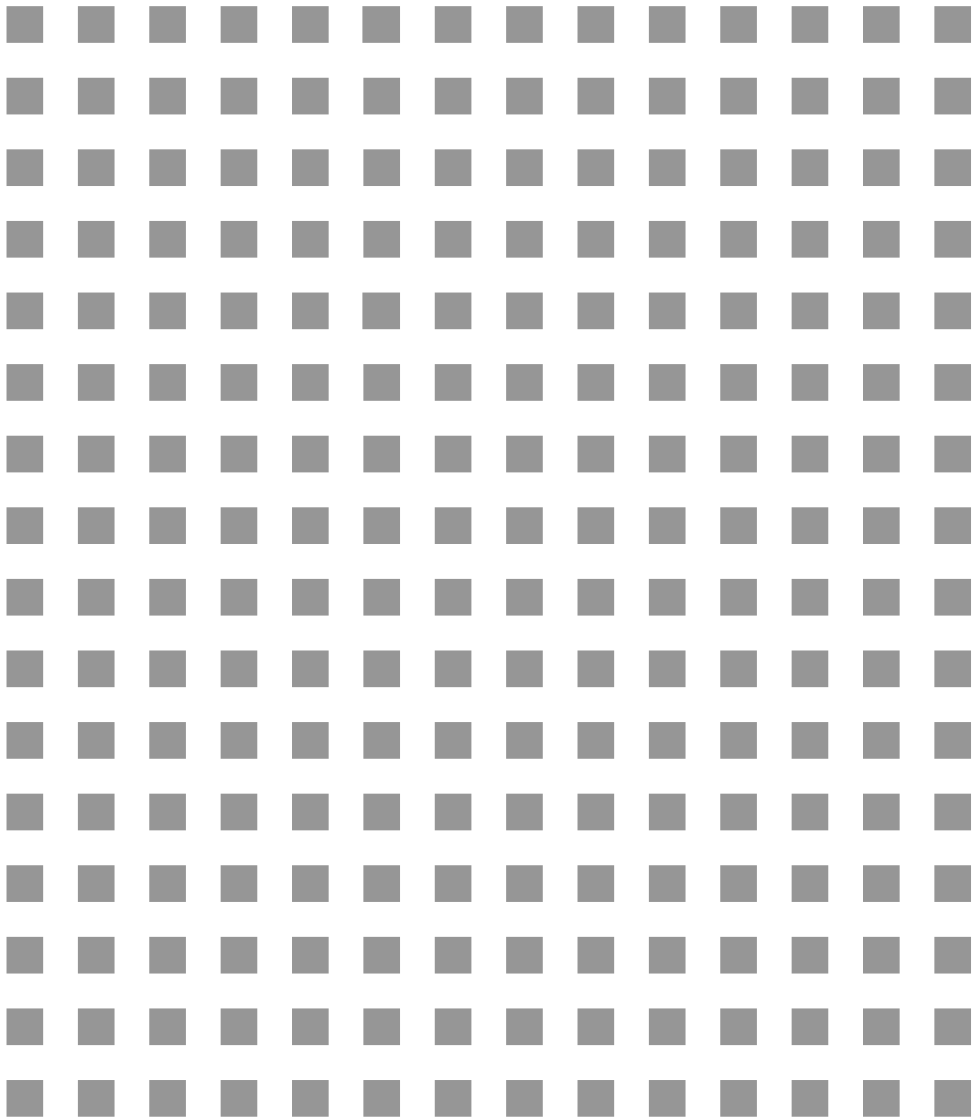


# Book reviews



**Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Gunnar Nygren (eds.). (2015). *Journalism in Change. Journalistic Culture in Poland, Russia and Sweden*. Frankfurt, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford and Warszawa: Peter Lang Publishing, pp. 333, ISBN: 978-3-631-64921-3.**

The book *Journalism in Change*, edited by Gunnar Nygren and Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, presents the main results of a research project comparing journalists and their views in three countries: Sweden, Poland and Russia. The book is thus very much a part of the turn towards comparative studies (in media research in general and journalism studies in particular) we have seen in the past decade. The research interests here are, broadly, to study how global trends impact different national journalism culture, and to identify and explain salient differences and similarities in how journalists perceive several interrelated aspects of their work in a context of change and fluidity. It is a set of starting points that are at once generic and comprehensive, and I am pleased to say that overall the book lives up to its initial promise to cover the breadth of the journalistic working experience in the three selected countries.

