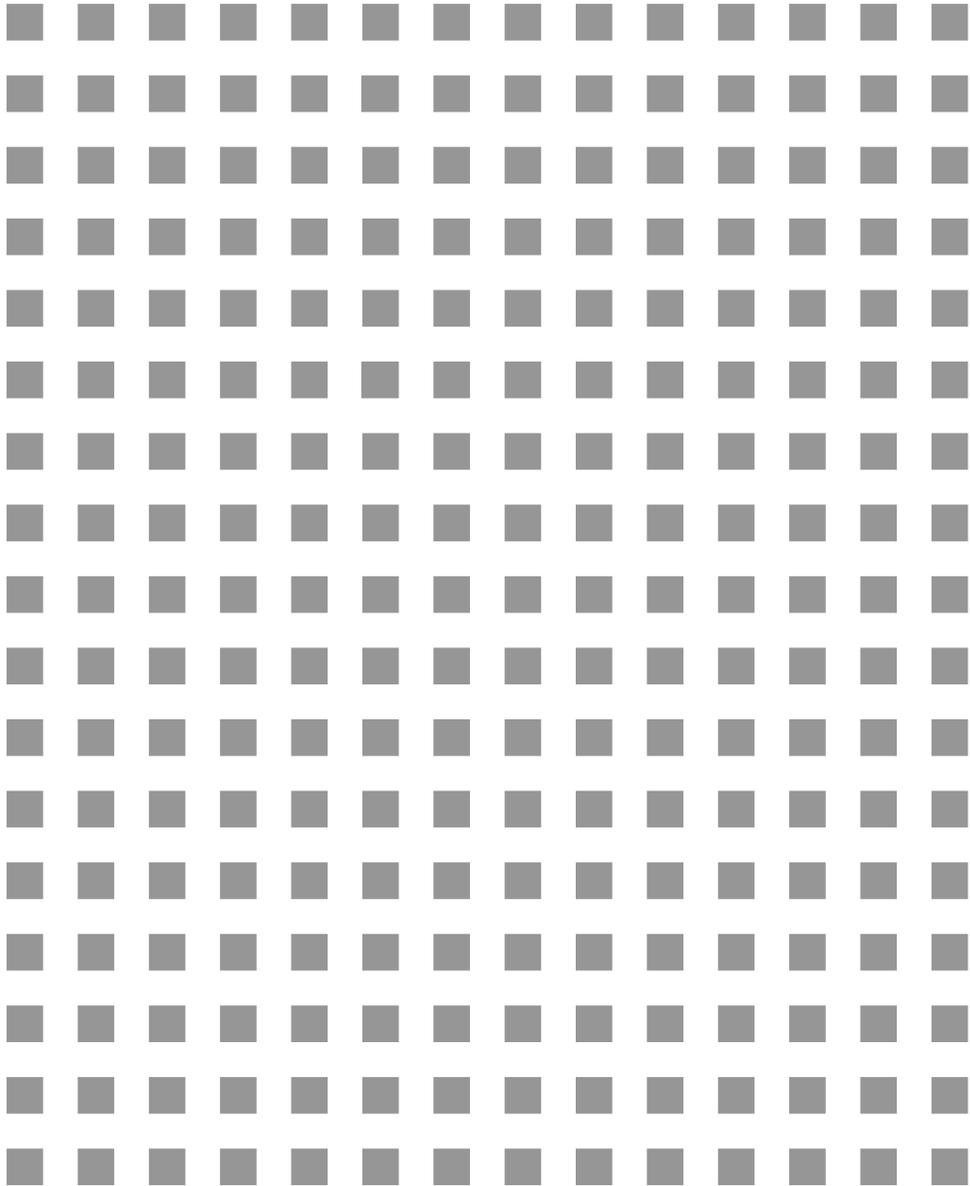


# Book reviews





**Delia Balaban and Ioan Hosu (eds.) (2009). *PR Trend, Society and Communication*. Mittweida: Hochschulverlag, pp. 337, ISBN 978-3-9812499-3-4.**

This volume entitled *PR Trend, Society and Communication* was published both in English and Romanian (the Romanian version was published by Tritonic Publishing House) in the same year. The publication was devoted to the annual scientific event organized by the Communication and Public Relations Department at the Faculty of Political, Administrative, and Communication Sciences of Babes — Bolyai University from Cluj–Napoca. This edition brings together interesting research conducted by Romanian researchers deeply preoccupied by communication studies such as: advertising, journalism, public relations and new media.

