

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04177-6 - Democracy and Media Decadence
John Keane
Frontmatter
[More information](#)



Democracy and Media Decadence

We live in a revolutionary age of communicative abundance in which many media innovations – from satellite broadcasting to smart glasses and electronic books – spawn great fascination mixed with excitement. In the field of politics, hopeful talk of digital democracy, cybercitizens and e-government has been flourishing. This book admits the many thrilling ways that communicative abundance is fundamentally altering the contours of our lives and of our politics, often for the better. But it asks whether too little attention has been paid to the troubling counter-trends, the decadent media developments that encourage public silence and concentrations of unlimited power, so weakening the spirit and substance of democracy. Exploring examples of clever government surveillance, market censorship, spin tactics and back-channel public relations, John Keane seeks to understand and explain these trends, and how best to deal with them. Tackling some tough but big and fateful questions, Keane argues that ‘media decadence’ is deeply harmful for public life.

JOHN KEANE is Professor of Politics at the University of Sydney and at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB). He is also the Director of the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (IDHR) at the University of Sydney. His online column ‘Democracy Field Notes’ appears regularly in the British- and Australian-based *The Conversation* (theconversation.com/uk). Among his best-known books are the best-selling *Tom Paine: A Political Life* (1995), *Violence and Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), *Global Civil Society?* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) and the highly acclaimed full-scale history of democracy, *The Life and Death of Democracy* (2009).

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04177-6 - Democracy and Media Decadence
John Keane
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04177-6 - Democracy and Media Decadence
John Keane
Frontmatter
[More information](#)



Democracy and Media Decadence

JOHN KEANE



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04177-6 - Democracy and Media Decadence
John Keane
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York
Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107614574

© John Keane 2013

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2013

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd. Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-04177-6 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-61457-4 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements and permissions</i>	<i>page</i> vi
1 Communicative abundance	1
2 Monitory democracy	77
3 Media decadence	109
4 Democracy's opponents	191
5 Why freedom of public communication?	213
<i>Index</i>	246

Acknowledgements and permissions

Generous research support provided by the University of Sydney, the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB) and the ERC Project, Media and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, University of Oxford, is gratefully acknowledged.

Permission for the use of illustrations has been granted as follows:

- Cover 'Dust', by Cong Lingqi (2008), courtesy of White Rabbit Contemporary Chinese Art Collection, Sydney.
- 1.1 Computer graphic ('splat map') of global Internet traffic, by Giovanni Navarria, with permission.
- 1.2 Marshall McLuhan, by Louis Forsdale, courtesy of Library and Archives Canada.
- 1.3 Ratio of media supply, courtesy of W. Russell Neuman, University of Michigan.
- 1.4 Patterns of Facebook usage, courtesy of Thomas Crampton.
- 1.5 Nellie Bly, courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-75620.
- 1.6 Centralised, decentralised and distributed networks, by Giovanni Navarria, with permission.
- 1.7 Space Hijackers, courtesy of Guy Smallman.
- 1.8 Julian Assange, by John Keane.
- 2.1 Representative democracy, by Giovanni Navarria, with permission.
- 2.2 Monitory democracy, by Giovanni Navarria, with permission.
- 3.1 Planting the first pole on the overland telegraph line to Carpentaria, by Samuel Calvert, courtesy of National Library of Australia, an10328023.
- 4.1 China Carnival No. 1: Tiananmen (detail; 2007), by Chen Zhou and Huang Keyi, courtesy of the White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney.
- 4.2 'The Grass-mud Horse and the River Crab', by Jessi Wong (2010). Linocut on paper, edition of 10. Courtesy of the artist.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04177-6 - Democracy and Media Decadence
John Keane
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Acknowledgements and permissions

vii

- 5.1 *Deepwater Horizon* fire, with permission of US Coastguard.
- 5.2 Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear power plant, with permission of Felicity Ruby.
- 5.3 *The Ruins of Lisbon after the Earthquake of 1755*, engraving (b/w photo). German School (eighteenth century) © Private Collection/The Bridgeman Art Library.