To give an idea of the comprehensive scope of the book, the authors (all participants in the *Journalism in Change* project) set out to comparatively cover the demographic characteristics of journalists (gender, age, education, etc.; in Chapter 3, by Michał Głowacki); the changing working conditions of journalists — which includes covering structural changes in the organization of work and the labor market, aspects of working conditions in journalism that are increasingly acknowledged as important but still rarely studied (Chapter 4, by Jöran Hök); journalistic autonomy, particularly as it relates to the ongoing digital transformation of the journalistic workplace (Chapter 5, by Gunnar Nygren); journalistic ideals, values and norms — and the central issue of the persistent gap between ideal and reality (Chapter 6, by Maria Anikina); the relationship between journalistic work and the journalistic field and the external fields of politics and commerce, and the impact of these relationships on journalistic quality (Chapters 7 and 8, by Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska), and finally the impact on journalism of new interactive technologies and practices (Chapter 9, by Elena Johansson). In short, the authors set out to cover more or less every key aspect of journalistic work covered in classic as well as recent literature, and to do it across three countries. The sheer ambitious scope of the book is thus its major strength. The data presented here is so comprehensive as to be almost overwhelming at times, yet always anchored in careful, grounded analysis. It is no mean feat to present an edited collection where all chapters fit together well (the chapter authors make frequent references to results from earlier chapters, creating a solid sense of an ongoing argument) and all clearly contribute to the same overarching story — which, as the title of the book suggests, is one of gradual but irrevocable change to journalism as a profession across the three countries studied (and globally as well).

In this sense — i.e. the ongoing changes to journalism as a profession — the main results of the book are not all that surprising. This is not a critique per se — after all, such is the nature of the cumulative endeavor of academic research. Rather, this book adds additional weight to many observations made by previous research. For example, Michał Głowacki's chapter on demographic characteristics of journalists (which includes the forms of their employment) well illustrates the increased precarity of journalistic work, but with some interesting comparative results: in Poland and Sweden, it is the young journalists (under 35) who are to a greater extent employed on more precarious temporary contracts, whereas in Russia it is rather the older cadre of journalists which shows a higher degree of temporary employment. Jöran Hök's chapter on working conditions tells a well-known story of intensified production conditions, and the demands of multiplatform production — but also of the overall often positive attitude to multiplatform production and the opportunities it affords. Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska's chapters on the influence of the spheres of politics and commerce (the latter conceptualized under the well-known heading of “commercialization”) also support previous research and present the results one would expect, as they demonstrate a strong perceived influence of politics in Russia, a somewhat weaker such influence in Poland, and a virtually non-existent political influence in Sweden. What is somewhat more surprising here is Dobek-Ostrowska's strong assertion that the negative effects of commercialization (e.g. dominance of soft news over hard, increase in sensationalism, focus on lifestyle/entertainment news) are much more pronounced in Poland and to a large extent can be explained by the extent of foreign media ownership — the latter assertion would for example contradict research by Stetka (2012), which holds that foreign media ownership has generally been beneficial to CEE nations as it has kept local moguls/tycoons from thoroughly instrumentalizing the media. However, the evidence presented here is strong and the case well-argued, so the debate on the role of foreign media ownership in post-Communist nations continues.

The book is far from just presenting the “same old story” of de-professionalization of journalism and commercialization of news media, however. There are also many results here that are more surprising, or that provide even more striking and powerful illustrations of well-known trends. In the latter category is Gunnar Nygren's (Chapter 5) finding of the increased functional integration of the business and editorial sides of news production across all three countries: the creation of various forms of lifestyle supplements and the increase of lifestyle journalism in general is clearly made possible by a much closer relationship between business and editorial than has previously been the norm (as discussed on pp. 146–148). This trend is well-known among professionals and industry commentators, but has so far escaped rigorous scholarly attention — making Nygren's observations on this point highly relevant, particularly as the phenomenon seems to cut across national borders.

I would also like to highlight Maria Anikina's (Chapter 6) findings on career alternatives for journalists — these results speak volumes about the transformation of journalism (at least in some countries) into an occupation that is seen as a stepping-stone to other occupations, rather than an occupation you stay in over the course of your career. In Poland and Russia, roughly between 35 and 50 per cent of younger journalists (under 35 years) agree or strongly agree with the statement "To work as a journalist is a step in my career to other areas" (Table 6.8, p. 161). In other age groups, the number is also high, (about 40 per cent of the older — over 51 years — journalists in Poland also agree with or strongly agree with this statement) — except in Sweden, where numbers are significantly lower (about 10 per cent of younger journalists and barely 3 per cent of older journalists, on the same measure).

The trend of journalism as a "stepping-stone" occupation is further highlighted by data in the same chapter on the willingness of working in PR, and from Dobek-Ostrowska's chapter on journalism on politics (Chapter 7). In the latter chapter we see that a surprisingly large proportion of journalists would consider politics as an alternative profession (as many as 50 per cent of Russian journalists would consider politics as an alternative profession, as would 45 per cent of Swedish journalists; see Figure 7.2, p. 185). If we add to this Nygren's previous research on journalism as an occupation people are increasingly "passing through" (Nygren, 2011; see also Nygren's conclusions in Chapter 5 in this volume, p. 151), then the results presented in this book present additional robust evidence for a key element in the de-professionalization of journalism. While the trend is not equally pronounced across countries (less marked in Sweden, slightly more so in Poland, and fairly clear in Russia), the tendency is clearly the same cross-nationally. This, I would say, is one of the key results presented in this book as it points to a radical structural change in how journalism-as-work is both organized and perceived by those who work in the field.