The selection of papers published in the issue was made according to the innovation criteria, justifying the book title (“trend”) and the variety of research studies included in it. The book structure obviously proves the variety of topics, which can be very attractive for readers for many reasons. The first part of the collection pays attention to PR and communication studies, while the second one is dedicated to research on advertising. The first section brings to light an interdisciplinary view upon communication approaches and the studies that can be synthetically organized in the following categories: social communication, journalistic discourse, political analysis and new media. Therefore, this review demanded a selection of the most relevant articles for all these scientific fields.

Ioan Hossu emphasized a new direction to the process of social framing by developing the concept of “communitarian space” in the chapter entitled *Community and Communication*. His research relies on a sample provided by the local press that draws a profile both of readers and journalists, considering them part of a community. The chapter covers the relationship between mass media and community at many social levels, which develop new identities by means of technology. The main conclusion of Ioan Hossu’s article is that society should be aware of new media advantages that helps consolidate the local community.

Leading the discussion further into the public relations field, one of the articles, written by Gheorghe-Ilie Fârte, discusses the relationship between creation and destruction as a principle of efficient work of PR practitioners, calling the problem into question even from the title: “Public Relations Practitioners as Agents of Creative Destruction and Creative Cooperation”. The starting point of his research is the theory of a succession of adaptive cycles, structured in four fundamental stages: exploitation, conservation, release and reorganization. The essential aspects focus on what creation and destruction mean from the public relations’ point of view. The release stage is antithetically defined by the author as “a phase of innovation, but also of recession, effort and sacrifice” (p. 52), while creative destruction regards the idea of dynamically adapting to changes. This article is particularly meaningful for Romanian society after the December 1989 Revolution, because it reflects the new cycle society adapted, which consists of

growth, conservation, release and reorganization. The main conclusion of Ioan Hossu's article is that society should use the advantages of new media to consolidate the local community.

Another study that deserves the reader's attention is presented by Ion Chiciudean and George David. Its title is a call to change the view on public relations strategies: *The Role of Communication Planning in Preparing Organizations for Crisis Situations*. Their research relies on the analysis of crisis situations that provides researchers the opportunity to explain how useful prevention and preparation can be: "organizations which properly evaluate the danger of the crisis they may face, set up plans in advance on how to manage the most likely crisis scenarios" (p. 142). The core of this article underlines the responsibility to create a crisis management cell closely followed by a crisis communication plan. At the end of the study, the authors argue that the best solutions for activating a crisis cell are connected to practices that may help people to understand which phases of communication management this process involves.

The complexity of journalistic discourses arises from the challenging title of an article signed by Mirela Lazăr: "Emotionalism in the News Discourses." The main goal of this study is to demonstrate what thematization of suffering leads to, and how media consumers emotionally react to it. Mirela Lazăr's research is based on a sample of 50 news-stories broadcast within awareness campaigns conducted by the Romanian TV channel PRO TV between July 2007 and April 2009. The starting point of this analysis is represented by a stereotyped rhetorical–argumentative strategy applied within a narrative frame, which helps to register the dynamics of emotion. To conclude, the author strongly emphasizes the importance of emotions form the point of view of reality: "In this specific context of the thematization suffering, the television news discourse proposes an understanding of reality through emotionality" (p. 45).

