the post war period, which is considered to be the media era par excellence: Has there ever been democracy without fatigue, democracy with a capital D, with full civil virtue and full citizen participation, with full transparency and scrutiny of public affairs and of the *Res publica*, within a state built on the model of parliamentary democratic representation? For example, when we look at the history of the relationship between the media and democracy in recent decades in the West, the balance is critical. In Portugal, we need only retreat back to the period immediately following the 25th of April and the heated summer that followed. The media at that time had clearly been hijacked by partisan politics and from that moment forward, nothing extraordinary or radically different might have taken place had it not been for the spread of those groups who hijacked to new, national and foreign interests, economic powers, etc.

The democratic experience, as we know it, generally includes within its own genesis, construction and development, its own corruption, its self-degradation, and its own fatigue. This happens, first of all, as a result of mechanisms inhibiting self-evaluation and external scrutiny, while they also restrict transparency. Then, for this reason, it pulls into itself, phenomena of occult powers, of traffic of influence, partisan cronyism, political and economic patronage, corruption, in short, the slow, cyclical and continuous corrosion and decrepitude of the democratic system.

And all has become even more complex in the age of the networks. In her article "Hell after Paradise", Zeynep Tufekci (2018), based on her investigation into the entanglements between big data and social media from the political and

sociological points of view, posed the key issue in a preliminary fashion. In a short space of time, between the so-called Arab Spring and the arrival on stage of Cambridge Analytica, we have switched from an age of hope for social networks and for political change that might deepen the experience of citizenship and we have been forced to recognise multiple cases of the subversion of the very principles of democracy.

The famous cover of the MIT Technology Review of January 2013 following Obama's 2012 second election announced, "Big Data Will Save Politics". Yet it was already definitely outdated by the same strategies of microtargeting that the same candidate had used in 2008 and 2012. Tufekci argued that the new technological and political experiment was, however, to become a "fatal combination" for dictators as well. They redefined options that now surpassed the level of proto-deliberativism to achieve a state of post-truth, dedicated to the tracking of vulnerabilities, polarization, and the disinformation of voters. She posits that there are several causes for this reversal, namely: i) the "weakening" of the media as traditional guardians of information; ii) the clickbait era of the new gatekeepers; iii) the enervation of local journalism; iv) the phenomenon of polarization and echo chambers; and, v) the exploitation of "weak digital security in the U.S". In her words, "It was not Russia that created conditions for social mistrust, weak institutions and distant elites ..." (Tufekci, 2018: 48). And she listed the main mistakes of the U.S.: the Iraq War, the 2008 financial collapse, health system and insurance, responses to the climate crisis, Congressional lobbying, tax havens, and the fragility of internet anti-trust measures, etc. Another issue might be worth adding: Facebook's mission to make the world more open and connected, yet more dependent on the platform's most important asset, the resale of users' attention (and private data).

Regression

From the paradox between the acceleration of technology and the regression of both politics and the democratic experience, a new "disinformative" order is

arising together with the complex phenomenon of polarization which has been created by counterintelligence centres with the intermediation of the so-called "alternative media" (Horaczek, 2019) of the far right. Great digital platforms have arrived as well. They were introduced into Western politics at the beginning of the new century and have gone on to dissuade debate and freedom of information, to restrict and fence in critical public spheres, and repress any hint of civil virtue or diversity of cultural expression. Thus, in addition to the model of reciprocity and to the forms of relationship that provoke a resonant response, we are now witnessing most of all empty, or mute forms of relationship or those that only reinforce people's current convictions.

Hartmut Rosa (2010) pointed out that the acceleration of time and technology, the control of the virtual and the new systems of mediation, contain in themselves the embryos of a new form of totalitarian domination by way of the web they weave. They recenter the post-modern condition exactly around a new "nature" based on data bases (Lyotard, 1979), social acceleration, models of inequality and uncertainty (Innerarity, 2018), and regression, all of which may lead to "democracy fatigue" (Appadurai, 2017). All this takes place amid the late capitalism of globalization, in which culture is diluted by economics. The "disintegration of the social" takes place along with the unregulated acceleration of technology. The association between the creation of wealth and the growth of inequality can also be seen as a consequence of asymmetric and deregulated technological development.