Finally, I would also like to draw attention to the findings in Elena Johansson's chapter about interactivity and social media use in journalism (Chapter 9). Again, the overall results are hardly surprising: Johansson finds the same conservative attitude to new media that many previous studies have indicated (e.g. Hermida, 2012), but also that social media are quite commonly used in an everyday working context and that they seem well on their way to becoming integrated as natural tools for professional journalists (see pp. 243–254). What is somewhat more surprising is that it is journalists in Sweden, arguably the country with the highest internet and broadband penetration as well as the highest proportion of regular internet users, who are the most skeptical and most conservative overall when it comes to using social media in their professional life. Whereas Polish and Russian journalists can be quite positive to the interactive potential afforded by various social media and think it can improve the quality of journalism, Swedish journalists are much more negative. This result also convincingly demonstrates the necessity of adopting a comparative perspective when studying changes in journalism;

it is all too easy to assume that results from one country (read: the US) readily apply to other nations. It is obviously the case that attitudes towards audience interactivity and social media as a professional tool differs significantly between countries, and not always in the way we would expect it to differ, either.

In summary, this book offers an important contribution to the ongoing study of how journalism as an occupation and professional field is changing in the face of technological and economic restructuring. Across all the empirical chapters, the results lend support to previous research on key topics, but also develop earlier research in important ways — notable here is the strong empirical evidence for the ongoing erosion of the boundaries between the business and editorial sides of journalism, as well as the more detailed study of the (gradual) transformation of journalism into a “stepping stone” occupation, or a step on your career ladder rather than a career in and of itself. The comparative design adds significant value to the book in two main ways: one, as the comparative perspective shows salient and often somewhat unexpected differences between the three countries, and two, Poland and Russia in particular are interesting cases in themselves as they are nations rarely studied in the international literature on journalism. For all these reasons, I would definitely recommend this book to anyone interested not just in journalism in these three countries but in journalism and its future in general.

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**Elena Vartanova (2013). Постсоветские трансформации российских СМИ и журналистики [Post-Soviet Transformations of Russian Media and Journalism]. Moscow: MediaMir Publishing, pp. 278, ISBN: 978-5-91177-059-4.**

The book *Post-Soviet Transformations of Russian Media and Journalism*, authored by Elena Vartanova, the dean of the Faculty of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University, one of the leading media scholars in Russia, has passed barely noticed by the international media research community, as many books in national languages do today. Meanwhile, the book, in our viewpoint, deserves attention not only of those who study post-Soviet media systems but also by comparative media researchers around the world, as it provides an example of how a multifaceted theoretical context creates a lens for assessing the post-communist transformations of a today’s media system.

The structure of the book is classic in terms of going from theory to practice. The book includes five chapters; four of them speak of relevant theories (Chapter 1), the structure of the media market (Chapter 2), factors that shape the dynamics of media development (Chapter 3), and Russian media policy (Chapter 4). All the parts

are assessed in comparative perspective: thus, Chapter 2 ends with how the Russian media system relates to Hallin and Mancini's (2004) media models, and Chapter 4 indirectly compares the Russian policy on media with the EU media and telecom policing.

Chapter 1 is, arguably, the most valuable for the Russian-speaking researchers. It clearly shows how post-Soviet, Anglo-American, and continental European research traditions unite and intertwine in Elena Vartanova's scholarly optics. On the one hand, the chapter, as the book itself, pays an homage to the Soviet tradition of media research upon "national media models" — a tradition well established within foreign media studies in Moscow (Vartanova 2005; Sharonchikova & Urina 2010; and many others) and St.Petersburg (*Periodical press* textbook series and other books); it inevitably influenced the recent reflections upon the Russian media system (Zassoursky 2012; Vartanova 2012). This tradition, even if it did not openly generate sufficient criteria for comparative research, has accumulated unique empirical data on the media systems under study. Today, this knowledge becomes increasingly valued, especially because "the market model and democratization processes, though oriented to similar goals, have not produced the same results for post-socialist CEE countries, as well as for the post-Soviet ones" (p. 14).

On the other hand, Vartanova puts the development of the Russian media of the recent 25 years into a constellation of comparative perspectives, namely "media in transition" research, comparative media systems studies, and a wider context of social modernization theory. The latter, with the reference to Kangaspuuro and Smith (2006), casts light onto the existing misbalances in the content production and journalistic culture of Russia. "The basic conflict of Russian modernization, [that is] lack of a systemic approach in transition to a new type of society along with significant progress in particular areas" (p. 23) has lead, as Vartanova states, to a detachment of media and wider culture from the late-Soviet modernization project. This, in its turn, implied encapsulation of the national media production and persistence of pre-modernization practices and attitudes in the professional community.