Finally, the last part of the book is dedicated to advertising research, variously discussed from the sociological, anthropological and economic perspectives. Chapters cover interesting debates around essential concepts such as brand management, advertising discourse, archetypes and new media. The first article, suggestively entitled "Valorigraphic Convergences and Divergences of Romanian Youth: A segmentation by the "Q" Method" underlines a young consumer profile based on research conducted by Leo Burnett Agencies in 2007–2008. The three authors directly involved in Leo Study are Dan Petre, Vlad Turtureanu, and Dragoş Iliescu. The most comprehensive part of this article presents the description and importance of four identified segments of young consumers, according to 14 categories of problems related to target interest such as: free time, music, sports and food preferences, health, education, work and career, technology and gadgets, self-characterization, models, influences and values, reading, information and the Internet, emotional life and sex and discrimination. The "Q" methodology provides the results of this research, basically the consumers' segmentation into five categories: the old-

fashioned person, the calculated-ambitious person, the confused pessimist, the opportunist, and the neighbourhood rebel. The study reveals not only the marketing behaviour of the young Romanian target, but also significant information related to social and family lifestyles.

The competition between traditional and new advertising represents the topic of another outstanding paper published in this volume by Mirela Abrudan and Delia Balaban, which bears the title: "Brands and New Media: Swarm Marketing and Social Media Networks." This article comes up with some innovative communication and marketing strategies that can be used for Internet promotion. The main point pays attention to the branding process in terms of using social networks (e.g. Facebook) to promote very well-known brands.

In conclusion, this volume offers a comprehensive range of academic contributions, all of which are based on professional expertise and various research methods that prove the high quality of the researchers.

*Mădălina Moraru*

UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

**Marta Dyczok and Oxana Golutvina (eds.) (2009). *Media, Democracy and Reform: The Post-Communism Experience: (Interdisciplinary Studies on Central and Eastern Europe 6)*. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 246, ISBN 978-3-0343-0311-8 pb.**

The collapse of communism that started twenty years ago in Central and Eastern European countries signaled the beginning of a new era of political, economic and social transformations. The common communist past and contemporary development of power and market relationships as well as changes in value systems created both single and diverse post-communist space. In the *Media, Democracy and Freedom* Marta Dyczok and Oxana Gaman-Golutvina brought together an international and multidisciplinary group of scholars to explore how the media and public spheres have developed in post-communist countries and what challenges these countries face on their way to freedom and democracy.

The authors of the book have solid academic and research experience, especially in political science/post-communism research. Marta Dyczok is an Associate Professor of History and Political Science at the University of Western Ontario, author of two books, including *The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees* (2000). Oxana Gaman Golutvina teaches Political Science at the Moscow Institute of Foreign Relations and Higher School of Economics. She is also a Vice-president of the Russian Association of Political Science and author of over 150 publications, including her book *Political Elites in Russia* which was recognized the best political science book in Russia in 2007.



In 2000–2004, Ukrainian “elites believed that media is an important tool for shaping public opinion and containing protests”. However, the reality was just the opposite — the media “bandwagoned” on the protest movement of the electorate. Marta Dyczok agrees that it is questionable that most of the media really shared the values of protesters. Channel 5, which “played a key role in providing an alternative point of view and became the most watched TV channel during the Orange revolution” quickly lost its progressive standing and standards and as a consequence — ratings as well. The only enduring and visible achievement was the destruction of what the author calls “an official mediated political communication system”. Therefore, describing events in Ukraine, Dyczok concludes that Ukrainian media should not be perceived as an important instrument of power as “control of the media system does not necessarily guarantee control over societal attitudes or behavior”.

What is especially interesting, is that the volume highlights how in some cases sustainable political cultural models remain in the mass media field. Writing about the role of the media in Color Revolutions that took place not just in Ukraine, but also in Serbia, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, Vicken Cheterian concludes that these revolutions failed to establish a new culture and independent journalism. Masha Lipman also mentions the “Soviet-style constituency” of the media sphere in Russia. Furthermore, most of the authors demonstrate how the post-communist journalist quite often continues to carry on communist traditions. Finally, Gaman-Golutvina summarizes: “as in old communist times, journalists at the moment are also more inclined not to public information but rather to formation of definite opinions and orientations” (p. 238).

