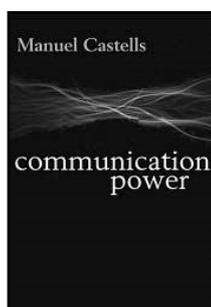


Books review

CASTELLS, M. *Communication Power*.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, 571 pages.

ISBN: 978-0-19-956704-1



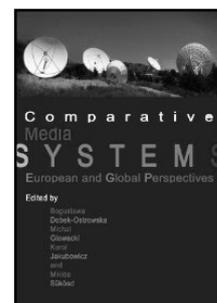
The latest book by Manuel Castells, and continuing the author's previous volumes, presents an analysis of the network society, the social structure that characterises society of the 21st century and that is constructed around digital communication networks. This is a critical, scientifically solid book of great use to anyone interested in understanding the role of political power in the network society.

It is also easy to read and accompanied by up-to-date examples and empirical data from many research studies (mostly from the Anglo-Saxon academic world), presented in five chapters. The first three chapters tackle the definition of the concepts "power in the network society", "communication in the digital age" and "networks of mind and power". In the first chapter, Castells avoids technological determinism and presents a summary of the main elements of the network society: exercising power and counter-power, society and global networks. The second chapter describes the transformation of audiences from receivers to producers of messages and proposes the concept of mass self-communication, through which the new forms of network communication promote new opportunities for social change. The third chapter connects the network society with framing theory to analyse the relationship between emotion, cognition and politics. From this point, chapter 4 explains why, in the network society, current politics is media politics, focused basically on the politics of scandal and relates this kind of politics with the crisis of legitimacy and lack of trust seen at a global level, challenging the meaning of democracy. Lastly, chapter 5, referring to the last North American elections, tackles the new types of power and explores how different social movements act in our society by reprogramming communication networks.

DOBEK-OSTROWSKA, B.; GLOWACKI, M.; KAROL JAKUBOWICZ; MIKLÓS SÜKÖSD, M. (ed.) *Comparative Media Systems: European and Global Perspectives*.

Budapest – New York: Central European University Press, 2010, 304 pages.

ISBN: 978-963-9776-54-8



This new volume has appeared in the wake of the now established *Comparing Media Systems* by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini. This is a compilation, with a prologue by Mancini and Hallin themselves, extends their perspective by adding nuances to their model and particularly by introducing countries to the East. The introduction by Karol Jakubowicz already moves in this direction and the first chapter by Hans J. Kleinsteuber lays the foundations for a comparison between the media systems of Western and Eastern Europe. The book also offers a view of the Turkish media system within the perspective of the three models (corporate democratic, liberal and polarised pluralist), with some characteristics of the three but with a marked tendency towards the "Mediterranean" model. We also find a significant number of researchers from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, such as Carles Llorens and Isabel Fernández, writing a chapter comparing the reform of the public radio and television systems in the United Kingdom and Spain during the period 2004-2007; as well as a contribution by Laura Bergés with a specific study of the "convulsed" transformations of the Spanish television production model. We can also find a description of the Ukrainian public radio and television service by Olexiy Khabyuk. The last few chapters focus particularly on the ups and downs of journalism which, in Eastern Europe, is also going through uncertain times. In this respect, the book provides a text by Wolfgang Donsbach on the effects of globalisation in the professional structures of journalism, which is also studied with a relatively different perspective by the Lithuanian and Estonia researchers Aukšė Balcytienė and Halliki Harro-Loit, respectively. Lucyna Szot also reviews the labour problems of journalists in Poland and Maren Röger talks of the tabloid discourse of Axel Springer, *Fakt*, in this country. It is worth mentioning the collective chapter, led by Hartmut Wessler, where we find a series of conjectures on the influence of the structure of media systems on how discourse is constructed.

DWYER, T. *Media Convergence*.
 Buckinghamshire: Mc-Graw-Hill–Open University Press,
 2010, 208 pages. ISBN: 9780335228737



Tim Dwyer is a professor at Sydney University and a specialist in communication policy, and in this book he investigates the issue of present-day digital technology convergence. The book does its bit to this debate and also attempts to tackle digital convergence as a new common space where various political-economic ideologies converge to impose a series of models

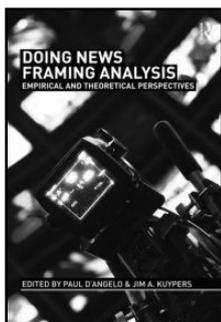
for interpreting reality on top of other ones (chapter 1). Particularly, *the assumption is made that the term [convergence] often obscures important shifts in work practices, editorial processes and publishing strategies*. In this respect, many different cases are reviewed, sometimes with particular attention to the effects of this process on the distance between the internet and television. This more structuralist view is also complemented by a warning regarding the emergence of new practices by users that transform the media, so that the industry often finds itself lagging behind and has to adapt to new uses. Consequently, in chapter 2 the author analyses the acquisition of MySpace by the conglomerate News Corporation, as an example of what is happening. Of particular note is chapter 3 (*Media Ownership and the Nation-State*), reviewing the legal framework of Canada, New Zealand, Australia, United States and United Kingdom, Dwyer's speciality. The book also tackles the academic debate regarding this area, revisiting the concept of *mediatization* and, in summary, reviewing the different aspects of media convergence: technological, industrial, legal, commercial, etc., and their effect on how liberal democracies function. Without obviating a certain ideological positioning in this respect, the last chapter proposes that more social democratic models of communication policy should be re-acquired, in line with the measures that have been adopted everywhere after the financial disorders resulting from the last economic crisis. This kind of policy, argues Dwyer, would also encourage citizen control of the media sphere, avoiding private monopolies and ensuring content diversity.

