

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.

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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

people working for political parties, particularly political marketing specialists and public relations specialists. This book is for them and about them. It helps the reader be more self-critical in order to be successful in the next election. It will also be a very useful university textbook, particularly for sociologists of media, psychologists, media experts, political scientists and public relations or marketing experts.

The book was published very neatly. The typography and layout used help to understand the text better. The book also has an abstract in English and two indexes, for people and for subjects. The size of this book is very manageable in everyday use.

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Kees Brants and Katrin Voltmer (eds.) (2011). *Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy: Challenging the Primacy of Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 284, ISBN 978-0-230-24335-4.

Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy: Challenging the Primacy of Politics, edited by Kees Brants and Katrin Voltmer, is a newly published aggregation of short essays, written by distinguished experts and scholars in the field of political communication. The research results remain a joint venture of some of the leading scientists from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands who worked in collaboration in order to enlighten the readers on the nature of selected aspects of this perplexed phenomenon in a comparative British-Dutch perspective. The issues discussed here take a highly convoluted form due to the constantly changing face of the discipline itself — in contemporary times or, as suggested by the editors, in the era of postmodern democracy, politics and the media have become more and more interrelated and interdependent domains of human culture. The postmodern period is heavily marked by the principle of uncertainty in relation to a rapidly evolving political scene. Such a tendency is specifically reflected in an increasingly doubtful location, the content and reliability of politics which today meets new challenges stemming from emergent technologies and the ways they are used by the public. Not only have diverse kinds of media evolved, but they have also developed an elaborate and sophisticated set of tools serving present-day democracy in communicating a given message to the audience. The new media landscape has proved to be an asset for both politicians and observers of the political scene who might engage directly in dynamic processes of public life. This assumption is in line with the principal thesis proposed by the authors, suggesting that all types of political institutions are to a large extent incapable of controlling the way in which their messages are communicated and interpreted. It is where