Examination of the role the media play in a larger social and political context, elaborated by the book authors, is especially helpful for understanding the changes occurring in the dynamic post-communist world. Having addressed post-communist experience through a multidisciplinary, diverse and multidimensional approach, the authors come to the main conclusion — the *media do matter* in post-communist transformations. However, empirical findings show us that today’s media rarely take the role of independent actor, “creator of politics” or autonomous power in the post-communist region. They continue to be a tool for business and political power-holders in post-communist countries. Finally, “they are not the masters of the discourse”, as Oxana Gaman-Golutvina writes. Playing mostly a passive role that is quite different from the original and “normatively” defined watchdog function of the media, they still remain a site where state-society relations are contested and where struggles for power become especially visible. Besides looking at media systems we find an effective framework to study state-society relations, analyze the importance of the weight of the past, usefulness and limitations of the comparative perspectives.

Anastasiia Grynko

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF “KYIV-MOHYLA ACADEMY” IN KYIV, UKRAINE

**Mihai Coman (ed.) (2010). *Models of, Models for Journalism and Communication/Modèles de, Modèles pour le Journalisme et la Communication*. Bucharest: Ars Docendi Publishing House-University of Bucharest, pp. 555, ISBN 978-973-558-515-0.**

The volume edited by Mihai Coman, *Models of, Models for Journalism and Communication/Modèles de, Modèles pour le Journalisme et la Communication* is the only bilingual work (English and French) in communication studies ever published in Romania that brings together leading scholars of the field — Peter Gross, Karol Jakubowicz, Elihu Katz, Timothy Kenny, Bernard Mieke, Pierre Moeglin, Eric Rothenbuhler, Colin Sparks — and other foreign researchers from 14 countries, in an exchange of ideas about “transformations that occurred in the media and communication landscapes after the fall of Communism, in 1989” (p. 9). This book covers an important area of research which highlights the need for a closer understanding of journalism cultures, popular culture, media and public sphere, multimedia, public relations, advertising and corporate communications. Broadly speaking, the book presents 40 interdisciplinary studies of researchers participating at an international conference devoted to the 20 years since the creation of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication Studies from the University of Bucharest.

Peter Gross and Timothy Kenny’s chapter *The Media Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe Is Over; Long Live the Transformation* opens the exciting field of debate about the consequences of political, economic and social transition in Central and Eastern European (CEE) journalism. According to the authors the journalism promoted by the media from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe has lost its chance to take on Western model standards. Basically, in the last 20 years, the media in post-communist countries have failed to become a truly incorruptible, uncensored, non-political, non-partisan and independent institution. Nevertheless, Gross and Kenny concludes, “[t]oday’s journalism in CEE countries has completed its transformation; it has not emulated its Western counterparts but has naturally evolved into it in a not-so-smooth historical continuum, despite its relatively brief (but also influential) communist detour” (p. 19). Along the same lines, the work of Colin Sparks — *Theories of Transition* — proposes an interdisciplinary approach to the term “transitology” (an expression that refers to “societies which, in the last third of the twentieth century, moved away from a variety of dictatorial regimes” (p. 91)), that has been imported from political science and has been placed in the media sphere. Sparks argues that transitology should be considered in the case of Central and Eastern Europe as opposed to the model of democratic governance and market economy. From this perspective, very few countries in Central and Eastern Europe can be classified as authentic democracies with functioning market economies. Using the typology of B. Berg-Schlosser (2004), which creates a scale of post-communist democratization (for example

A-type states, which have reached or are about to achieve the ideal of democracy, such as Poland or Slovakia or D-type states — Ukraine, Belarus — which are non-democracies), the author explains why the media systems of CEE countries have gone through different transitional processes. However, the conclusions drawn by Colin Sparks do not converge with those of Peter Gross and Timothy Kenny, who believe that the transformation of media systems of Central and Eastern Europe has not yet finished, on the contrary “[t]ransition, and its faults, are likely to be with us for some time yet, and so too are all the problems it brings for the mass media” (p. 103).

A call to change the media system is the main topic of analysis provided by Karol Jakubowicz. *Participation and Partnership: A Copernican Revolution to Re-Engineer Public Service Media for the 21st Century* advocates the redefinition of policy and regulatory frameworks relating to Public Service Media (PSM) and rethinking of PSM organizations and their relations with the audience and civil society. The author concludes that the time has come for a new, participatory stage of PSM evolution, based on partnership with, and participation by, users and civil society in general. “This is required in order to meet the new expectations of the public, but primarily to provide new legitimacy and rationale for PSM, as the old one, speaking to the general public on behalf of the elite, is no longer tenable. To survive in the 21st century, PSM needs a new sense of itself and its place in society” (p. 21).