Chapter 1 works as a crystal that focuses theoretical backgrounds to formulate the main research question of the book (and for any existing systemic research on the national media model):

What general factors does one need to take into account assessing the situation in the Russian media? And [...] which features of the Russian society shape [their] modernization peculiarity in the context of societal traditions? (p. 18)

Chapters 2 and 3, in contrast, would be most interesting for international scholarship. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the dynamics of the traditional media segments, as well as of the emergence of new media, both parts being well based on statistics and the results of previous research. In this chapter, the reader will find a deep assessment of structural and content features of the Russian media

in the 2000s. The chapter reconstructs the basic changes in the media system, juxtaposing, *i. a.*, the Russian face of the newspaper crisis and regionalization of the newspaper market with the TV-zation of the nation, thus turning Russia from “the most reading country in the world” to a TV-dependent nation; it also singles out three distinct stages of media concentration. In the end of the chapter, Vartanova states that, among the three models by Hallin and Mancini (2004), the polarized pluralist, or Mediterranean, model is the closest to the Russian media system, but she also insists that, in the Russia of today, an “etatist commercialized media model” has formed.

In Chapter 3, the author’s background in media economics stands at full strength — but it also limits the conclusions to a certain extent, making them sound a bit economically deterministic. Between the factors of change, the economic environment and the market health of media seem to be the primary definer of the media modernization, media and political interaction or societal cleavages perceived as important but secondary to commercialization and globalization. While this may be fully true, one remark could be added to such a description. As social economists and social psychologists in Russia note, there is no unified Russia in social terms (Zubarevich, 2011; Auzan, 2011; Petranovskaya, 2014) — but several Russias with varying modernization speeds, value sets, and consumption and behavioral patterns. Taking this into closer consideration might have enriched the book even more, as both journalism cultures research (Anikina et al., 2013) and media and political studies (Gabowitsch, 2012; Bodrunova & Litvinenko, 2013) show that the value cleavages between post-industrial cosmopolitan and blue-collar post-Soviet audience groups may be decisive for interpreting the existing media consumption patterns, audience segmentation, and political roles of various clusters of media.

Another challenge to this book is that it focuses more upon media than upon journalism — despite the title. There is, indeed, a bunch of important facts about the journalistic community and the journalistic culture in Russia mentioned or shortly described in the text, like the important discussion on Soviet vs. Anglo-Saxon orientations in media professionalism, including attitudes towards freedom of speech and its possible limitations by the state. But the book would be more comprehensive with a small chapter specially dedicated to the journalistic community and its dynamics. The lack of such a chapter may be explained, though, by the fact that, by the moment of publication, a very scarce amount of comparative data on journalistic cultures on the whole and on Russia in particular was available.

Chapter 4 presents one of the first attempts to describe the media policy of the Russian state in between 1991 and 2013. The discursive shape of such descriptions is still forming today; thus, contrasting Russian policing reality to the EU media policy is even more valuable. From the book, media policy emerges not only as a framework for any media system to exist but also as a dimension of its systemic modernization. And it is here where the dichotomy of old/Soviet and new/Western, as in Vartanova’s earlier works, turns into new/European vs. old/Asian opposition in

both media laws and self-regulation of journalists — even if we see that Asian elements are just anti-European, rather than culturally divergent.

Regarding Chapter 5, it was, evidently, planned as the one to put up the the agenda for future research. But the author's economic determinism shows up again, making this chapter perhaps less strong than it might have been otherwise. For Vartanova, the main conflict in the Russian media system is the clash between news and entertainment — or, rather, between the content and business models oriented to public interest and profitable entertainment content that ensures the survival of the industry. But the very text of the book suggests at least several other issues of the same fundamental nature. First, it is media autonomy on the systemic level, which so far looks like a lose-lose choice between dependence upon either authorities or media owners. Second, it is the extent and modes of performing the watchdog function in the absence of such a tradition and within a transitional drawback. Third, it is the deliberative potential of media in the fundamentally fragmented society where TV-oldies vs. internet aborigines not only consume different media but also protest against each other on the streets.

But, of course, one cannot expect that quarter of a century of media development can be described in full detail in one book, even if the book is outstanding. *Post-Soviet Transformations of Russian Media and Journalism* is a milestone — the first thorough review of the Russian case since the appearance of Hallin and Mancini's comparative framework, well grounded in both theory and empirical data. This book is already becoming a starting point for practically any research project in the area of Russian media and journalism studies, and we hope to see it translated into other languages, for the international scholarly community to benefit from it just as well.

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**Silvio Waisbord (2013). *Reinventing Professionalism. Journalism and News in a Global Perspective*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 280, ISBN: 978-07-456-5192-7.**

Journalism is not only a type of media content. It is also an occupation where you receive a salary, a profession with standards and for some also a mission of life. To discuss journalism as a profession is to navigate in the tension between seeing journalists as a social group and normative assumptions about quality in journalism. Professionalization is a way for journalists to gain autonomy to defend the common standards of quality.