On the other hand, classical models of pluralism and of contradiction in the media are now at a new crossroads. The new situations of the rise of the far right-wing media seek to recenter processes and to lead to new principles of exclusion, new strategies for conquering ethno-national sovereignty by smothering intellectual and cultural dissidence. With the populist reversal, the Other is rejected, and this syndrome of democratic fatigue is imposed in a context sometimes referred to as "post-democratic" (Appadurai, 2017).

Mediarchy

It is patently obvious that the fields of communications – media, news media, and advertising – have become superimposed within in this complex global crisis. Alternative facts and fake news have added a new ideology – that of clickbait – and its replicants: bots, chatbots, and all the troll factories in the world that use Twitter and Facebook as surrogate mothers, such as terrorist platforms, political mafias and cyberwarriors, which make use of strategies to attract attention and destabilize geopolitics. Those who make use of clickbait have no concern for either content or ethics. What matters to them is to maximize the quantitative effect of this unscrupulous click economy.

Against all expectations, fifty years after the creation of the Internet, politics and fraud have rediscovered each other in more highly complex technological environments supported by sophisticated algorithmic models and Artificial Intelligence. They are colliding with classical democratic values, in particular with the transparency of democracy, freedom of expression and information, and pluralism. Hence, the fears of the critics of technological acceleration – from Orwell (1949) to Mumford (1963), from Ellul (1964) to Rosa (2010) – and their warnings about the potential emergence of technological tyranny over humanity are perhaps more current than ever before.

Stiegler (2011), for example, taught us that mass culture is mainly at the service of capturing and destroying attention. It seeks to disseminate the everyday censorship of the plurality of voices and cultural expressions. It serves as a regime designed to deter communication and normalize consensus by way of a "mediarchy" (Citton, 2017) intended to maintain a permanent state of denial and manipulation of information. It was the model of manufacturing consent that was dependent on dominant interest groups, and it led to the degradation of the democratic experience and evolved into our recent examples of political polarization and proto-fascist populisms now in the midst of our digital age.

The concept of "mediarchy", was proposed by Yves Citton. He argued that the performative power of the media prevails over democracy. It encompasses the

models of perception of the world included within these systems of mediation and the accumulation of power and capacities to act. Moreover, it also reconfigures the specific structure of the media in a prescriptive dimension of this performative device that controls expression and representations of the world. The media, thereby, shapes our view of facts and events and conditions our perceptions and behavior. Today's mediated conditioning has reached a worrisome dimension, especially in the digital sphere, with its so-called filter bubbles, the echo chambers that have created the greatest phenomena of political polarization in history.

This is how the risk that the media might evolve into tyranny is coming back under debate in the West, along with a reflection on potential new holocausts. Take a look at the post-truth question. As Timothy Snyder (2017) rightly pointed out, post-truth is largely the announcement of pre-fascism. It is a growing model of communication for this digital age that is based on denying both memory and the event, in favor of false narratives constructed and disseminated automatically by the new populisms, in order to denigrate facts, political opponents, or history itself. Around the contemporary issue of truth and the media, the author focuses on another central theme of his work, that alternative facts and the persecution by the populists of both the transparency of information and the ethics of journalism together with post-truth "reestablish(es) precisely the fascist attitude to the truth" (p. 57). Snyder is also highly critical of the system of the media. He argues that the media basically "go along with the real events of the present day" (2017: 73), subscribing to a contemporary critical lineage – from Steiner to Habermas – that associates the media with the democratic crisis.

In addition to the fatigue of European citizens in relation to the EU bureaucracy, as demonstrated both by recent electoral abstention and the fact that the same bureaucracy failed to take up identity issues and defend cohesion and European cultural heritage, Europe and the European media also failed to deal well with the 2015 migrant crisis (Georgiou, 2019). Moreover, they have also failed to respond to the trend towards populism, from Orbán to Kaczynski, from Brexit to Trump, notwithstanding all the previously mentioned issues (i.e. the invasion of

Iraq, the subprime crisis, etc). Hence it has been said that "what fuels populism today is a crisis of the traditional media" (Sousa, 2019).

