

find amazing examples of the professionalism and courage journalists need to have, combined with everyday struggles to survive and preserve work ethics.

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Damian Guzek (2019). *Mediatizing Secular State: Media, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Poland*. Berlin: Peter Lang, pp. 333, ISBN: 978-3-631-77535-6.

The monograph by Damian Guzek, *Mediatizing Secular State: Media, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Poland*, published by the prestigious Peter Lang publishing house, is an important and necessary study which analyzes in a pioneering way media relations, religion, and politics in contemporary Poland from the perspective of the secularization and desecularization processes. The publication is the 8th part of the *Studies in Communication and Politics* series.

The book consists of seven chapters, in which the author discusses the following theoretical issues: the place of religion in the model of a secular state, the theoretical approach of mediatization, mediatization of religion and politics, as well as issues that are based on the empirical findings in the area of media representing the idea of a secular state. The above-mentioned issues are analyzed in the context of the processes of secularization and desecularization as two important ways of understanding the presence of religion in the society of post-communist Poland. Damian Guzek does not consider (and rightly so!) these processes as mutually exclusive “or-or” alternatives, but instead he treats secularization and desecularization as a starting point for discussion, among others about the phenomenon of the privatization of religion, the issue of the separation of state and religious institutions, or the question of plurality of religions.

The research methodology and research hypotheses presented in the introduction help the readers find answers to the key theoretical and practical question: Does Poland fit into the category of a secular state, and if so, to what extent? What do Church-state relations look like in practice? What is the media representation of a secular state and Church-state relations? Do the processes of the mediatization of the secular state and Church-state relations occur and in what way? What is the reception of the mediatization of the secular state?

The first chapter is an attempt to answer the question to what extent one can talk about the implementation of the secular state model in Poland in the context of the fusion of national and religious identity. This problem is successfully taken from a historical perspective and takes into account the role of the Catholic Church during the partitions, the idea and development of Polish messianism, and the fusion

of the state with the Church during the Soviet occupation. Symbolic points connecting the Church and the state were also discussed, for example the role of the icon of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa or national and church celebrations on August 15th. The author proves that the relations of religion and politics in Poland should not be strictly categorised, because on the one hand there are signs of growing secularization processes, such as the privatization of religious practices, but on the other hand the institution of the Catholic Church still plays a significant role.

The second chapter discusses key aspects of the theory of mediatization. In the context of an institutionalized approach to mediatization processes, the author explains the following elements: media institutions, media differentiation, media logic. Firstly, he refers to their current foundations in the scholarly literature that classifies the media as social institutions. Next, he points to differentiation as the heterogeneous process for the media to obtain more or less autonomy. He applies a few divisions related to the specificity of media systems and the role of media autonomy in these systems. The highest concept of institutionalized mediatization refers to the media logic, and he puts emphasis on understanding the rules of this logic and its basic components. In the context of academic reflection on mediatization, the author attempts to place the theory of mediatization on one of the levels of sociological theories: paradigms, super theories, base theories, and theories of middle range. The book also mentions various approaches to forms of mediatization, for example those proposed by Stig Hjarvard, who divides it into direct (strong) and indirect (weak) processes, or by Andreas Hepp, who has a different perspective on the forms of mediatization and focuses on its quantitative and qualitative aspects. It should be noted that Damian Guzek, in addition to indicating the key basic theoretical concepts, defines his own research position and the methodology adopted at work, which makes his scholarly reflection comprehensible and transparent.

The third chapter deals with the topic of the mediatization of religion and the mediatization of politics as specific fields for analysis of the idea of a secular state and the Church-state relationship. Guzek analyzes the mediatization of religion and mediatization of politics as two autonomous research directions. In this way, the reader notes the specifics and separate achievements of both areas of research. The author recalls key phenomena related to the progressing mediatization of the religious sphere and emphasizes the appropriation of media logic within the agency of representatives of religion. Moreover, Guzek addresses the problem of mediatization in relation to politics. He points to the possibilities of shaping this relationship on the one hand in the scholarly literature based on media dominance, and on the other hand from the perspective of media politics. He applies theoretical solutions in the mediatization of religion and the mediatization of politics and considers the problem of mediatization according to the idea of a secular state in the broad context of social change exerted by changes in the media and communication (p. 83). The innovative typology of religion communicated in a public sphere in the context of the research works of M. Lövheim and M. Axner can be regarded as a particu-

larly valuable part of this chapter. The views of the Czech theologian Tomáš Halík on the role of religion and Christianity in Europe presented there are also an important element.

