



Emmanuel Dubuisson: the candidate newsrooms should discover

In 40 years as a journalist and entrepreneur, in Paris and the regions, I had never met anyone quite like him. My colleagues must take the time to get to know him.

By James Houyez

By dwelling on opinion polls down to their slightest fluctuations, we risk letting name recognition decide whom we speak to. Our role also involves discovering a body of work before its author comes to the forefront of public debate.

In early September, I spent a day with this declared presidential candidate. An hour-long interview supplemented the conversations I had in his company. I was able to observe him, explore the subjects in greater depth and gradually understand what connected them. My astonishment grew as the discussion continued.

Born in Sri Lanka and adopted in France at 6 months old, Emmanuel Dubuisson grew up in a family that has served France. What struck me during our meeting was the depth of his thinking and the attention paid to the human consequences of every choice. I came away with a curiosity I was keen to share. My assessment of the man calls for an examination of his work, with all the freedom of judgement I wish for my colleagues.



Emmanuel Dubuisson

Understanding what the MDRS seeks to build

The MDRS, the Dubuisson Model for Systemic Reorganisation, starts with how things work in practice: a person, a household, a business, a school, a healthcare facility. For each, the needs, resources, responsibilities and funding must be specified. The public accounts are then reconstructed on the basis of these elements.

The order of the reasoning matters. Residents retain their place in the calculations, along with the constraints of their lives. Pay reform also affects the resources of social security bodies, household spending, production and public revenue. The model traces these relationships, taking account of time lags and transition costs.

This attention to the passage from a decision to its effects particularly struck me. The discussion brought economic questions back to their purpose: what an organisation would genuinely enable a person to experience, learn or pass on.

A 12,883-page master dossier

The master dossier contains exactly 12,883 pages, organised around 24 construction modules and 94 operational rules. It brings together the current reference framework, technical registers, historical parameters and appendices. The adopted rules are distinguished from older material to preserve a record of corrections and decisions.

This volume includes the sources, assumptions, the author’s decisions, methods and available simulations. The code and execution results make it possible to trace the checks carried out and the points still to be completed. The reader can thus examine how the reasoning was constructed.

Dubuisson explains that this body of work provides the framework of rules for building macroeconomic and macro-budgetary models: their effects, their repercussions, their interconnections and their transmission through the system, all the way to the population.

He hopes to complete this work within a few months so as to present substantiated and demonstrable models whose assumptions and calculations can be discussed. Simulations exist; the integrated national assessment and the consolidation of funding remain to be completed. It is against these results that the ambition will have to be tested.

Responses to students’ concerns prepared before the clashes

When we met in early September, I had already been able to examine proposals addressing the difficulties facing students that are now at the heart of the tensions. Comparing them with the demands made since then, I see compensatory measures that go further and an approach to people’s circumstances that strikes me as fairer.

These responses existed before the clashes. Implementing them, with the necessary funding, could alleviate a substantial part of the discontent by addressing its material causes. The depth of this strand warrants an article in its own right: that much space would be needed to explain how its elements fit together and assess its scope.

Why I refuse to remain silent

In our country’s present circumstances, can we allow visibility to take the place of competence? We must examine the choices that have led us to our present difficulties and study the options that might better serve our children and grandchildren. For a journalist, giving readers the means to make that judgement entails a particular responsibility.

We know that instructions have been given and that colleagues have received explicit messages threatening them with professional reprisals if they were to cover this subject. In some newsrooms, they are required to write only negative coverage to destroy his credibility, or to publish nothing about him. I am astonished at the efforts being made to prevent a man’s work from being debated, while he is presented as an unknown. Perhaps the question should instead be: ‘But what do they really fear about him if he emerges from the shadows, and what will the consequences be?’

With GlobReport, I am pursuing an international project devoted to the freedom and integrity of the press. I am currently working to set up an NGO to help fellow journalists practise their profession, including in countries facing very serious difficulties, while preserving their independence. This commitment prevents me from accepting silence about what I observe and the accounts entrusted to me.

As independent journalists, we can investigate and publish without waiting for the major titles to open their pages. With freelancers and smaller newsrooms, we can circulate our work among different audiences and find an audience for subjects excluded elsewhere. Let us take up this one with the rigour needed for readers to judge for themselves.

My dear colleagues, let us meet this candidate and scrutinise his work. Our solidarity must enable each of us to inform the public without bowing to the expectations of those in power. I am not asking you to share my impression: I am asking you to take the time to form your own and to let our readers judge.