

Oliwia Szeląg

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Poland)

ORCID: 0000-0002-6958-8362

e-mail: [olisze2@st.amu.edu.pl](mailto:olisze2@st.amu.edu.pl)

## Book Review: Marlena Plebańska, *Kompetencje cyfrowe i ich cyfrowy rozwój*, Difin, Warszawa 2021

With an increasing global adaptation of new technology, new spaces of human activity require opening up to the effects of the development of social and political structures. In order to make effective use of those achievements, it is necessary to acquire competencies to achieve the desired goals. This challenge also applies to political participation, which, since the early 1990s, has been adapting achievements to new technologies (Päivärinta & Sæbø, 2006; Zarate, 2017). For the successful development of such planes of political participation as e-government and e-democracy, besides creating the proper e-infrastructure, it is crucial to equip citizens with digital competencies, which became the focus of Marlena Plebańska's book *Kompetencje cyfrowe i ich cyfrowy rozwój* (2021).

She confirmed that the impact of development and education in digital competence is essential for effective functioning in a society where two dimensions of analogue and digital activities intermingle. A turning point was the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the digitisation public sphere and caused an increase in digital competence among societies opened up to e-government.

This book deals precisely with the topic of digital competencies development. The author presented the results of in-depth research on the development of the role of e-education in the context of digital competence. The book contains five chapters, which are divided into sixteen sub-chapters. The researcher rightly included the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, which allowed her to demonstrate what changes have occurred in the perception, understanding, and use of digital competencies during the coronavirus crisis.

The first chapter highlighted human evolution from the perspective of social communication and the development of remote education. The second chapter analyses the role of future competence and digital competence. The next one presents the research results on young workers' perceptions of future competence and digital competence. The fourth

chapter reviews definitions and models of digital competence. Furthermore, the fifth chapter analyses research results on developing digital competencies using e-learning techniques and tools in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Digital competence, as the author herself points out, is the ability to use new technologies and innovative thinking or designing digital strategies in various organisations (Plebańska, 2021, p. 89). These are also crucial qualities for the proper functioning of democratic societies, in which citizens have the space to formulate their social demands independently and sovereignly participate in political decision-making. Thus, those skills are relevant in the context of the digitisation of modern political participation, like e-voting. This publication provides clear guidance and recommendations on incorporating these elements into the general education curriculum.

Technological developments such as printing influenced access to education, which in turn is associated with an increased awareness of citizens. The ongoing digitisation may lead to the development of further social competencies, including combating digital threats. The latter is essential in the development of e-democracy. The author also discusses all the industrial revolutions from the perspective of education development. The latter, Industrial Revolution 5.0, is evidenced by the adaptation of artificial intelligence to education systems.

The second chapter deals with the role of future competencies in the modern world and predictions for that issue in Poland. Plebańska notes that the COVID-19 pandemic was a turning point for the progressive automation of work on a global scale. She also points to evidence that shows a drive toward economic and industrial digitisation, which may also impact political participation. Digitalisation of other spheres increases younger generations' support for e-government and the ability to develop digital competencies.

The third chapter presented the results of studies on young workers' perceptions of future competencies. Plebańska (2021, pp. 86–88) asked ten research questions addressed to students from twenty-nine countries. The results show that the role of digital competencies in the labour market is essential, regardless of the chosen industry. She also pointed out significant trends in the perception of digital competencies. Her data results show that the crucial competence is collecting, processing, understanding, and critically evaluating information. It enables citizens to gain resilience to disinformation and fake news by skilfully finding and verifying information. The fourth chapter is an overview of the definitions of digital competence presentation and the most popular models related to the issue. The models guide the development of digital competencies into safety and participation in the digital society (Plebańska, 2021, pp. 95–107).

Chapter five analyses research on digital competencies and using e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Plebańska, based on another research survey, delivers evidence that remote work increases the digital competencies of employees. She also points to further prospects for e-learning and presents an extended list of recommendations in that issue, including the role of digital competencies.

The publication provides new knowledge about the relevance of digital competence. She confirmed the necessity of developing digital competencies for modern societies. The conclusions of the book provide valuable knowledge for political scientists. Proper digital education allows societies to create technological solutions due to political interests. In contrast, the lack of well-quality digital education increases the risk of using technological achievements to implement digital repressions (Feldstein, 2021). The publication is also a successful analysis of digitisation in Poland. An extensive list of recommendations gives clear guidance and suggestions for developing e-education and digital competencies. Its conclusions shed new light on the problem of civic education, which needs to include the skills necessary to strengthen digital political participation in democratic systems.

### References:

- Feldstein, S. (2021). *The Rise of Digital Repression: How Technology is Reshaping Power, Politics, and Resistance*. Oxford.
- Päivärinta, T., & Sæbø, Ø. (2006). Models of E-Democracy. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 17(37). <http://aisel.aisnet.org/cais/vol17/iss1/37>
- Plebańska, M. (2021). *Kompetencje cyfrowe i ich cyfrowy rozwój*. Difin.
- Zarate, J. (2017). The Cyber Attacks on Democracy. *The Catalyst Fall*, 08. <https://www.bushcenter.org/catalyst/democracy/zarate-cyber-attacks-on-democracy.html>