The fourth chapter explains the research methodology. The author has conducted research of source material in which he refers to press publications, documents from the election campaign period, and applicable legal norms. The study by Guzek is based on mixed research methods. “The first stage concerns content analysis, the second the grounded theory, and the third an audience reception study. These methods provide qualitative and quantitative data, which is why in the last part of this chapter we perform their triangulation and establish the dominance of the qualitative perspective in the analysis” (ibid.). The above-mentioned method is usually not used in the community of Polish media scholars, whereas in the English-speaking research area it is employed, among others, by S. Hesse-Biber, K. Webb, H. Campbell, and C. Huddleston-Casas. Guzek accurately exposes the value of complementarity of quantitative and qualitative methods.

In the fifth chapter, the author presents the results of media coverage on the subject of the secular state and the Church-state relationship. Guzek offers an overview of the percentage distribution of individual categories present in the media material, he discusses the coverage of political and religious actors and refers to the results of the media coverage of individual confession as well as nonbelievers.

In the sixth chapter the grounded theory of secular state mediatization is presented. Guzek indicates the axial categories that constitute the analyzed research material, and then proves that there exists certain incoherence on the subject of the secular state. Political actors are adapting to the progressive logic of the media, and the communication of religious actors is becoming more and more professional. Guzek points to the existence of clear traces of banal religion in the research material in the context of the fusion of religion and the state.

The seventh chapter is an attempt to determine the mediatization effect of the secular state based on the results of the reception study. Two important conclusions emerge from the analysis. That social knowledge about the secular state is primarily taken from the media. Respondents unanimously identify the media as their basic source of knowledge about the secular state.

Solid theoretical foundations are a great asset of the book, in particular the references to English-language scholarly literature, which increase the cognitive value of the publication. The monograph is not just a presentation of various concepts of social sciences, but a kind of author’s “discussion” and polemic with them. As an example, one can certainly appreciate the recall of three dimensions of sociological concept of secularization according to José Casanova (progressive loss of beliefs and decline of religious practices in modern societies, privatization of religion, emancipation of secular social spheres from religious institutions) or the concept of secularization according to Charles Taylor presented in the book *Secular Age*. The researchers to whom Guzek refers are among others: K. Asp, A. Bradney,

H. Campbell, J. Casanova, N. Couldry, A. Hepp, S. Hjarvard, A. Jansson, H. Knoblauch, M. Lövheim, N. Luhmann, K. Lundby, J. Mariański, and J. Strömbäck.

The monograph is especially recommended for students of the following fields: journalism and social communication, political science, sociology of religion, as well as for media scholars and political scientists.

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Alicja Jaskiernia (2018). *Monitoring wolności mediów w Europie* [Monitoring Media Freedom in Europe]. Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, pp. 487, ISBN: 978-83-7545-840-4.

The issue of media freedom has recently aroused extraordinary emotions not only in professional, legal, or academic circles, but also among the general public. The media have become the subject of frequent discussions, analyzes, and disputes, and their actions (and also the actions of the authorities regarding the media) are widely discussed in both professional and private situations. It appears that everyone is directly affected by the problem of the media: how they function, who finances them and how they show the world around us. This does not mean, however, that the increased interest in the condition of the media results in a relatively consistent stance of those who take part in the dispute: on the contrary, the increasing polarization of the media disunites the audience to a great extent. The polyphony of judgements, opinions, and descriptions, immersed in the overwhelming mediatization of everything, in the information chaos, in this information oversupply, leads at the same time to degeneration; for example, news is often fake, and the media offer is based on algorithms and cybernetics.

On the other hand, we are facing situations that were unthinkable only a few years ago: in democratic countries, the media are becoming the object of ruthless political pressure, not to mention the violation of bodily integrity and even threats to the lives of journalists. One can even conclude, observing the changes taking place in the countries so far considered to be the forerunners of democracy, that values such as freedom, liberalism, and democracy are on the decline. Instead, they are being replaced by authoritarianism, which always tries to subdue freedom of speech, substituting it with censorship and restrictions on civil liberties and rights.

It seems that we are currently witnessing such processes, both globally and regionally. So, unfortunately (?) we have come to live in interesting times, without any guides, without these bright lighthouses which show the way to knowledge, the understanding of things, awareness of the changes taking place, and the threats