Europe out of the picture

Gianni Baget Bozzo (1986), a former Italian member of the European Parliament and author of one of the first reports on the communications strategy of the EEC at that time, pointed out as early as the 1980s that Community initiatives were being received by Europeans with indifference and mistrust. He argued that European institutions were underestimating the common cultural ties among European citizens and suggested as a possible solution that greater reliance be placed on the European "message" rather than random news and that the most appropriate means of communication should be used (Aldrin and Utard, 2008). The essential question, from our point of view, might be that pointed out by Valentini and Nesti (2010: 59) who stated that it was decisive that the "ifs" and "how" of EU initiatives "take into consideration cultural factors in setting up communication strategies that foster dialogue within and outside Member States and whether culture can be seen as a vehicle for mutual understanding, trust and a common sense of belonging. In this respect, a shared culture could be the paradigm that boosts citizens' support for the EU project."

Perhaps under the influence of Gianni Bozzo, European deputy Francisco Lucas Pires (1992) issued a similar opinion shortly thereafter. The former Portuguese Member of the European Parliament remarked in his booklet that European integration was coming together in the material and moral fields but was far from the achieving any unity "in terms of political discourse and the multinational dialogue about itself. In regard to journalism, (...) the European community is still more news than message (...)". He concluded by pointing out that it would be good for the EEC "to have the means and the capacity to start by representing itself to itself".¹

¹ Francisco Lucas Pires, *A Imprensa e a Europa*, Lisbon, 1992, Author's edition.

As European Commissioner for Relations with Parliament, Culture and Audiovisual, João de Deus Pinheiro was one of the first European leaders to search out solutions, as early as the 1990s, to the EU's crisis of communication with its citizens. In response to his proposal, the Commission acknowledged the need to remedy the problem "as a matter of utmost urgency" considering that "the information deficit is part of the democratic deficit", and taking a position regarding its new information and communication policy, identifying the following main problems:

"The weakness of the overall strategy and the lack of coordination; failure to appreciate the importance of information and communication policy; lack of proper identification of the specific requirements of individual audiences; to surfeit of information but of insufficient quality not always suited to the needs of the public".²

Subsequently, on several occasions, the European Parliament called on the Commission to set up a common strategy for information and communication, by way of resolutions on Information and Communication Policy in the European Union (14/05/1998) and on the Information and Communication Strategy in the European Union (14/03/2001). In mid-2001, the Commission Communication on "A new framework for cooperation initiatives in EU information and communication policy" was published (CCE, Brussels, 27.6.2001.COM (2001) 354 final). It set out the main strategic guidelines for EU communications, including cooperation between the institutions and the Member States, establishing the Commission's Interinstitutional Group for Information and Communication Services (Commission and Parliament), arrangements for monitoring and assessing impact, and finally the means for providing information and communication activities. Television and radio broadcasts and information for journalists were highlighted as "one of the priorities of the European institutions", in order to inform citizens by audiovisual means. Cooperation with Euronews was set up so that various information programmes might be produced, and this cooperation was to be renewed for a period of three years. Finally, Europe by Satellite (EBS) was to provide live coverage of the institutions'

² See: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-93-538_en.htm

work and news briefs. This European information and communication policy was created in 2002 to "close the gap between the Union and the public ... to create a Europe that is close to the people, that is familiar and meaningful to them" (COM (2001) 354:3). To some extent the aim was also to facilitate the process of building Europe, as was mentioned in a Community guideline that advocated the dissemination of information that might be more qualitative and strategic than quantitative (COM 281 (2002)).

