Media crisis: innovation without creativity? The case of the Swiss media

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Abstract

In most developed countries, the media has faced a severe crisis. This contribution examines how an innovation process has been going on in the media, but not necessarily in a strong “creative” way. Firstly, we will propose a short literature review to recall fundamental definitions of innovation and their relevancy to analyze media. Innovation theories are linked not only to fundamental authors like Schumpeter, but also to Christensen (disruptive innovation) or Chesbrough. We will show that dominant approaches on innovation can be useful to understand some changes in the media but there are also some limits of such approaches. Secondly we will try to see how changes in the media could be analyzed thanks to a creative perspective. Thirdly we will develop a case study which is the Swiss media. This case is very illustrative since Switzerland is a country where the media is a key industry, considered as essential to democracy, and since the Swiss media is facing a crisis. The paper propose a study of changes in the media based on the idea that an innovation process includes both destruction and innovation. We show that, in [...]
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Abstract
In most developed countries, the media has faced a severe crisis. This contribution examines how an innovation process has been going on in the media, but not necessarily in a strong "creative" way. Firstly, we will propose a short literature review to recall fundamental definitions of innovation and their relevancy to analyze media. Innovation theories are linked not only to fundamental authors like Schumpeter, but also to Christensen (disruptive innovation) or Chesbrough. We will show that dominant approaches on innovation can be useful to understand some changes in the media but there are also some limits of such approaches. Secondly we will try to see how changes in the media could be analyzed thanks to a creative perspective. Thirdly we will develop a case study which is the Swiss media. This case is very illustrative since Switzerland is a country where the media is a key industry, considered as essential to democracy, and since the Swiss media is facing a crisis.
The paper propose a study of changes in the media based on the idea that an innovation process includes both destruction and innovation. We show that, in the case of the Swiss media, particularly the Swiss press, three main trends have appeared: Internet and technological platforms have developed a lot, within a context of globalization, and what we have called a “googlization” of the media. In the Swiss media case, the digital development leads less to new forms of human creativity than, in fact, to a new form of industrial system driven by main actors of communication industries.
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In most developed countries, the media has faced a severe crisis. The revenues of the print press, particularly the daily press, have strongly declined, while traditional radio and television have had to evolve in a new technological and economic context. Simultaneously an innovation process can be observed in the media with the development of online media, the participation of users, such as user generated contents, changes in organizations and journalistic work (integrated newsrooms, etc.)… Now, the media are generally included not only into cultural industries but also into “creative” industries because they are considered as depending on creativity and deriving value from this creativity (see, for example, the classification of cultural and creative industries made by UNESCO (2013) which includes cinema, radio and television). Can we consider that the changes which have concerned the media have favored creativity? This contribution examines how an innovation process has been going on in the media, but not necessarily in a strong "creative" way.

Firstly, we will propose a short literature review to analyze and distinguish the innovation perspective in general, and especially concerning the media, from approaches related to the creative field. Secondly we will take the Swiss media as a case study. This case is very illustrative since Switzerland is a country where the media is a key industry, considered as essential to democracy, and since the Swiss media is facing a crisis combined with innovative elements.

1. INNOVATION: FUNDAMENTAL DEFINITIONS AND RELEVANCY TO ANALYZE MEDIA

1.1. Fundamental definitions of innovation: Schumpeter
Let us recall the main theoretical approaches of innovation (Badillo, 2013) Joseph A. Schumpeter is the key author of the technology push model. He defined innovation as new combinations, with five types of innovation and a general process of “creative destruction”:

“The fundamental impulse that sets and keeps the capitalist engine in motion comes from the new consumers, goods, the new methods of production or transportation, the new markets, the new forms of industrial organization that capitalist enterprise creates. (Schumpeter, 1942, pp. 82-83).

“The opening up of new markets, foreign or domestic, and the organizational development from the craft shop and factory to such concerns as U.S. Steel illustrate the same process of industrial mutation—if I may use that biological term—that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one. This process of Creative Destruction is the essential fact about capitalism. It is what capitalism consists in and what every capitalist concern has got to live in.” (Schumpeter, 1942, p. 83)