

Karol Jakubowicz (2013), *Media a demokracja w XXI wieku. Poszukiwanie nowych modeli* (Media and democracy in the 21st century. Searching for new models). Warszawa: Poltext Publishing House, pp. 274, ISBN: 978-83-7561-269-1.

This new book by Karol Jakubowicz is a multi-layered study dedicated to the state of modern democracy and the role of media in democratic processes taking place in the digital era. The author at the beginning of the analysis of these two big issues takes the reader one by one through a map of terms and definitions of democracy, forming democracy in modern times and the influence of media and new communication technologies on its formation. The author was inspired by many works about the modern crisis of democracy, from Alvin Toffler and John Naisbitt, Peter Dahlgren, Jurgen Habermas to Ulrich Beck. In particular, a special meaning is given to the opinions of James Carey, an American media expert, equating democracy and media in the context of the subject being analyzed. Jakubowicz agreed with his view that “journalism and democracy are two names for the same thing,” and “where there is no journalism, there is no democracy” (p. 11).

The author dedicates two chapters out of seven to ideological and political frames of democracy in the modern and globalized world, but at the same time divided world (chapter three), and the reasons for the crisis of democracy (chapter two). The remaining five chapters include an originally and deeply thought analysis of relations between democracy and media.

The author commences his considerations from the review of the existing conceptions of the relations between media and democracy, the role of media in democratic political systems (media as a watchdog of authority, an “alarm clock,” media of conflict and social consensus, citizen journalism), and ends them with a question about the possibility to introduce the currently direct communication democracy. The author expresses a view that changing social and technological conditions invalidate a lot of traditional conceptions of the role of media in a democracy, especially because the modern crisis of democracy “puts a question mark over all of them” (p. 27). Also the financial crisis of media, in particular observed in the printed press, transferring a part of the public debate to the internet, creates a situation where traditional media have a lesser possibility to influence the public agenda, to control the dialogue between politics and citizens or to have an educational role. After many scandals involving media (f.e. the British tabloid *News of the World* phone hacking scandal), it is much harder to play the role of “the watchdog of democracy” when one is seen as more of a “hunting dog,” tabloidized and full of contempt for authority. The construction of a “digital union” or a “net union” with which we deal with in the internet era, in his opinion, does not necessarily need to lead to direct democracy. Mass media which would be replaced by “media of the masses” that could materialize it is barely a scenario, more likely to exist in the technological sense than in the social one. In the post-democratic era when although all democratic institutions still function, the *demos*

is weakening under the pressure of huge economic strengths (p. 61). There are changes in many dimensions of modern democratic societies, not always in a positive sense for the democratic condition.

The third chapter is dedicated to the results of globalization and the various effects of international integration and the growing popularity of nationalism, populism and ethnic tensions as resistance against globalization. In the author's opinion, nationalism can be a reaction to globalization and integration processes, and populism is an answer to "all the other" (p. 86). Globalization is a process internally contradictory due to the fact that the resistance that it causes introduces a "new worldwide disarray" (p. 86) or — as John Keane would like it — the "New Middle Ages" (p. 91). The author also cites the opinion of Zygmunt Bauman that globalization is accompanied by the appearance of fundamentalism, polarization and a neo-tribal reactions. In a globalized, neoliberal, post democratic world in which it is the market that controls a state and not the state controls the market, a politically-ideological decomposition takes place within the frames of democracy (p. 95). The role of transnational organizations such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund increases, and the role of the state weakens, ethnicity and nationalism are revitalized, and the eruption of populism particularly dangerous for democracy takes place. The latter tends to be deemed as the "dangerous mutation of democracy," as I. Krastev said (p. 113), or as the "shadow thrown on democracy" because it accuses democratic procedures for failures. As a result, as is observed even within the old democracies, support for authoritarian solutions is growing.

Chapter four and five of the book are a detailed study devoted to the crisis of the role of media in a democracy and such important issues like tabloidization and commodification of media, and mediocracy. In particular tabloidization and commodification of media that erases the differences between journalists' materials and goods or between information and entertainment, transform journalism into "the art of efficient product sales" (p. 125). Therefore, their ability to play an important media role in democracies is reduced. Tabloidized information (sensations, personalized, emotional, trivializing), displacing "hard," serious news, weakens the quality of journalism. Also, the way politics in media looks when presented most often in categories of conflict, aggravates the display of the crisis of democracy. The author makes a review of the attempts to democratize media which means for him taking down the barriers between the medium/communicator and its recipients and the one direction communication of content for the benefit of dialogue and conversation. An element of this process must also be the democratization of media organizations themselves and (...) allowing recipients to have influence on their manner of functioning" (p. 150). Jakubowicz thinks, however, that the expectations of mass participation in forms of meditated communication are unrealistic which does not mean that the new media are without influence on the models of communication. Movements for the democratization of media, which started in western democracies in the middle of the past century, coming from the contestation of the mainstream media and social *status quo*

focus on trivial contents and conflicts, disrupted perspective of viewing politics and helplessness towards threats or hate speech.

The author, just like other researchers, advises that “internet glasses” should be taken off in assessing the abilities of new media. Restraint should be shown in all cases, from the Arabic uprising to the movements of Occupy Wall Street, so willingly deemed as the “internet revolutions” (p. 219). Internet media are a technological revolution without precedence in history, but technology is only a tool for changes because “freedom cannot be won by tweeting” (p. 220). A similar anti-deterministic technological standpoint is presented by the author in many other matters by painting out skepticism towards the prompt arrival of a half-direct democracy. He deems that currently we cannot see solutions that could assure the demand to accomplish a deliberative democracy. In the author’s opinion, the largest challenge of the digital era for new media will be their ability to adapt to similar tasks towards democracy that we expect from traditional media (p. 209). The book by K. Jakubowicz contains his diagnosis regarding the future on democracy and the role of the media, avoiding radical opinions and judgments. A diligent reader will find many interesting issues about the condition of democracy and media, and new roles for everyone in public communication which is created in the digital era, in which all of its participants must find themselves somehow.

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Norbert Merkovity (2012), *Bevezetés a hagyományos és az új politikai kommunikáció elméletébe* (Introduction in the theory of old and new political communication). Szeged: Pólay Elemér Alapítvány, pp. 218, ISBN 978-963-9650-99-2.

The book of Norbert Merkovity confers the area of political communication in two parts, so it concerns itself with both old and new political communication. His aim is to provide a theoretic summary to define, to extend and sometimes to control the achieved results of political communication from the last century until today and he tends to highlight the changes. He analyses the old and new era of political communication and points out the differences of these two periods. Based on Gianpietro Mazoleni’s public dialogue model of political communication, Merkovity distinguishes the actors of political communication, therefore he examines the mentioned eras from the perspective of the political system, the media system and citizens/voters.

The book consists of twelve chapters which are divided into two parts. The first part’s six chapters deal with old political communication. The first chapter starts with the definition of political communication and based on rich interpretations of international literature it describes the definition of political communication on three levels separately — space, public arena and strategy of struggle for power.