Media & Democracy

edited by

Everette E. Dennis
Robert W. Snyder

Transaction Publishers
New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.)
## Contents

*Preface*  xi  
*Introduction*  xv  

### Part I: Definitive Questions

1. Media and Democracy  
   *Leo Bogart*  
   An author, media scholar and former Media Studies Center senior fellow explains why the media are not, inherently, agents of democracy. “Mass media can serve democracy only when those who manage them feel a passionate responsibility to create it and maintain it.”  

2. New Roles for New Times?  
   *Denis McQuail*  
   Market and technological forces are altering the role of the media in public life, argues a professor of communications at the University of Amsterdam and former Media Studies Center senior fellow. “Whether one is a pessimist or an optimist, there is little doubt that things are changing fundamentally and a reassessment of the media-politics relationship is high on the agenda for those who care about democracy.”  

### Part II: Media and the Dynamics of Democracy Around the World

3. Opinion—The New Authority  
   *Boutros Boutros-Ghali*  
   “For the past two centuries, it was *law* that provided the source of authority for democracy. Today, law seems to be replaced by *opinion* as the source of authority, and the media serve as the arbiters of public opinion.” In this new situation, the former secretary-general of the United Nations makes a firm commitment to press freedom.
vi Media and Democracy

4. A Soul of the Soul  
Václav Havel

The president of the Czech Republic considers the importance of a free press, responsibility and cultural standards. "In its own way, the press—as a part of the information and communication system of today's civilization—is a soul of the soul of all mankind. It is a medium of self-understanding."

5. Creating Public Knowledge  
Michael Schudson

The power of the press is closely related to democracy, writes a professor of communication and sociology at the University of California, San Diego and former Media Studies Center fellow. "The news gains power not in its direct impact on audiences but in the belief, justified in viable democracies, that the knowledge of citizens can from time to time be effective."

6. Maoism vs. Media in the Marketplace  
Orville Schell

The Chinese Communist Party is introducing market economics while maintaining control in the political realm, writes a veteran China watcher, now dean of the University of California's Graduate School of Journalism. "But just as the pressure of one geologic plate against another creates earthquakes, it is possible that China's increasingly market-driven media will ultimately collide with its stubbornly resistant, Leninist state in a politically tectonic way."

7. Transforming Television in India  
Sevanti Ninan

Market reforms and satellite television have transformed Indian broadcasting, writes the television critic for The Hindu in New Delhi, India. But there is a price: "Television, which was started in India to remedy underdevelopment, is now preoccupied with commercial broadcasting."

8. The Price of African Press Freedom  
Joe Davidson

In the '90s, writes a Wall Street Journal reporter who has covered Africa since 1986, African nations have intensified efforts to establish market economies and multiparty democracies. "Growing pains, however, including squabbles over press freedom, will continue to be part of the process."
9. Magic Realism in Latin America
   Maria Luisa MacKay

As nations struggle to build democracies and market economies, journalists wrestle with everything from censorship to bringing down governments. "In the land of magic realism everything can happen," notes a writer for Clarín of Buenos Aires, Argentina—"hell and utopia alike."

10. Samizdat Goes Public
    Adam Michnik

In the old world of communism, writes the editor in chief of Poland’s Gazeta Wyborcza, the difference between good and evil was as clear as the contrast between black and white. "In the world of democracy, the prevailing color is gray. This world is ruled by arguments which are divided and not complete, by partial and contradictory interests."

11. Breaking Censorship—Making Peace
    Gábor Démény

The mayor of Budapest, Hungary—a former samizdat publisher—explores the growing appreciation of free expression in Eastern Europe. "I take this as the safest guarantee of the demise of censorship, which is destined to become a phenomenon so irrelevant that in the future it will arouse only the interest of media historians."

12. A Tyranny of Images
    Monroe E. Price

In the countries of the former Soviet Union a distinctly different view of press freedom has emerged, argues a communications law scholar. "In the emerging battle for identities in Ukraine or Kazakhstan, Estonia or Azerbaijan, independence has often meant, above all, freedom from televised images produced by Russia."

