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**JÁN VIŠŇOVSKÝ, JULIÁNA MINÁRIKOVÁ, MIROSLAV KAPEC (2022):  
*SLOVENSKÝ MEDIÁLNY PRIEMYSEL* [THE SLOVAK MEDIA INDUSTRY],  
PRAHA: WOLTERS KLUWER, 135 PP., ISBN: 978-80-7676-596-2.**

From their origin onwards, media have become an inseparable part of our modern society. While having an impact on their users and consumers, due to the development of modern technologies and various changes in modern lifestyles, there are several iterations in their current operating formats. Contemporary states, their representatives and citizens face numerous challenges to make media function in the best possible way. First, suitable legislation is needed that meets the criteria of our new and dynamically changing times, with constantly developing technologies and emerging topics. Transparency is crucial in the context of concentration of media ownership and the funding of media outlets. Furthermore, the performance of journalists must be professional and highly ethical to provide high-quality work and provide a clear and unambiguous distinction between editorial and advertorial contents. Journalists must also be responsible for the published content and restricting sponsorship, the process of digitization, and the free access to the information for both the journalists and the public. The role of media as the watchdog of democracy has been important for decades, and it is crucial to continue providing this function today when most people believe that they live in countries that abide by the rule of law. Therefore, to build and maintain a thriving democracy, special emphasis needs to be placed on investigative journalism, along with proper protection for media professionals who seek to expose the misconduct, scandals and corruption that unfortunately is still abundant in twenty-first century societies.

Furthermore, every media market ought to be prepared to deal with unaccustomed problems that constantly appear or ample unexpected crises, as we have experience in recent years—the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic with all the consequences it had on the media, language or communities globally; the ongoing war in Ukraine; and the complex issue of migration. The occurrence of new topics and concepts such as the phenomenon of political correctness and its influence on language, agendas, actions or conduct. There is also the arrogant endeavour of politicians and public figures to make use of media for their own sakes —be it for winning an election, getting better ratings, or spreading their ideas and views, or joining the unrestrained influx of fake news. The transparency and plurality of the media market is fundamental for a well-functioning

modern state, however, recently we have witnessed deep and probably irreversible changes – the gradual loss of ability to set the agenda, along with the decline of circulations and readership, the rise of publishing costs and the fall of advertising revenue in the case of the traditional print media, while social media, especially social networks gain more importance in providing information and news.

Print media as well as the traditional electronic media – radio and TV – face the challenge of maintaining their positions in the competitive media market. In most of the European countries, including Slovakia, there is a dual system with public-service media (PSM) and commercial TV and radio stations operating on the media market. The role of the public-service media is to acknowledge their viewers and listeners as citizens and consider all strata of society (audiences) and are expected to provide unbiased and impersonal newscasts. The PSM care for minorities, provide support to cultural or legal awareness, promote education, but also entertainment, while being funded by licences, advertising revenue and grants from the state. By contrast, commercial media consider their listeners and viewers as mass consumers (customers) and their main aim is to make profit, while being funded from selling advertising space. To meet their targets, they have to offer attractive programmes satisfying both consumers and media buyers, thus it is usually entertainment that prevails in their programme structures. New possibilities of disseminating radio and TV broadcasting while using new technologies have brought significant changes, turning information society into digital one. Digital broadcasting has enabled the growth in the number of the programmes offered, better quality of image and sound, new additional services, lower costs of transmission, or increased demand on external receivers. However, it has also led to the process of convergence, and concentration of media on a multinational level, and also the emergence of new concepts – multimedia, pay-per-view, video on demand, digital audio broadcasting, or streaming.

The Internet environment has its specifics and since its arrival, and exponential expansion and growing availability, it has modified not only existing media industries, but also the whole of society. From the overabundant dotcoms of Web 1.0, the emergence of Web 2.0 has brought expansion of social networks and the interference of the public into media contents mainly through sharing and posting own contributions. In the context of the Web 3.0, the struggle—to cope with the information oversaturation and personification of the content offered—started. Together with the lack of regulation, anonymity, and lack of taking responsibility for the posted texts, this has led to vulgarisation and growing aggression in cyberspace, the onset of alternative and disinformation media, dissemination of hoaxes, disinformation and misinformation. In this perspective, the issue of monopolisation and oligopolisation is highly topical in this field.