An outstanding paper published in this volume is presented by Elihu Katz, *On Sixty Years of Research and Theorizing on Mass Communication*, which is a review of six decades of empirical research on communication studies. The author deconstructs media communication in four distinct parts — Ownership, Technology, Content and Context, and illustrates “how each of them treated television in its heyday [...], and how each of them is now addressing the new information technologies” (p. 50). In each of the four areas occurred significant changes due to the emergence of broadcasting. For example in terms of context, television has moved politics inside the public’s houses or “[b]roadcasting invited people to return home, and to sit together as a family, and thus, indirectly, to tailor content to the living-room audience” (p. 50). On the other hand, technology has created the “global village” (McLuhan), where information travels relentlessly and this “would allow more togetherness and greater freedom”, and content produced participatory audiences and became a tool of indoctrination too (p. 50–51). According to Katz, these changes have not been adequately investigated by scholars, thus “research focused on content is being overtaken by technology and context, and that long-term effects are superseding the short-term”, and in terms of ownership “we have neglected the institutional aspect of mass communication” (p. 52). In the final part of his paper the author makes an appeal to interdisciplinarity and invites researchers from all fields to cooperate.

As has been previously seen, the book *Models of, Models for Journalism and Communication/Modèles de, Modèles pour le Journalisme et la Communication* is an

impressive range of academic and practitioner-based expertise, which produce a clearly-structured and focused discussion about the complexities surrounding the important topic of communication studies.

*Natalia Vasilendiuc*  
UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

**Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska and Kamila Majdecka (eds.), (2011). *Studia empiryczne nad komunikowaniem politycznym w Polsce (Empirical Studies on Political Communication in Poland)*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, pp. 258, ISBN 978-83-229-3157-8.**

Detailed investigation and analysis of social phenomena as well as drawing correct conclusions about how voters make their decisions requires interdisciplinary research conducted by specialists in many fields. This challenge facing scholars specializing in media studies, communication, sociology, cultural studies and law is a complicated one, because of the transformations which have taken place in many fields in Poland. These transformations influence voters' activities and interests in political campaigns to Polish and EU institutions. Another problem is the frequency with which the Polish citizen can take part in exercising his/her democratic right. The higher the frequency is, the lower the interest society has to vote actively. Moreover, legal regulations which determine the scope of political marketing practices and actions taken by electoral committees to persuade voters, underline the importance of describing instruments and mechanisms used in various electoral campaigns. It is very beneficial that *Empirical Studies of Political Communication in Poland*, a publication edited by Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska and Kamila Majdecka was published by University of Wrocław Press in 2011. This should be one of the most important publications in this field.

Unlike the USA or Western European countries, where political advertising and political marketing have already taken an important place as a research field for many decades, in Poland there are still many questions concerning the cognitive nature of man in certain social and political environments. These questions still require a detailed analysis. It was in the 1990's when Poles started to gain experience in organizing political campaigns and this period is indeed very short. Conducting empirical research on people's political behavior in Polish reality is interesting because it involves a living organism which is not fully formed and for that reason overreacts. When deciding, the voter is often not influenced by the party's political programme, candidates' profiles or abilities to perform their function. Very often impressions, appearances and other irrational factors count for far more.

Due to the complex nature of this problem, the sequence of issues discussed was determined by constructivism and cognitive realism. The publication has an interesting structure, which consists of two parts. For better understanding of the subject matter the outline of contemporary research in the field was presented first. Having read this material the reader can better evaluate the neutrality of methods and practices used during and for political campaigns.

