

The editors, Lange and Ward, provide two useful chapters in the end that synthesize the case findings. Echoing many contributors' viewpoints, Ward says, "In none of the countries studied in this book is the organization of elections via the mass media a perfect model and it is possible to identify certain areas where failings in the systems have occurred and will continue to do so in the future." Furthermore, he concludes that "although there are indeed a set of core principles that act as both the philosophical and moral foundation of liberal democratic systems of government, there are also strong national specificities that must be taken into consideration. The style and nature of how elections are approached by the mass media varies not only between countries, but also within countries, and depending on the media sector." Alas, the "end of the history" prediction seems premature in light of this comparative analysis about media and elections. It could be a long time before we really perfect the political system that humans can possibly envision and practice.

In the last chapter, Lange provides thorough and useful suggestions derived from the observations about the nations under study. Additionally, Lange's ideals and normative recommendations regarding the multifaceted interaction between politics and media—particularly broadcasting and print media—could be beneficial to both law and policymakers in different democracies. The advent of Internet-based technologies, however, seems to challenge the traditional wisdom and deconstruct the existing governance of media. Although still in its infancy, the Internet has already broken apart the very concepts that helped categorize the functions and characteristics of traditional media, even blurring the roles of information senders and receivers. With so many exciting political activities and breakthroughs happening online, researchers simply cannot shun this new-

comer and its influence on future political events.

Although the book deserves applause for the editors' conscientious effort to pursue comparisons, a substantial part of the world is not covered. A host of Latin American and Asian democracies, unfortunately, are not included in the book. Geographic differences could be a variable that warrants further inspection. Another potential factor to differentiate the existing democracies is the country's length of tenure in practicing democratic political system and/or privatizing mass media. Given this, many new democracies, i.e., the countries that belonged to the former East European bloc, South Korea, and Taiwan, could be interesting cases to examine: Do their political and media systems interact any differently from the "developed" democracies? Perhaps another volume should ensue to formulate a more complete and meaningful picture.

This book is ideal for classes in media and politics, comparative media systems, comparative or European politics, and international communication. Each chapter would be appropriate for students interested in a specific nation. Professor Lange is a member of the board of governors of the European Institute for the Media. Professor Ward is head of the Communication Policies Programme and director of Research and Strategy at the European Institute for the Media.

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■ *The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the 21st Century.* Robert W. McChesney. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004. 352 pp. \$45 hbk. 16.95 pbk.

Media scholar Robert W. McChesney has written what is probably the most important of his several books on America's media monopolies and oligop-

olies. *The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the 21st Century* is a thought-provoking and comprehensive analysis of why corporatization of the media is so pervasive today, why it is fated to get worse if the public does not get involved, and why it is dangerous for both journalism and democracy.

In this latest account McChesney has pulled together the most powerful conclusions and insights from his earlier books along with new evidence and renewed focus. McChesney wrote to the reviewer, "*The Problem of the Media* really culminates 20 years of research on media for me, at least with regard to domestic U.S. policies and systems."

The manuscript's completion in late 2003 gave McChesney time to document and explain the unprecedented and successful grassroots uprising against the FCC majority's high-handed vote of 2 June 2003 which would have allowed greater cross-ownership and national market control by the largest media corporations. The uprising was the first hopeful development after decades of public apathy toward increasing media consolidation.

McChesney was so encouraged by its success that he devotes his final chapter to what he calls "a remarkable and mostly unanticipated first step" toward public participation in national media policy making.

In the preface, McChesney presents eight myths of the media. He then devotes his book to dissecting the eight myths, explaining their consequences for news coverage, and disproving them. This review's length is not adequate to discuss all eight myths, but the publisher offers the preface on the book's companion Website at [www.mediaproblem.org](http://www.mediaproblem.org), and it is well worth the few minutes it takes to download and read.

The eight myths, McChesney says, encourage and protect "the corporate-insider hegemony over media policy debates and the lack of public participa-

tion" that has prevailed for so long in the United States. The book is built on McChesney's foundational observation: "The corporate domination of both the media system and policy-making process that establishes and sustains it causes serious problems for a functioning democracy."

He notes that most media outlets fail to cover issues that are not in the interests of the national and international conglomerates that own them; that, in turn, has led to a marginalization of the poor and the working class because of their undesirability as a market for advertisers. He says the idea that the media "give the people what they want" is a myth because media increasingly only give people what the advertisers and ownership want. McChesney emphasizes in the book, "Ownership does matter, especially in media, where control over ideas, news and culture rates as a unique power even among powerful corporations."

The book is not just a litany of woes about the regrettable state of today's journalism with its stifling preoccupation with profit. McChesney also offers suggestions for how public accountability can be demanded of media corporations if only the public will actively support media reform and the politicians will muster the courage to defy the media lobbyists. It won't be easy. His judgment about the newly consolidated radio industry applies equally to all the media when he says the current situation "is a case of corrupt policy making that allowed a handful of large companies to run wild."

Another of the myths is that this stranglehold on the major news media by publicly traded media giants is a natural result of free market forces. McChesney convincingly argues that the situation actually is the direct result of past and continuing government policy decisions.

Ben H. Bagdikian, who first called attention twenty-one years ago to the emergence of giant media corporations, is

among nearly forty media scholars, professionals, and activists featured on the companion Website for McChesney's book. Bagdikian says, "*The Problem of the Media* is another of McChesney's important contributions toward a greater understanding of how the major media and government policy makers have denied the American public information they need to understand and protest damage to democracy inflicted by official and corporate communications policies."

McChesney is a professor of communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is the author or coauthor of eight other books dealing with the effects of America's media being swallowed by huge media and entertainment conglomerates and the cofounder of Free Press, which is working to raise public awareness about the dangers of a few corporations gaining control over the U.S. news media.

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■ *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy.* Robert W. Entman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. 229 pp. \$16 pbk.

Politicians, the military, and the public are struggling to change paradigms in a post-Cold War, post-September 11 world—how to determine international policy and secure a homeland when threats are not bound to borders and nations—and media researchers are crafting their own interpretations of how journalism is, or should be, emerging to strengthen democracy and the public good in this new world.

In *Projections of Power*, Robert Entman constructs a "cascading activation" model to reflect the news framing process among key politicians, important national media,

and the public. Ideas "cascade" from the administration to other elites (Congress, experts, foreign leaders), to the media, to news frames, and then to the public. "The farther an idea travels between levels of the cascade, the fainter the traces of the 'real' situation are—whether the actual perceptions, goals, and calculations of the president way at the top, or the true mix of public sentiments moving from the bottom back up to policymakers," the author says.

He then offers five propositions of the model and examines them primarily through coverage and framing of the Korean Airline and Iran Air flights blown from the skies in the 1980s (Chapter 2); U.S. military action in Grenada, Libya, and Panama prior to the Gulf War (Chapter 3); and debate about the Gulf War in 1990-1991 (Chapter 4). These case studies are older and are used to build evidence for Entman's arguments.

Entman, a professor at North Carolina State University, is co-author of *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America* (2000) and co-editor of *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy* (2001). He is a central figure in framing research, and thus is eminently qualified to undertake a comprehensive look at the framing of news in international coverage.

The important part of this book is not whether the model is correct as presented; Entman asks for further research and testing. Scholars might examine whether the cascading activation model as presented—even with proper attention to interdependency of public opinion, media coverage, and political strategies—reinforces a more traditional vertical, top-down, method of influence from politicians and elite media.

In an era when challenges to political leaders and elite media are offered by horizontal communications, the landscape of which groups have the ability to get their message to a sizeable (elite or not) audi-

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