The reviewed scientific monograph is focused on the current position and functioning of three media sectors in Slovakia – the press, the electronic broadcast media (radio and TV) and the Internet. However, the monograph does not provide its readers with a complex analysis of these media branches. It aims to reflect the multidisciplinary character of the examination of this issue, which is based on paradigmatic frameworks of media and communication studies. As the authors of the publication state in its Introduction: “*We point out the most significant facts and aspects forming the current nature and character of these three media sectors.*”(page 8). The book was published with the help of a financial grant provided by the Scientific Grant Agency at the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Academy of Sciences to the project VEGA No. 1/0283/20 with the title “Synergy of media industry branches in the context of critical political media economy”. One of the aims of the project was to provide a set of notions that within the context of multidisciplinary foundations lead to the definition and delimitation of synergies of individual branches in contemporary Slovak media industry.

The publication is divided into three main chapters: 1) The Slovak industry of publishing the periodical print press; 2) The radio and TV industry in Slovakia; and 3) The Internet industry in the context of media environment. Each chapter is elaborated by a lecturer at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication who is an expert in the chapter’s field.

The first chapter is presented by Ján Višňovský. His scientific research deals with the issue of journalism in the perspective of the development of information and communication technologies, multiplatform journalism, profession of a journalist, journalism on social media and topical issues of the Slovak media industry, especially regarding the periodical press. This chapter consists of five subchapters focused on the following areas – Part I: Current legislation of publishing the periodical press in Slovakia. Part II: Ownership and ownership relations in the publishing sector in a historical perspective. Part III: The market in the periodical press in Slovakia and its peculiarities. Part IV: The largest players in the market in the periodical press in Slovakia – News and Media Holding, Petit Press, MAFRA Slovakia, FPD Media, OUR MEDIA and N Press. Part V: Conclusions.

The second chapter was elaborated by Juliána Mináriková. She is a specialist in the area of media systems and those of traditional electronic media, especially TV and radio broadcasting in the context of setting strategies of broadcasting in the conditions of new technological trends. Her chapter involves 4 main subchapters, as follows – Part I: Media system and its arrangement, restricting the media system. Part II: The core and funding of traditional electronic media, restricting the legal framework of electronic media broadcasting in Slovakia. Part III: Technological determinants of broadcasting. Part IV: The structure of media

market of electronic broadcasters in Slovakia; the media market in Slovakia, Survey of ratings, Radio stations and networks, TV stations and groups. Also, the state of the media market in Slovakia in terms of arrangement of broadcasters, globalisation and media concentration.

The third chapter was produced by Miroslav Kapec, who specializes in radio communication and production. Within his research, he is also interested in online and print journalism, social media and non-factual content in the online environment, but also the operation of mainstream and alternative media in the Slovak media environment. His chapter consists of five subchapters – Part I: Monopolisation and oligopolisation of the Internet industry. Part II: Social media. Part III: Review of key platforms. Part IV: Disinformation online media and Part V: Conclusions.

The scientific monograph offers much inspirational information not only to experts in the field, academics and researchers, but also students of mass media communication, journalism, marketing communication and other related branches. The lay public will also be interested in the current conditions and factors under which the Slovak media market has been operating. The elaborated topics, concepts and ideas that may be found in individual chapters and subchapters may serve as the scientific basis for both the theoretical and empirical follow-up research.

Despite the complexity of the investigated issue, the authors managed to produce a book of suitable length that offers a good read and provides readers with an insight into specific conditions, in which contemporary media market in Slovakia works. The findings published in the monograph may serve as the foundation for an institutional debate on the contemporary state, challenges, peculiarities and difficulties of media market in Slovakia, with special attention paid to building a healthy democratic system fit for its purpose for the public. It offers an amazing content to international readers, which could be enlarged if translated into English.

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