In the first part, which consists of five articles, some basic notions and issues are discussed. Actors in political life, connotations of the notion 'election advertising', i.e. the factors which create this notion, the importance of particular elements which make it more effective and attractive, for example advertising slogans, public debates of candidates in front of an audience or radio listeners. It is clear that because of legal regulations concerning the use of radio and television in political campaigns in Poland, the Internet is even more valuable and thus widely used. The authors' conclusions in each article are the effect of consideration sourced from theoretical knowledge and an original approach to the research methods used. Multimedia research material was used as a starting point to emphasize the changes in creating advertising slogans used in presidential campaigns. The issues touched on during these campaigns were also widely discussed and arranged. Methods of presenting them, factual argumentation as well as forms and technology used by various media to underline how important the subject is, were also covered. Advanced research material, which is the basis of the scholars' work environment as well as the conclusions presented in the second part of the book show mostly practical applications of theoretical assumptions. The fact that politics and politicians are present in the media and political discourse and reception, encourage further reading.

The following issues are presented in the next five texts respectively: the role of the journalist in the process of forming political likes and dislikes and media activity in the European Parliament campaign in Poland. In comparison to other election campaigns, we can see another level of involvement here.

Numerous tables and charts are an asset of the book. They help the reader to understand the text better and illustrate research results thus enriching the reader's knowledge.

The authors did not intend the publication to be a 'prescription' with medication to gain voters effectively and guarantee political success. They rather showed which mistakes should be avoided in building persuasive strategies. While searching for ways and tools to influence potential voters effectively and to gain their loyalty, it is obligatory to follow research results in this field. The book under review fills a gap in the publishing market perfectly. Interesting remarks and conclusions, which are often different from hitherto presented, are an inspiration for further studies.

It is clear that precise conclusions based on detailed analysis which, in turn, results from appropriate research methods used have a great cognitive value. Who is this book addressed to? Active politicians, people interested in political life and



the media's role should be exposed in increasing the public's awareness and shaping their opinion in the sphere of omnipotent politics. Another factor to be considered is the unpredictable behaviour of the audience itself which may either cherish the possibility to participate in public life, or reject this chance and ignore what the media offers while portraying various facets of political culture.

The content of the book is constructed within the framework of two distinct dimensions of political communication: i) the horizontal, which involves a constantly changing shift of power between politicians and the media; ii) the vertical, which investigates the relationship between political communication elites (journalists and politicians) and citizens as the addressees of their messages. The two processes that accompany the developments occurring in both dimensions are *mediatization* (horizontal) and *de-centralization* (vertical), the latter emphasized as being more and more frequently encountered in postmodern democracy. As advanced by the contributors to this volume, the new form of citizenship tends to challenge the primacy and credibility of institutionalized politics in public life, often opting for a partial or even entire disengagement from active participation in political life. This new phenomenon may thrive due to the emergence of new forms of communication, primarily the Internet, which counterbalances the traditional style of mass media, providing space for active, independent and creative citizenship.

The book is divided into three parts devoted to the analysis of three different issues, namely: i) new approaches to political communication; ii) mediatization which touches on the ongoing shift of power between politics and the media; iii) de-centralization that discusses new forms of citizenship and political communication. The introduction presents the chief premises of the book as well as depicts the rapidly changing face of contemporary communication in postmodern democracy which is continually affecting the performance of present-day politics. The remaining parts contain a certain number of essays which discuss one of the above-mentioned subjects in a diversity of contexts provided by real-life instances from both the British and Dutch political public sphere. Interestingly, most of the results are supported by empirical evidence in the form of interviews, experiments conducted on selected individuals and statistics based on data obtained from various sources, particularly different kinds of media.

Part 1, *New Approaches to Political Communication*, consisting of two theoretical essays, explores the themes of audience democracy (horizontal dimension) and political representation viewed as a mediated act (vertical dimension). The latter work seems to be particularly interesting as it accentuates the role of surveillance media technologies, including blogs, webcams, Twitter or YouTube which have posed a serious threat to politicians' visibility and are constantly questioning the authenticity of their everyday performance.

Meanwhile, Part 2, *Mediatization: The Changing Power Game between Politics and the Media*, examines the horizontal relationship between politicians and jour-

nalists, specifically the part spin doctors play on the British and Dutch political scene and their metacoverage in the media, the changing patterns of political news coverage in British and Dutch newspapers, the culture of political journalism in the UK and the Netherlands or the interaction between politicians and journalists in political broadcast interviews. Also, what can be found interesting is that the emergence and popularity of satirical televisions shows such as *Have I Got News for You* (BBC) and its Dutch counterpart, *Dit was het Nieuws*, have demonstrated an increasing need of politicians and candidates for political posts to participate in such programmes and interfere with their standard media representations by exposing their normality, authenticity and humour to the audience.