This is the main argument in the book *Reinventing professionalism* by Silvio Waisbord. He is a professor at George Washington University, but the inspiration



for the book came from five years outside the academy in training journalists in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This experience made him think about similarities and differences in journalism in different parts of the world, about common occupational practices on the surface but also different values when it comes to ethics and professional roles.

To be a professional is in daily life a kind of guarantee for high quality in work. But Silvio Waisbord focuses on the other perspective of the notion “professional” — journalism as a social institution, occupational identities, autonomy in relation to other fields and a special journalistic logic that separate journalists from other occupational groups. The profession guards the boundaries to keep control — and this strong position can make it possible for the profession to keep the common standards and values of the profession. In the final analysis — quality and a service of the common good in society, a public service orientation that has developed in the professionalization of journalism.

This is the ideal model of professionalization. Waisbord describes the two paths to professionalization in the Western world — the “market path” developed in the US and the “public path” developed in Europe with a strong public service in radio and TV (like the BBC). Professionalization of occupations has also been a strong area in sociology, and Waisbord uses classics like Abbott and Freidson to place journalism beside other professions developed in modern society in the process of labor division, knowledge monopoly and certification, expanding higher education and the public sector.

But — there are two big *but*s in these theories on professionalization. First: Are they valid also outside the traditional Western world? Second: Can professions survive in a network society where knowledge is more equally distributed, especially in media, when everybody can publish in their own blog or website? Silvio Waisbord discusses the challenges for journalism as a profession, and he acknowledges that the perception of journalism as an autonomous profession is a kind of western invention. Even if journalism in many ways becomes more similar on the surface globally, there are still huge differences when it comes to the position and autonomy of journalists in relation to political and commercial power in society. Waisbord returns many times in the book to this key question — the control over work and the strength of the profession to keep a degree of autonomy in relation to other social fields (Waisbord also uses Bourdieu). This professional autonomy is necessary for journalists to defend the standards and values of journalism — in the service of society and the right of citizens to know. Even if basic values like objectivity and detachment differs, and some journalistic cultures have a strong tradition of advocacy and partisan journalism, the journalistic community still needs autonomy in relation to political and commercial power to be regarded as professional. Waisbord labels this as “hybrid professional cultures” developing in different parts of the world where professionalization is a process of interaction between journalism and national institutions.

The second “but” is more difficult to discuss, and Waisbord touches on it only briefly. In Western countries where professionalization of journalism developed, this is now also questioned by media development. The knowledge monopoly of journalists is broken when everybody can publish and call themselves journalists, the borders between journalism and PR/marketing are increasingly blurred, journalistic institutions are losing influence and journalists is no longer a privileged group but a “flexible workforce” crossing professional boundaries regularly. Media users have become “prod-users” and journalists are challenged as a profession. Other researchers (for example Singer & Quandt, 2009) ask if journalists have to give up part of their privileged position to meet the new active audience on a more equal level.

Different kinds of semi-professional journalism develops in, for example, community media, “citizen journalism” where people without any education or professional belonging produce journalism for society. Are they to be regarded as professionals or amateurs? Or perhaps it is the content we should discuss, and not the formal status of those producing it? In these border areas, theories about professions gives us little help and we need to realize that journalism in the media world of today is not limited to big traditional media but can flourish in broader spheres.

This also means that journalism as a profession has to be less detached, less separated from the audience so journalism can still remain relevant. On the other hand journalism is also threatened as a profession in this “late modernity” by commercialization and managerialism ruling media companies. Waisbord still gives professionalism a strong support in this changing society:

Professionalism offers a refuge to protect news from being vulnerable to government and markets uninterested in the pursuit of critical rationality, accountability and transparency. Professionalism is necessary for journalism to be a counterweight to power. Professionalism is needed to nurture an occupational culture committed to democratic goals. (pp. 225–226)

There is a strong normative basis in Waisbord’s book — journalism is not *any* profession, journalism is necessary as a profession and institution in all societies struggling for democracy. With this normative basis, Waisbord gives many good arguments for professionalization of journalism and he shows how the professional logic can be a tool in the struggle for press freedom in many authoritarian countries.

But can we use theories about professions as media researchers, as tools or lenses to research and describe journalism in different societies? Yes, with the help of theories of professions and also sociological “field theory” from Bourdieu we can analyze the position of journalism in relation to different kinds of power in society. But we also need a critical mind to remember the limits of professionalization, the relations to active audiences and different forms of semi-professional journalism.

The great advantage of this book is that Silvio Waisbord brings this (sometimes forgotten) tool back into journalism research. With these theories, the current dis-

cussions about “boundaries” of journalism becomes relevant to follow and to study. They make it possible to discuss the role of journalism both within media companies and in society. Finally theories on professionalism make it possible to discuss what differs journalism from production of any soap.