GRABER, D. *Mass Media and American Politics*.
 Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2010, 384 pages.
 ISBN: 978-1604264609



This is the latest update of a reference book on political communication. In this edition, Graber reinvents, as she says herself in the preface, the original volume to include the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) that are changing the news scenario in the world, reflecting the political and technological changes that have occurred since the publication of the previous edition in 2005. The first few chapters provide a description of the North American media system, a description of the function of the media and their effects, and issues such as the regulation and impact of new media on the new media landscape. There is also a description of the legal, political and economic framework in which the North American media operate and their journalistic routines. Then, in chapter 5, there is a list of the changes occurring in news in times of crisis or when information is provided on extraordinary facts. It is as from chapter 6 that the book tackles the relationship between the media and politics, be it the ethical problems involved in the political activism of journalists or how the media influence citizens' attitudes and behaviour. The next chapters focus on election coverage, paying particular attention to the technological changes that have made the internet a political tool that empowers citizens. As an example, there is a description of the campaigns by Obama (called "the campaign to come") and McCain ("the prototypical campaign of the past"). The book then deals with the role of the media in the judicial system and at a local and state level, and the impact of news on North American foreign policy, of particular interest being the section on the coverage of armed conflicts. The volume concludes with an interesting discussion on the new challenges and political trends in the web 2.0 era (distribution of news produced by citizens, political consequences of *netizens*, the future of the public media, the impact of new technologies, the multiplication of platforms and regulatory policies for the new media space).

D'ANGELO, P; KUYPERS, J. A. (ed.). *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010, 392 pages. ISBN: 978-0-415-99236-7



Since the appearance of the book by Reese, Gandy and Grant entitled *Framing Public Life* (2003), we have needed a volume that tackles framing theory seriously when applied to communication studies. This volume, edited by d'Angelo and Kuypers, is quite a useful methodological conceptual guide for future research based on framing theory. The book has thirteen

articles divided into three sections. In the first section, dedicated to the construction of framing, of note are the articles by Reese on the frames used in the so-called "war on terror", the article by Nisbet on the frames used in news related to climate change and poverty, the articles by van Gorp and by B.T. Scheufele and D.A. Scheufele that tackle the methodology and reconstruction of frames, quite an important issue, and the innovative analysis by Cooper of the relationship between framing and the blogosphere. The second part of the book presents different perspectives of the effects of framing. For example, Brewer and Gross describe the effects of framing on public opinion, listing the different methodologies used to carry out the analysis (laboratory experiments, experimental surveys, fieldwork, content analysis, in-depth interviews, focus groups), and Coleman explores the effects of framing and agenda setting on visual images (*visual framing*). The last part of this volume contains different articles brought together under the title 'Theoretical integration in news framing analysis'. We should particularly mention the article by Lawrence, presenting research into political news framing, while Hardin and Whiteside analyse framing from a feminist perspective. The volume ends with a chapter written by Robert Entman, analysing the power of the media through framing theory. In short, this is a reference book for all those who wish to learn about framing theory in communication studies.

HANSEN, A. *Environment, Media and Communication*. New York: Routledge, 2010, 256 pages. ISBN: 978-0-415-42576-6

Environment, Media and Communication is a book that forms part of a phenomenon covering many different disciplines apart from communication: the appearance of issues related to climate change on the public agenda. Hansen, a lecturer at the University of Leicester, presents quite a theoretical book but one full of examples and cases to illustrate his theses, as well as exercises for readers to familiarise themselves with them. The book takes a thorough look at the construction of discourses on the environment by the media and how these discourses affect people's social perceptions concerning the different environmental challenges facing humanity today. The different exercises proposed are accompanied by capsules as digressions that deal with specific issues, such as the significance of hypertext on the internet as a source of information, an evaluation of public relations in how news is constructed, and the image of nature in advertising, among other subjects. Hansen uses concepts from frame analysis, frame packaging and, in general, a markedly constructivist perspective is taken when analysing the media background that interacts with the ecological crisis. We therefore find harsh criticism both of the "environment business" and also the banal or, on the other hand, sometimes sensationalist treatment of ecological themes in all the media, with particular attention on news content. For this reason, this book also focuses on the interests created and on the political and economic agents involved in any environmental problem of a local nature, as well as its importance at a global level. Specific communication and awareness raising campaigns for the environment are also analysed, taking into account the scenario made up by the public sphere in the media, as a territory that ecological groups are trying to take over in order to make their demands heard.



Others books of interest

COSTA, LL. *La comunicació local*. UOC – Vull Saber, 2009, 92 pages. ISBN: 978-8497888219

GONZÁLEZ CONDE, M. J. *La radio: el sonido de la supervivencia*. Universitas, 2009, 330 pages. ISBN: 978-8479912642

McPHAIL, T. (ed.). *Development Communication: Reframing the Role of the Media*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 256 pages. ISBN: 978-1405187947

JAMIESON, K. H.; CAPPELLA, J. N. *Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media Establishment*. Oxford University Press, 2010, 320 pages. ISBN: 978-0195398601

HARTMANN, T. (ed.). *Media Choice: A Theoretical and Empirical Overview*. Routledge, 2009, 305 pages. ISBN: 978-0-415-96458-6