Part 3, *De-Centralization: New Forms of Citizenship and Political Communication*, shifts its focus towards the vertical dimension of political communication, investigating the recent trends observed on the British and Dutch political scene, especially concerning an enhanced role of the general public in reshaping the present-day political order. Among the most salient issues discussed here are the growing disconnection of citizens from the active political life of their countries, the scope of political consumerism and the way it affects the citizens' involvement, various forms of political participation in the realm of popular culture or the development of participatory and citizen journalism. One of the most interesting theses involves a statement that fruitful political discussions flourish on the Internet forums related to the reality television shows such as *Big Brother* or *Wife Swap* or a suggestion that the format of such programmes tends to imitate some forms of citizens' participation in political life.

The volume remains one of the newest and most precious publications on the ongoing interplay between politics, citizens and the media from the perspective of political communication discussed in a variety of contexts. An indisputable asset of the book is that it offers a deep and fresh insight into the investigated matters by means of empirical evidence provided in each chapter to support a given hypothesis. A wide range of figures and tables presenting statistical results, being strongly grounded in verifiable data, is what contributes to both the credibility and reliability of the proposed theses. Additionally, a well-written, logical and clear structure of the work as well as frequent use of well-known examples from everyday reality to explain an intricate nature of debated phenomena, can appeal not only to scholars trained in the field. It is also aimed at those who are not professionally acquainted with the subject, yet interested enough to probe into contemporary patterns of political communication. The book may be strongly recommended to anyone whose interests revolve around different forms of representation of media-centered politics in the eyes of citizens seen as critical observers and commentators of the political scene in the era of postmodern democracy.

*Kornelia Boczkowska*

ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY IN POZNAŃ, POLAND

**Eric Klinenberg (2007), *Fighting for Air: The Battle to Control America's Media*. New York: Metropolitan Books, pp. 339, ISBN 13: 978-0-8050-7189-0.**

Scientific and popular literature on the intensifying focus on the media market and changes in their ownership structures is quite rich, and every year new analyses devoted to these issues appear. Among them, there is a book by Eric Klinenberg, sociologist at the University of New York, that is worthy of special mention. Written in a journalistic style, the book is devoted to the functioning of the local media in the era of the overwhelming reign of global media concerns. *Fighting for Air: The Battle to Control America's Media* is a very interesting picture of dealing with the fight for airtime in the American area of broadcasting.

Klinenberg, as befits a sociologist, refers in his argument primarily to the relations between media and society. The author's analysis shows the influence of global media on impoverishment and impairment of the current role of local communication. Local communities are thus deprived of the diversity of information provided so far by local media, which, according to Klinenberg, can threaten democracy. Arguments cited by Klinenberg cannot be classified as extremely revealing but they are certainly a true reflection of the situation in today's media market in the United States.

Klinenberg talks about the real dangers faced by local broadcasters during the reign of global media companies. The reader seeking more in-depth theoretical considerations should not read *Fighting for Air*: .. because they are simply not in the book. The author does not devote too much time to detailed analysis of social antagonisms such as: *Does big global always mean dangerous? Should local always be the synonym of quietness? Should local problems be considered from the perspective of size, or rather wealth? What impact will the weakening of local communication have on contemporary democracy?* Instead of theoretical considerations and digressions, the author presents fairly "strong" and "pictorial" evidence of how the global media, occasionally supported by government regulations, have often led to very adverse changes in the local media market in the United States. During the first decade of the establishment of the Telecommunications Act (1996), the increasing concentration of media in the United States could be observed. According to Klinenberg, global "trends" of development in the media market dictated of course by transformation of the media from "public body" into "media company" caused "much harm" to local media which have shaped local societies so far.

In Klinenberg's opinion, local media "have been forced" to generate revenue, which means that they move away more and more from the local community and their role in the creation of local identity is smaller and smaller. The most important thing is to ensure positive economic growth for the heading or the TV station. However, the needs and expectations recede into the background, which according to Klinenberg is clear, when one analyzes the content of American local newspapers, radio and TV season schedules.