13. Exporting American Media
    John Maxwell Hamilton and George A. Krimsky

Since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, Americans have ventured abroad to spread their journalistic gospel. The dean of the Manship School of Mass Communication and former president of the Center for Foreign Journalists offer suggestions. "Foreign media assistance requires a long-term view. Patience, not a quick fix, will make the difference."
Part III: Journalism as a Democratic Discipline

14. Regaining Dignity
   
   Robert MacNeil
   
   Journalists will regain some dignity if they stop thinking of themselves as members of the media, argues the veteran broadcaster and author. “We are what we call ourselves. And for 40 years I have been proud to call myself a journalist. I think media stinks!”

15. Images that Injure
   
   Brian Mulroney
   
   The power of the media must be exercised fairly, writes the former prime minister of Canada. “No leader who has seen responsible public policy initiatives subverted or smothered by mountains of trivia and drivel and trash will disagree with the notion that perseverance in the face of indignity is one of the fundamental requirements of modern leadership.”

16. Scoping Out Habermas
   
   Victor Navasky
   
   In a personal interview, the scholar Jürgen Habermas explains to the The Nation’s publisher and editorial director the purpose of critical opinion magazines: “At the core of their mission is to maintain the discursive character of public communication. Who else, if not this type of press, is going to set the standards?”

17. Public Journalism—Defining a Democratic Art
   
   Davis Merritt
   
   The former editor of the Wichita (Kan.) Eagle explores the roots and purpose of public journalism. “Its objective is to find ways for journalism to serve a purpose beyond—but not in place of—telling the news: the purpose of reinvigorating public life by re-engaging people in it.”

18. Journalists and Democratic Memory
   
   Donald W. Shriver Jr.
   
   How should journalists in a democracy write about the past? A professor of social ethics at Union Theological Seminary and former Media Studies Center senior fellow offers suggestions. “Their goal should be to remember the past with the fullness, accuracy and empathy that prevent people from stereotyping one another and thus perpetuating their mutual enmity.”
19. Diversity, Democracy and Niche Markets  
*Nancy Hicks Maynard*

Niche marketing and new information technologies will “enhance occupational and economic opportunities,” writes the former publisher of the *Oakland Tribune*. “Potential social impacts are less clear. This boon for the market may result in lousy social policy if it causes enclaves to dominate our political structure to the exclusion of a common national vision.”

20. Journalists—Professionals in a Market Culture  
*Margaret T. Gordon*

“Owners and investors have a right to make money,” writes a professor and former dean of the Graduate School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington and former Media Studies Center senior fellow. “But has it gone too far? Are the First Amendment and professional ideals now being endangered by the drive for increased profits?”

21. Scorned in an Era of Triumphant Democracy  
*Andie Tucher and Dan Bischoff*

Why are journalists so unpopular? An ABC television producer and an editor at *WORLD BUSINESS* provide some explanations. “People want explanations—but they want explanations that confirm their general assumptions about the way the world works, reinforce the facts they already know and uphold the beliefs they cherish.”

**Part IV: Democracy and New Media**

22. The Electronic Republic  
*Lawrence K. Grossman*

Interactive telecommunications are changing politics and government, argues the president of the PBS Horizons Cable Network and former Media Studies Center senior fellow. “In the electronic republic, it will no longer be the press but the public that functions as the nation’s powerful Fourth Estate, alongside the executive, the legislative and the judiciary.”
“Fears that on-line media will render obsolete traditional forms of communication are unrealistic,” writes a scholar at Tufts University. “On-line services could enable a greater realization of principles like equal access to information and freedom of expression, both of which are commonly associated with a sound democracy.”

The Internet does not threaten American journalism, argues the author, a professor in the Graduate School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington. “Rather than dismiss new media as interlopers, journalists should seize the opportunities they provide to enrich and to extend the best of journalistic practice.”

In Toronto, Citytv’s “Speakers Corner” uses a video kiosk to give ordinary viewers a chance to get on the air. Moses Znaimer, founder of Citytv, calls it “unmediated,” a “rough and real alternative” to the “slick, prepackaged” media content of the United States.

A Canadian media scholar explores works on the media and democratic discourse. “The complaint is not simply that these enormous agencies of public address are being squandered on trivia and titillation when they could well be instruments of social betterment. Rather, as almost everyone who thinks seriously about the matter agrees, it’s that they are actively making us all dumber. Right and left differ only on whether this is inadvertent or structurally convenient.”

For Further Reading

Index