A crucial new moment for the definition of policies was the Commission's new Communication about the implementation of the information and communication strategy for the European Union (COM (2004) 196 final). Information and communication strategy was meant to refer to the framework for communicating with the general public (rather than all the Commission's information measures), as set out in the Commission's communication of 2 July 2002 [COM(2002)350 final]. The main objectives of this strategy included improving the image of the EU and its institutions, as well as disseminating the knowledge and understanding of its missions, and, above all, establishing a dialogue with citizens. The fact is that in the Communications of 2001 (354 final) and 2004 (196 final), the Commission appeared to remain unaware of the existence of a public European audiovisual system. This last communique said that (p. 17): "The great growth in radio and television broadcasting (only EUR 15 there were more than 1,100 national television channels and 1,900 local or regional ones...makes it more cumbersome to use." Would the Commission consider that in order to reach a "large audience" with the "limited resources relative to the costs of achieving such goal" would imply "using a critical mass of means aimed at multiplier targets". There was no acknowledgement of the existence of the highly relevant European public television and radio services, which, curiously, have always been side lined relative to European information and communication strategies.

In their 2004 study "In Search of Europe - A Cross-National Comparative Study of the European Union in National Television News", Claes H. de Vreese and Jochen Peter carried out a cross-national comparative content analysis of the coverage of European Union politics in British, Danish, Dutch, French, and

German television news. The goal was to establish a baseline for television coverage of the EU in a non-event context. In most of the countries studied, EU politics were marginally represented on national television news. They found that "public broadcasting outlets did not report more frequently about the EU than did private outlets. However, the EU was more prominently covered in public than in private television. In other words, the visibility of EU affairs was equally low in both public television and commercial television, but public outlets attributed more importance to EU affairs than did commercial television."(P.16). The most significant conclusion, however, was that the Europeanization of television news coverage is more illusion than reality. The findings also suggested that there is no European public sphere in mainstream television coverage.

A year later (2005), Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström, head of Institutional Relations and the Communication Strategy, met European broadcasters, asking them to "put Europe in the Picture". Two hundred broadcast editors and correspondents from all over Europe gathered in Brussels for a two-day consultative conference entitled: Putting Europe in the Picture. At that time, this was the main picture, there was limited exposure of the EU in bulletins, but with significant differences between European broadcasters:

"It's time to get away from the old approach of putting out the same dull and uniform messages to everyone in Europe. It's time to find out what people actually need to know, and to start giving them the information they need in lively language that makes sense to them, using the media they are familiar with. You the broadcasters are crucial to the success of this strategy."³

Wallström proposed regular meetings between the broadcasters and EU institutions to assess the changing needs of both sides and to highlight the best TV concepts to deal with European affairs. She sought to encourage the development of European TV by using attractive formats for putting the message across about Union policies. The objective of the conference was to establish

³ "Europe in the Picture", IP/05/461, Brussels, 20 April 2005.

how the EU might help broadcasters report European affairs more effectively.⁴ Some of the conclusions and recommendations of senior broadcasters and online editors, participants in the conference held in Brussels (2005) were as follows:

“What Europeans want is what they get: i) 67% of Europeans want more TV information programs about Europe; ii) 77% of Europeans consider TV information programs about Europe superficial and of poor quality. What do most Europeans expect from TV information programs about Europe? They also want to see information that is relevant to their daily lives, put into perspective in relation to the broader context. They do not want to see politicians' faces...”⁵

Several years later, the Commission published "A citizens' summary" (2008)⁶ where they conceded that "One of the factors currently undermining genuine citizens' information and debate on the European Union is the very limited coverage of EU information in the audiovisual media. Most Europeans are interested in news about the European Union (64% according to the Eurobarometer of March 2007). Figures indicated that they would prefer to receive this information on their favourite TV and radio channels. However, the EU-related information provided by national audiovisual media currently takes up less than 10% of the time allocated to national news."

To address this deficit, the Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström presented an audiovisual action plan, which sought to provide more information on European issues to the citizens by way of the audiovisual media. In response to the problem, the Commission launched the Communicating Europe through Audiovisual Media initiative. Brussels drew up a three-step approach to achieve this goal. Firstly, it aimed to contribute to greater and more sustainable coverage of EU affairs by providing audiovisual media professionals with quality information and material. To that end, the EU information services were to

⁴ It was conducted in collaboration with the main European broadcasting associations, including the EBU – European Broadcasting Union.