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**Dorota Piontek, Bartosz Hordecki, Szymon Ossowski (2013). *Tabloidyzacja dyskursu politycznego w polskich mediach* [Tabloidization of Political Discourse in Poland]. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WNPiD UAM, pp. 170, ISBN: 978-83-62907-44-1.**

The book provides scientific knowledge and many observations about the tabloidization of political discourse in Polish media. There is a change in the way of conducting political discourse, in which the leading role is played both by journalists and politicians. The quality of the media offer is changing. It is visible in the selection of topics in news programs, the process of reporting events by journalists and behavior of hosts and their guests. Mediatization of politics is always accompanied by tabloidization of political discourse being a result of media's tabloidization. The authors aimed to collect the data allowing verification, using political and communication science tools, of the notion of trivialization of political discourse. They start with the premise that communication studies as a young discipline should use methodological and epistemological achievements of many other fields. They sought therefore roots of tabloidization research in various currents of reflection on discourse. The book is an attempt to describe the process of tabloidization, mainly affecting the media system, but which also influences the political and social system as a whole. Then, the process of tabloidization is understood by the authors broadly — not only as the change in journalistic standards, but also as a change in the public space.

The monograph was created by Piontek, Hordecki and Ossowski. It consists of four coherent chapters which fall into place. The first chapter starts with the basic knowledge about tabloidization, the second takes up the problem of multifaceted tabloidization research, the next is dedicated to changes in journalistic standards and the last one presents empirical data about tabloidization of political discourse in Polish news programs and main conclusions.

The opening chapter is the shortest one, which defines tabloidization and presents a short description of the development of research in this area. It also indicates the influence of tabloidization on political debate and the factors which conduce tabloidization, like for instance commercialization and technological progress.

There is emphasized distinction, in both formal and content level, between traditional journalism which is serious and opinion-making and “yellow” journalism, which is defined as the opposite of the first one.

The authors dedicated an important part of the book to the multiplicity of aspects of research on tabloidization. They presented a wide theoretical background which is a great part of the book. The chapter describes inter alia theoretical paradigms in the study of discourse. There is an attempt to connect the perspective of public discourse analysis with the Habermasian concept of a public sphere. The authors focused on the study of tabloidization in a Habermasian perspective, in which various types of proceedings are motivated by one of three types of rationality. These rationalities are the basis of three types of interests: technical, practical and emancipatory. In this chapter the authors showed how wide the horizon of research on tabloidization can be.

Chapter three of the book is a study devoted to the changes in journalistic standards. The authors sought the answer to the question of who is a journalist today, pointing out a number of definitions and approaches to this subject. Attention has been focused mainly on the ethics, the characteristics of journalism as a liberal profession, the role of mission, the status of journalists and the press law. The authors also analyzed the codes of ethics of main journalists’ associations in Poland and examined how journalistic standards looked in the light of research.

Closing the monograph, chapter four presents the data about political discourse in news programs. The empirical part of the book focuses on the analysis of the two most popular Polish news programs at an angle of tabloidization. The programs were examined both in terms of content (types of news, topic, actors etc.) and form of presentation (formal or informal, emotional etc.). This chapter is very germane, because it contains a detailed analysis of data collected by researchers and conclusions on changes in journalism and tabloidization of political discourse and communication space.

*Tabloidyżacja dyskursu politycznego w polskich mediach* is a valuable monograph, because it combines in a thoughtful way empirical research and a wide theoretical background. The authors analyzed the tabloidization of political discourse in a coherent and comprehensive way. The book presents a set of trends, theories and concepts which creates a broad background for detailed empirical research. Due to this and the data analysis, the authors describe solidly the process of tabloidization of political discourse in Poland. The book is a very valuable piece of work, being a successful attempt at describing the complex and dynamic process of tabloidization, mainly its influence on the media system, but also affecting the whole sphere of communication. It could also stimulate forward discussions and research on tabloidization of political discourse.

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**Sergey Korkonosenko (ed.). (2014). *Теории журналистики в России: зарождение и развитие* [Journalism Theories in Russia: Genesis and Development]. St Petersburg: SPBU Publishing House, pp. 272, ISBN: 978-5-288-05529-4.**

The study of theoretical foundations of journalism is important, because of the constant discussions and popular doubts about the necessity of journalism theory in general, and the desire to treat journalism as merely a craft. In recent years, the relevance of such work increases also with the problem of identification and identity of journalism, caused by modern business models of media functioning and active intervention of policy and political actors in such functioning. This is especially important, that in Russia there is still no major classifications of theoretical directions in the study of mass communication, there is a terminological confusion in the objects of theoretical analysis. According to the authors of the book, researchers as a community

[...] will not be able to move successfully further if they have not evaluated the “previous” knowledge ... they will be doomed either to rotate in a closed intellectual circles, or to identify situational, short-term features of journalism, which is not projected into the past or in the future. (p. 9)

It is no coincidence that collective work, which summarizes the interim results of the research project “Theory of journalism in Russia”, being a priority in the scientific trend of the Department of Theory of Journalism and Mass Communication in the Institute School of Journalism and Mass Communication (St Petersburg State University), attracted the attention of colleagues in the media sphere and became the winner of the National Association of Mass Media Researchers (NAMMI) award in 2015.

