

lish and American academics, enriched with the results of research conducted by Polish academics. Thanks to such a synthetic approach, this publication becomes a book which can be inspiring for media specialists, psychologists and students who are interested in the interdisciplinary perspective on the human-media relation in the “era of engagement.”

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Antonio Momoc (2014), *Comunicarea 2.0. New media, participare si populism* (Communication 2.0. New Media, Participation and Populism), Iasi: Adenium Publishing, pp. 272, ISBN: 978-606-8622-29-3.

The book, *Communication 2.0. New media, participation and populism*, by Antonio Momoc who is Assistant Professor in Political Communication at the University of Bucharest, focuses on the intricate relationships between contemporary communication studies and political sciences, in the versatile realm of new media. It is a daring endeavor, as “new media” today are the expression of a constant technological and social change, which influences in a determinant way both journalism and political communication. The book is, from this point of view, a useful information tool for journalists, advertising and PR specialists, NGO activists, politicians, and social media users who are interested in the growth of internet consumption and its consequences on the change of media consumption habits and political communication strategies.

Antonio Momoc’s book is composed of four chapters (*Communication, Political Communication, Online Communication, and 2.0 Populism and Participation*). The first chapter puts communication 2.0 in the context of interpersonal, public and mass communication in an attempt to explain mechanisms such as influence, persuasion, propaganda and manipulation and their relation with new communication platforms. The second chapter is an overview of the main theories related to political communication. Concepts like “watchdog,” “agenda setting,” “agenda building” and “propaganda” are discussed in the context of the new media and their evolution. The third chapter addresses online communication and its contradictions. The new media encourage political participation and consumerism, at the same time (p. 129). They become a platform for political actors, but not all citizens are able to connect (the mere expression of the digital and political divide). The last chapter of the book relies on the results of recent studies on how neo-populists used new media to persuade and to attract individuals into the techno-populist movements.

Communication 2.0. New media, participation and populism's declared aim is to explain the relations between the new forms of online political communication and civic journalism (both of them encouraging and fostering civic participation) and the emergence of new forms of populism. The digital era encourages the digital and political divide and social fragmentation argues the author, quoting reputed authors like P. Norris and C.R. Sunstein. However, the “search and share” revolution strongly influenced interpersonal and social communication at the same time, changing forever the journalism, advertising, PR and marketing industries.

The author considers that the Facebook and Twitter “revolutions” polarized the analysts of the phenomenon into optimists and pessimists of 2.0 participation. “The 2.0 participation pessimists blamed authoritarian regimes in Asia, Middle East or Northern Africa for using Western technologies to supervise and control the population — Google in China or The Big Firewall etc. The 2.0 participation optimists were enthusiastic regarding the so-called Facebook and Twitter ‘revolution’ during the Arab Spring (Iran, Egypt, Tunisia) and the ways in which common people used social networks to oppose the authorities in an organized manner, considering their protests were not covered by the mainstream media,” explains the author (p. 234).

The book explains how new media mechanisms were used by moderate and populist politicians to reach electoral success: “Howard Dean (in 2004) and Barack Obama (in 2008) used social media to mobilize voters to cast their ballot. The new technologies are also utilized as attack tools against competitors: in the 2004 presidential elections in Romania, candidate Traian Băsescu first resorted to being a digital guerrilla” (p. 235). The author argues that cyber-populists or new-populists completely rejected traditional media on the grounds that it is “bought.” This rejection brought them credibility in the eyes of social media users.

In this very context of the fading credibility and usage of traditional media, the author describes new ways of practising journalism: citizen journalism and participatory journalism. The emergence of an alternative press is considered by the author as a civil society response to the lack of access to mainstream media, and as a citizens’ protest against the submission of the traditional press. The phenomenon of citizen journalism is also reviewed from the perspective of the new social movements (NSM), i.e. Occupy Movements. The public is not considered to be passive anymore, as by user-generated content it contributes to the process of selecting and disseminating of news and other types of information. The role of journalist as gatekeeper fades out, in the given circumstances. Millions of users now have the possibility to contribute to the “search and share” revolution mentioned above. New journalistic practices emerge, and the public takes over some of the traditional functions of the “old” media institutions. The paradigm of expert as epistemic authority is also subject to serious questioning in the era of communication 2.0.

The book of Antonio Momoc ends with a question to which readers are invited to find their own answers: Is access to the Internet and new technologies a possibil-

ity to foster civic responsibility or is it just an expression of social manipulation? Based on the findings in his book, we may conclude that Antonio Momoc shares an optimistic view on this matter. He believes in a society opened to real communication and real social change for the benefit of democracy. His book is, as mentioned above, a daring endeavor, which combines serious scientific research with lived experience, on “terra incognita” of communication 2.0.

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