⁵ PUTTING EUROPE IN THE PICTURE. Findings and recommendations of senior broadcasters and online editors, participants in the conference held in Brussels on 20-21 April 2005, p. 2. <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/pdf/recommendations.pdf>

⁶ Annex to the Communication to the Commission "Communicating Europe through audiovisual media" SEC(2008)506/2, 24.4.2008.

increase the coverage of EU affairs to help broadcasters supply more information about the EU on European screens and to reinforce the role of the Commission's audio-visual library and audio-visual portal. The services should also encourage audiovisual media professionals to create and take part in European audiovisual networks which would bring together resources to create and broadcast EU-content, while retaining full editorial independence. By supporting co-operation and exchange between broadcasters and offering audio-visual material on major EU events free-of-charge, the Commission was convinced it would be able to bridge this gap. Somewhat later, Margot Wallström (2008) in a talk entitled "Communicating Europe - Mission impossible?" was very clear:

"Communication is a tool for democracy. In democratic societies, citizens need to know what the decision makers actually do and they must have the means to scrutinize them. The right to vote is clearly cornerstone to democracy, but the right to know should be just as important."

Wallstrom laid out the main issues regarding some of the biggest challenges for Europe. Even as she espoused the importance of democracy, transparency and openness, for instance, she challenged her colleagues to think about how to communicate all this efficiently:

"Do we have an information deficit? I do not think so. There is plenty of information on the EU and how it works. (...) Communication does not happen in an isolated vacuum, but in the public sphere. It is the public sphere of 27 Member States and of 23 languages. And to make it even more complicated: it is the public sphere of 3660 TV channels in Europe, of 25,000 journalists and 480 million citizens. (...) I think that there is a successful way to communicate Europe. It is not a "mission impossible", but a challenge and a task not to be solved via a simple Brussels directive. For me it is 'mission irresistible' – and a never-ending task."

In his paper "European Public Spheres and the EU's Communication Strategy: From Deficits to Policy Fit?" Markus Thiel (2008) spoke about his analysis of the communication and information deficits between the Union's institutions, the national governments, and the mass media. He made several suggestions as to

how the Union might improve its communication policy. "The Union is well advised in localizing news coming out of Brussels in the already existing and popularly used national media channels. Unfortunately, the efforts of Commissioner Wallström do not indicate that important mass media outlets are considered necessary by the Union."

Against this background, Thiel proposed supporting public television as a means to forward these goals. If the European Public TV, since the TSF Directive (1989), had not served to promote the identity / diversity of the great European house, the European cultural heritage, and the idea of Europe, what role did a European public service television fulfil? Speaking on the subject "Putting Europe in the Picture", Schwarz argued that programmes dedicated to EU affairs alone were not effective: the European dimension had to be integrated into thematic programmes and domestic news (A. Schwarz, RFI). However, what was truly incredible was the lack of a clear commitment on the part of public European broadcasters to put Europe in their picture. How might Europe, after so many years, sacrifice the implementation of its communication strategy, its main forum, the fundamental network of public radio and television broadcasters?

European Parliament resolutions and the principles laid down in the Green Paper on Audiovisual (1984) and the Audiovisual Directive have set up the European system of public television as a strategic platform for the assimilation of the European project and the idea of Europe. The main issue, however, is that the Brussels bureaucrats have never conceded this fact. The strategic goal of the Audiovisual Directive was clear. In order to reverse the predominance of North American television shows and films on European screens, Europe needed: (i) freedom of movement of European television programmes in the internal market, and (ii) broadcasting quotas that would require European operators to allocate more than half of their broadcasting time to European content.

As we have pointed out previously (Cádima, 2007: 11-12), European audiovisual policy, as regards public audiovisuals, and in order to follow key principles of the Directive, should be based on the primacy of culture over market forces and on European cultural heritage and diversity as a fundamental cultural strategy for

the consolidation of the idea of Europe, in particular through the widespread and consistent dissemination of the European audiovisual sector in the Member States. However, the European Parliament itself has found the opposite to be true: '(...) the share of European works is mostly filled by national works'. No assertive monitoring of European operators' adherence to the TVSF Directive has been undertaken, as was explicitly stated in the European Commission's own assessments of the application of Articles 4 and 5 of the Directive (PE 2004).⁷ Nevertheless, no substantive changes have yet been put into practice.