The authors focused attention on the genesis of the theories of journalism in Russia, namely on those authors and publications that make sense of the experience of the Russian press before the beginning of the 20th century, tracing the development and evolution of views on journalism in relation to the historical, political conditions, philosophical views and literary process. In essence, this approach makes it possible from the outset to define elements that make up the potential of normative theories, which at different times have received a complete description in the works of European and American researchers, and consider this process in relation to the movement of thought in other countries. At the same time the originality of Russian theoretical ideas about journalism becomes evident, that is the phenomenon of its cultural and civilization mission in Russia; strong links of journalism with literature and philosophical thought are observed, defining the idea of serving as deed in the aspect of theoretical normativity. Journalistic work is understood and approved by the theoretical thought as a personal feat.

The authors draw attention to the formation of normative concepts of the press, highlighting the types of normativity, which, thanks to the relative autonomy of

the Russian culture and the press could not be formed not independently long before theoretical developments canonized today. They are a decision-making type based on political attitudes of the official authorities, the professional and deontological type, contributing to the creation of the ideal professional representation, professional and pragmatic type, which formed an idea of journalism as a business. However, entrepreneurial motives do not dominate in the professional and ideological discourse. Developed together and in the mainstream with literature, the author's journalism does not coincide with the interpretation of journalism primarily as an information phenomenon.

The structure of the book allows one to present different trends in the theories of Russian journalism — philosophical, normative, sociological, political, psychological, cultural, and aesthetic. Each of them has its own chapter, and in each of these areas chronological coordinates of its origin, the factors and circumstances of its formation, prominent representatives, substantial components, growth trends, etc. are found. The authors, step by step, explore the creative, political, communicative aspects of the study of the press.

The crystallization process of theoretical thought in journalism has been driven by political, economic, philosophical and aesthetic needs of the ages, but because of differences in the socio-historical conditions, as well as the levels of development of periodicals and the identity of its researchers, either morally and ethics interests or political, philosophical and aesthetic ones played a decisive role; the most important in the definition of the professional mission can be either improvement of existing orders, or a critical attitude toward social evil and call for the destruction of this evil, but also the duty of amusement and benefit to the reader, or the idea of citizenship education. The authors rely on the continuation of their study, extending its frame and increasing the range of its participants.

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**Marta Majorek (2014). *Kod YouTube. Od kultury partycypacji do kultury kreatywności* [The Code of YouTube. From Participation Culture to Creativity Culture]. Kraków: Universitas, pp. 238, ISBN: 97883-242-2633-7.**

Social media are a dynamic communication environment that allows the multi-directional exchange of messages between users. The modern new media sphere offers many ways to produce, process and disseminate information, which leads to the engagement of individual users in the communication processes. Users are al-

lowed to choose not only the type of social services but also to create and give shape to their own content. That is why the currently social media environment is a field of interest of a growing number of researchers around the world. While most of the social media research is conducted abroad, Polish scholars do not challenge with similar cases as often, as their colleagues from the United States or Western Europe. In most cases, the social media analysis is based on research material gathered from Facebook or Twitter. Marta Majorek's book, entitled *The YouTube Code. From participation culture to creativity culture* is one of the first attempts at a comprehensive analysis of YouTube in Poland.

The book consists of nine thematic chapters. Assuming, that some readers may not be familiar with the YouTube service, the first chapter provides with the explanation of what exactly YouTube is, and what stands by the phenomenon of this site. Additionally, in this part one can find a description of basic functions and the terms of use. The author has presented the short history of the service and indicated the most important events affecting the current form of the service.

The second chapter of the book concerns the specificity of the political campaigns conducted via YouTube. The author has analyzed issues related to the electoral campaigning and political marketing, and made an attempt to compare political activity in traditional and new media. In this part of the book, notions such as netroots and trackers are also broadly described.

The third chapter is based on reflections on commercial marketing, which is used by brands to increase their incomes. The author explains the concept of viral marketing on YouTube and compares other marketing models used by brands. Majorek also points to the importance of the word of mouth — model of informal communication.

The fourth part is related to the educational dimension of YouTube. This chapter focuses on the new telecommunication technologies implemented in the educational processes. The author provides the examples of technology use in schools and lists the benefits of the modernization process.

The fifth chapter of *The YouTube Code* is focused on the role of gender in the virtual environment. In this case, the author presents the differences between females and males engaged in creating user generated content.