Klinenberg, on the very first pages, introduces us to the current reality prevailing in the U.S. local media market describing the history of the train that derailed in Minot, North Dakota, on January 18th, 2002, spilling 240,000 gallons of toxic chemicals used to manufacture fertilizer . At that time, residents were surprised by the behaviour of local radio stations. None of the six radio stations in the city mentioned the derailment. It turned out that all the stations belonged to Clearnet Channel Communications, with its main base in Texas, which at the time when the disaster happened, emitted prepared earlier recordings. What is worse, the institution responsible for compiling and transmitting messages about imminent threats (later renamed the Emergency Alert System), also failed because the local authorities were unable to use the equipment. Minot residents were left alone to fight against an unknown threat. As a result, one person died and more than a thousand had to undergo treatment.

The way of beginning the publication concerning the risks posed by the ubiquitous global media is quite meaningful, all the more so, that the style of work is also unique. We can have the feeling that we are reading a novel, rather than a scientific monograph. The remaining chapters of the book describe — step by step — how global media have changed the image of communication — in the author’s opinion, unfortunately, almost always for the worse. The most important thing is that due to Klinenberg’s journalistic style, almost everybody can understand the intricacies of economic and social determinants of contemporary local media in the USA.

The monograph presents not only traditional media such as: newspapers, radio and television. The author refers also to the alternative weeklies and the Internet. Each chapter of the book is supported by statements of many respected authorities, with whom Klinenberg met during his five-year research. The author takes readers into the studio of Sinclair Broadcasting’s News Central, which provides TV stations with “local” information. We also visit Florida to learn people’s opinions of Media General’s Tampa News Center, and confirm the convergence of information appearing in television, radio, newspapers and networks. Klinenberg describes how the reduction in staff in the various editorial offices causes “death” of the reportage referred to the problems of the city or state. He suggests that those who believe that the Internet will save local media should look at the Pew Center report, which shows that the network is dominated by the global media. The chapter on the history of strengthening the ownership of alternative weeklies on the market, illustrates how frustrated and at the same time powerless are some owners of local weeklies. Their frustration is obviously the result of fear of being absorbed by leading media corporations.

Apart from spreading the vision of common “unification” of local media in the world of global corporations Klinenberg, as befits a sociologist, describes in the pages of his book, the social reaction to the situation. The author describes in detail how the local community and emerging within it “civic groups” were able to unite to create a unique movement that Klinenberg has called “an unlikely social move-

ment for media reform”. The history of this social initiative is certainly worth telling, and Klinenberg takes up this task with unconcealed enthusiasm. The author introduces readers to the world of individuals, groups and institutions that attempt to recover the local news for local receivers. Self-appointed committees are struggling with further strengthening of ownership and media concentration, directing the sting of criticism primarily at media group companies. Their activities are focused on national legislative institutions. They try to persuade federal lawmakers to take up the challenge and try to solve this problem. Klinenberg in his work acquaints the reader with the activities of such organizations as: the American Free Press or Prometheus Radio Project, whose mission is to support community radio stations. The author of *Fighting for Air* concentrates a bit less on the role played by trade unions in shaping the reform movements in the world of the media.

Klinenberg is mainly focused on showing how devastating an impact on social communication global media have. His concern raises the fact that interest in any initiatives that reduce this negative impact is relatively small. Actions taken by global media meet with criticism from both scientists and ordinary recipients. However, according to Klinenberg it is still a “drop in the bucket”. While the “catastrophic” vision of the pervasive power of global media is a bit exaggerated, Klinenberg’s monograph seems to be extremely valuable since it shows us that the subject of his research, although sometimes somewhat marginalized, is important and inspiring for contemporary media studies .

*Fighting for Air* is a book that allows for a moment of reflection: Global Media — Dangerous Media? In addition, the book is very friendly to the reader who will not get bored while wading through the subsequent pages. It is also a valuable work devoted to the issue of media ownership.

*Ilona Biernacka-Ligięza*  
UNIVERSITY OF OPOLE, POLAND