The European Parliament has more recently taken up the topic again. A report from the European Parliament of 2013, about the implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (PE 2013)⁸, regarding the promotion of European audiovisual content, called attention to the following (paragraph 31): "(...) while the majority of Member States respect the rules on the promotion of European works, priority is still given to national works, and the percentage of independent works broadcast on television is declining. "In paragraph 33 of the same document, the European Parliament also requested that "the obligation to provide information on European works must include at least a breakdown by category (cinematographic works, television productions of fiction and non-fiction, shows and entertainment programs) and means of distribution and calls on Member States to provide relevant data on this subject."

As has been pointed out previously, this question is fundamental and has been brought up by multiple European researchers and / or parliamentarians over recent decades: Batz, Barzanti, Garcia, Cádima, Thiel, Janssen, and others. Thus, it is hard to accept that, on the one hand, the Commission has abandoned assessments⁹ and, on the hand, that the European Parliament has apparently

⁷ European Parliament resolution on the application of Articles 4 and 5 of Directive 89/552 / EEC "Television without Frontiers", as amended by Directive 97/36 / EC, for the 2001-2002 period [2004/2236 (INI)].

⁸ Report on the implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (2013) (2012/2132 (INI)), Committee on Culture and Education, 2013.(2012/2132(INI)), da Comissão da Cultura e da Educação, 2013.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A7-2013-0055+0+DOC+PDF+V0//PT>

⁹ See:

http://ec.europa.eu/archives/information_society/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/implementation/reports/index_en.htm

dropped the issue of European production quotas in its monitoring of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. The EU's own communication strategy is now subsumed under the "European Single Market Strategy". The position closest to the original concept is the action plan on misinformation within the strategic communication working group for the East (East StratCom), a EU and NATO initiative dealing with strategic communication in crisis situations and the "reaction" to cybercrises. There is, as well, a social media network campaign about the European Citizens' Initiative¹⁰. What is more, the EU Strategic Communication Plan (2016-2020)¹¹, while recognizing that "communication does not take place in a vacuum, but in a complex environment of 28 national public spaces and an emerging European Public Space" (page 4), fails not only not mention the PSM (Public Service Media) of the Member States as it equally ignores the traditional public television service in Europe.

Meanwhile, a new revision of the Audiovisual Directive was launched in 2015¹² aimed at updating the existing rules for the provision of audiovisual media services in Europe. In so far as the promotion of production is concerned, the new document required on-demand service providers (such as Netflix) to promote the production and distribution of European works, stating that at least 30% of their catalogues would have to be made up of European content. Articles 16 and 17 of the 2010 Directive requiring "television broadcasters to reserve a majority proportion of their broadcasting time" were maintained. However, the Commission also insisted on doing away with key requirements that such works are from third States, and not from national programming in each Member State. National content thus counts statistically as the production / distribution of European content, leaving national broadcasting operators and their audiences to focus in on their own national production, which is basically television broadcasting, or in other words "teletrash" to a large extent. The EU thus continues its solitary path, outside the potential of its Public Service Media

¹⁰ A UE em 2018 — Relatório Geral sobre a Atividade da União Europeia. (2019). Comissão Europeia. Direção-Geral da Comunicação. <http://europa.eu/general-report/pt>

¹¹ Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020. DG Communication.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/strategic-plan-2016-2020-dg-comm_april2016_en.pdf

¹² EU DIRECTIVE (EU) 2018/1808 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL 14 November 2018 that amended Directive 2010/13/UE. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018L1808&from=EN>

system, giving credence to the critics of this model, who, thirty years after the first audiovisual directive (1989) continue to think basically like Garcia (2007: 2): "There exists a profound anachronism between the EU's chimerical vision of television as a unifying force and what actually takes place in the audiovisual market".

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