In the sixth chapter, the author tries to operationalize the notion of community and the social meaning of new media. Majorek provides a with couple of indispensable conceptions (in her opinion), to answer the question as to whether YouTube is a social medium or not. Her reflections in this part are based on the distinction between reality and the virtual world. Additionally, the author presents YouTube as an instrument that may be helpful in the process of self-image creation.

The seventh chapter familiarize readers with the memes and video memes, which are popular in the Internet. The author explains the role of the memes in the new media sphere through the phenomenon of cultural changes.

The eighth chapter is an attempt to explain the creative processes occurring within YouTube. The author uses the concept of remix to describe different aspects of content creation. Majorek tries to present new forms of content produced by amateur users. She compares particular elements of the creation process and indicates characteristic differences between them. In this chapter the author has also mentions the interactivity, which allows users to shape their new media environment.

The ninth chapter is a reflection on postmodern auditory created as a result of technological changes. This part of the book focuses on the differences between traditional media and new media. The author tries to indicate of the reasons behind fragmentation of audiences and tries to predict the next step of media development. In this chapter, the author has also presented her analysis showing, that the audiences of traditional broadcasting are shrinking.

The content analysis performed by the author, has been conducted on a selected research sample, gathered from YouTube. Although Majorek bases her work on many publications written in the field of communication science, political communication or internet research, there is a lack of important conceptions explaining new media dynamics as a whole. What is more, the selection of certain YouTube channels does not allow a strong argumentation in the field of the dynamic social media environment. The author could however, provide with more quantitative data, such as video duration or specific audience data. That could help to present the structure of YouTube content and its viewers in a more detailed way. To conclude, the conducted analysis could be improved in terms of empirical data.

As the author rightly points out, the concept of the remix (p. 183) is a manifestation of the new creation. Remix theory is indispensable to explaining the specifics of new media content and the efforts behind the creative processes. The author clearly highlights the fact, that culture and technology overlaps. In addition, the reflections could be complemented by Lev Manovich's characteristic of new media: (1) numeric representation (2) modular organization and (3) cultural transcoding. The book in general is focused around the issues related to user generated content. The author should have emphasized to a greater extent the transition from user to the producer. In this case, the author could present the conception of produsage. Axel Brun describes produsage as a situation, when individuals become independent from professional content and start to create content in free, individual way. The creative process is the key to understanding the mechanism behind YouTube.

The author claims that YouTube is a specific and unique type of social media (p. 143). In comparison to Facebook, which is mainly focused on communication between the users, YouTube is a content service. In both cases, the social factor is the most important, because there are groups (communities) of users, that are as-



sociated around specific content. In the eighth chapter of the book, the author points out:

Nowadays, the professional video, music and advertising industry, exists mainly next to the “backyard” production. There is a dichotomy between content, which was produced by the the average users and traditional media companies. This may be an analytical issue and could create difficulties in perceiving YouTube as a new media service in terms of quality and mutations of various categories. (p. 193)

As the author claims, there may be a big difference between content created by amateurs and professionals. However, it is important to mention that there is an increasing number of users/artists who know the basics rules of framing, recording and video editing, which allows them to create interesting content. What is missing in this analysis is a lack of a strong distinction of what is professional and what is amateur production. Does amateur production not also exhibit bear traits of professionalism?

One of the most important claims in this piece, is the fact of change and fragmentation of audiences (p. 204). Many researchers have claimed, that the development of new media will lead to the dusk of traditional media. Majorek does not take that catastrophic scenario into consideration. According to the author, the raise of new media is nothing more than the next step in media development. Unfortunately, we must remember about media companies such as Netflix, which could threaten traditional media. In the author’s opinion:

Amateur video production could fill the gap and eliminate the disadvantages mentioned above [refers to the unification of traditional media content, excessive advertising and the audience boredom]. This type of content could be, in some way, closer to the audience and easier to consume because of the bottom-up model of production. (p. 204)

According to this reflection, we should mention the Smart TV, VOD and the traditional media that are trying to fight against the destructive effect of the internet expansion. A good example of such a situation could be the hybridization of public television in Poland.

Majorek also claims, that the education system should use YouTube for teaching. The author believes, that usage of the service could help to help to increase the level of education among students (p. 95). In the fourth chapter, she proposes obvious ways of YouTube use during the classes. Readers may get the impression of the unreflective glorifying use of new technologies. The author however does not present any specific disadvantages of the education digitalization process. The *YouTube Code* is a very general reflection on social media. The book does not provide with in-depth, detailed analyzes of the processes taking place in this dynamic environment. This could be caused by the too broad thematic scope suggested and presented by the author. Social media is not only communication. Social media is

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characterized by a multiplicity of practical functions and applications used by journalists, specialists and users every day. Starting from entertainment, through modern marketing and ending on education or politics. It is impossible to describe all those relevant processes just in 238 pages.

Despite that, the book is a good way to familiarize oneself with the basic notions of the new media. The author draws our attention to several important elements that constitute YouTube and the other social media. The book could be an addition to a more accurate and advanced analysis.

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