

landscape. This knowledge is important because the survival of newsrooms is not the only thing that depends on the professionalism of journalists and on the quality of the journalism they offer. The welfare of local communities and the quality of democracy at the local level is dependent on it too.

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Michał Kuś (2013), *Telewizja publiczna w Hiszpanii. Pomiedzy polityką i rynkiem* (Public television in Spain: Between politics and the market). Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, pp. 129, ISBN: 978-83-229-3368-8.

In his latest book *Public television in Spain. Between politics and the market*, Michał Kuś has addressed an interesting issue of the history and present of public television in Spain. The dividing lines of the work are the death of dictator F. Franco Bahamonde in 1975 and the parliamentary elections in Spain in 2011. Adopting such a time perspective allows the showing of the evolution in Spanish public television in a period of less than 40 years. The author raises the question whether in the case of contemporary Spain any particular or unique model of functioning of public media can be noticed, or there is simply a common trend, which prevails in most European media systems, that also applies to Spanish conditions. As he notes in the introduction/foreword to the book:

When writing about the past and present of Europe, one cannot leave aside the problem of participation and role of the individual institutions of a political system (mainly parliament and political parties) in the process of shaping and functioning of modern European electronic media markets. State and political control over these markets may take many forms. The existing legislation in this area is clearly the starting point. State and political control can be analysed on the personal level (e.g. way of appointing the staff in the media industry), economic level (regulations on financing the media) and the level of controlling content distribution. Therefore the scope and forms of control result from many different factors.

It is the problem of the links and the complex relationships between the electronic media and politics that the author of this peer reviewed work primarily focuses on.

It should be emphasized that Kuś thoroughly accounts for the choice of this particular topic for his book. Firstly, since its establishment, television has been perceived as the medium which exerts the most powerful influence on public attitudes and opinions. This is the reason why it was and often continues to be subjected to special form of control, mainly in relation to broadcast content. The moral and cultural arguments, on the one hand, and the economic ones, on the other, have often been used to justify control. As Spanish television does not meet all the criteria for the model of public television, it is clear that Spain has not been a random choice. The commonly

accepted concept, which distinguishes between the two following models: commercial broadcaster (American model) and public television (European model) and accordingly the two media regulation systems: commercial and public broadcasting, has proved to be insufficient in the case of Spain. The differences observed in these models are based on disparate roles of a state, ways of financing the medium, its objectives in relation to broadcast programmes, the models of audience and social legitimization. Spain has not been a random choice. As the author explains, the traditions of strict political control over the media were inherited in Spain after the period of authoritarian rule. Moreover, the model of financing state-owned (public) television based on revenue from advertising, which is not typical for European countries, was adopted. In addition, despite the rapid economic development Spain still lags behind other EU countries as for the development of the media. This backwardness is, according to the author, rather structural and institutional than economic.

Both the chronological order and the order based on the issues presented have been applied in the work. The period of time between 1975 and 2011 which is covered in the book has been divided into four sub-periods closely related to the political and social history of Spain. The first chapter discusses the sub-period from 1975 to 1982: the times since the death of the dictator F. Franco Bahamonde to the seizure of power by the socialist party PSOE. The second chapter describes the phase from 1982 to 1996 — the times of the governing of PSOE. The third chapter discusses the sub-period from 1996 to 2004 — during the rule of the right-wing party known as Partido Popular.

The last chapter includes the period between the years 2004 and 2011 — the septennium of socialist governance (cabinets of J.L. Rodriguez Zapatero). With the reference to all the sub-periods mentioned, the author examines the legal background — the Spanish legislation concerning both public and private electronic media. He also refers to the most important legal acts issued by the autonomous communities of Spain. Moreover, in each of the sub-period he discusses HR policy, financial control and control over the content of the electronic media. The analysis of the last two aspects is carried out for both public and private media. The method of analysis has been taken from the concepts on the dimensions of political (state) control over the mass media by J. Blumler and M. Gurevitch. According to the author of the peer reviewed book, the life cycles of the public media and, in general, of the electronic media market are in the case of Spain closely related to political changes. In the distinguished sub-periods there was a uniform government audiovisual policy and each of the sub-periods can be perceived from the angle of the influence of the ruling party and the Prime Minister.

In the times after the collapse of the Franco regime until 1980, public television in Spain functioned by and large beyond democratic regulations. In the years that followed the links between politics and the public media were still very close which, as the author suggests, resulted from the specificity of Spanish political culture reflected in the habits and practices of political elites. The sub-period from 1982 to

1996, with PSOE as the ruling party, did not bring any significant changes. The authority of the state continued to treat the media, including public television, instrumentally, as “political prey.” Both positive and negative trends in the functioning of the television can be noticed between 1996 and 2004 when the rightist party Partido Popular ruled. The level of politicization of media remained high, although the gradual compliance of the audiovisual market regulations with the EU requirements was to liberate the public media from direct political control. However, at the same time, the dynamic development of commercialisation of the Spanish audiovisual market could be observed similarly to other European countries. During the rule of the Partido Popular the process of digitisation of Spanish radio and television began together with the advancing of tabloidization of the electronic media. Socialist rule between 2004 and 2011 brought some significant changes in the functioning of Spanish public television. The most important include: partial de-politicisation of the public media (with regards to the staff policy and the policy concerning the television programmes) and fundamental changes in the financing of public media, which brought a solution to public television’s huge debt problem. The reforms carried out by the socialist party and Prime Minister Zapatero led to the reduction in employment and nearly halved the RTVE staff, which transformed Spanish public television into a kind of “bonsai” — nice, though relatively small. Despite the criticism of the reforms, public television in Spain has a chance to carry out its mission, e. g. by producing programmes on culture.

Over the last several years many different theoretical concepts on the relationships between the mass media and politics have emerged, such as the theories of J. Blumler and M. Gurevitch or D. Hallin and P. Mancini, to name but a few examples. The research on the Spanish media system carried out by Kuś is a significant contribution to the verification of the theoretical assumptions. The book by Michał Kuś provides a clear account of the specificity of the Spanish audiovisual market. It is highly recommended to all readers interested in the subject of media systems, their evolution and the ever-present relationships between the politics and the media.

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Adina Zemanek (ed.) (2014), *Media in China, China in the Media. Processes, Strategies, Images, Identities*. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, pp. 212, ISBN: 978-83-233-3621-1.

In the vast landscape of media systems all around the world, China still tends to be the *terra incognita* for many western scholars. Today’s media system discourse is