

Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska

# Polish Media System in a Comparative Perspective

Media in Politics, Politics in Media



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A media system does not exist in a vacuum. It develops and grows within social, political and economic systems. They interact with and influence one another, as well as stimulate each other's development. The main subject of this work is the dynamically evolving Polish media system, which is under the influence of institutions and external stakeholders. Thanks to this, it is easier to understand that the "crossroads" is not only a problem of the Polish media system, but a global one. For this reason, a comparative perspective is employed. Three chapters help to provide an answer to research questions dedicated to political parallelism and journalistic professionalization. The analysis would be limited and unrepresentative if the book enclosed it with one country's border, omitting the broad global, European and Centro-European context.

I very much like the way this book uses empirical data and knowledge in testing theory-based hypotheses while offering its own clarifying models. Dobek-Ostrowska's work offers much-improved understanding of the way Poland fits into the Hallin-Manicini (Comparing Media Systems) categories, showing how it combines features of polarized pluralism (like southern Europe), and liberal market (with its commercialism and market logic). This book deserves a wide readership among scholars and others interested in Polish media and comparative media studies.

*Robert M. Entman, J.B. & M.C. Shapiro Professor Emeritus of Media and Public Affairs, George Washington University, USA*

A good book to catch the specificities of a media system in its move to democracy. The relationship between Polish professional journalists and politicians is investigated by Dobek – Ostrowska within a solid interpretative framework devoting particular attention to the comparative dimension.

*Paolo Mancini, Professor of University of Perugia, Italy*

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in a Comparative Perspective

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Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska

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**PETER LANG**

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PETER LANG



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*To Dariusz*



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# Abbreviation

AWS	Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność [the Solidarity Electoral Action]
K	Kukiz`15 [Kukiz`15]
KRRiT	Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji [the National Broadcasting Council]
LPR	Liga Polskich Rodzin [the League of Polish Families]
.N	Nowoczesna [.Contemporary]
PC	Porozumienie Centrum [Center Agreement]
PiS	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość [Law and Justice]
PO	Platforma Obywatelska [Civic Platform]
PSL	Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe [the Polish People's Party]
PZPR	Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza [the Polish United Workers' Party]
RMN	Rada Mediów Narodowych [the National Council of Media]
ROP	Ruch Odbudowy Polski [the Movement for Reconstruction of Poland]
S	Samoobrona [Self-Defence]
SB	Służba Bezpieczeństwa [the Secret Service]
SLD	Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej [the Democratic Left Alliance]
SKL	Stronnictwo Konserwatywno-Ludowe [Conservative People's Party]
TAZ	<i>Die Tageszeitung</i>
UW	Unia Wolności [the Union of Liberty]
ZChN	Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe [Christian National Union]



# Introduction

## Media systems as a matter of research

The category of 'media system' is one of the most well known and most widely applied in the field of communication studies. Although the term itself was coined by Parson in 1937, it permanently became part of the terminology of social sciences only thanks to Deutsch (1966) and Easton (1965). The authors were the first to use a system analysis approach in their research on politics, which they saw as a system or complex structure, whose elements are interconnected and mutually influence each other. All political processes are carried out within this framework, positions and roles related to power are exercised there, and the authority of government is enforced. Institutional features, such as standards, values, principles, development rules, etc. appear and improve there. The political system does not exist in a vacuum. It develops and grows within a social system, and alongside it, other systems emerge, such as economic or media ones. They are all tightly interconnected, they interact and influence one another, as well as stimulate each other's development (see Fig. 1).

## The media system concept

The system approach very quickly found supporters in communication studies. Newcomb's (1953) model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2007:95) lay at the heart of the system approach in communicology, thus creating the foundations for other models that soon began to snowball in science. In the beginning researchers started with simple schemes which were supposed to explain the process of interpersonal communication. Over time, the models became more and more complex and included more elements constituting the process of mass communication. One of the first models, today rather forgotten, was DeFleur's 1966 system model, in which the author included elements influencing the functioning of mass media and captured the mutual dependencies between them. On the one hand, the researcher pointed to legislative bodies and official controlling institutions, such as the Federal Communication Commission – FCC (political pressure), and on the other to financing institutions, advertisers, market research agencies and advertising content (economic pressure). Another element of the model was the audience playing a twofold part – of recipients with certain tastes, and of consumers of goods and services advertised in the media. In practice, in the 1960s, this model was applicable only to the USA, where media companies,

since the beginning of their existence, were included into the mechanisms of the free market. There, the actions of the state (political system), were limited to creating the basic framework for the legal functioning of the media. A particular role was played by economic entities, such as the owners, the competition, and the advertisers (economic system).

Thus, in the case of the American system, we can talk about a minimal political input and considerable economic influence on the media. In contrast to the USA, in Europe, they had an etatistic character. State media were monopolist and, since market laws were not working, or their reach was strongly limited, politics played a decisive role in the process of shaping the media system. The situation first began to change in the 1980s with the deregulation and privatization of the media in European Union member states. During the following thirty years, a new quality was formed in these states – the dual model, which seriously endangered the public media. The press of political parties has been depoliticized step by step, journalism has become commercialized, tabloidized, globalized, and unprofessional. Even where the state jealously protected the position of public media as national values (e.g., Scandinavia, Austria), deep systemic changes took place, moving them toward the liberal model. How does Central Europe and Poland present themselves against this background?

The fall of the Soviet bloc coincided with a global audio-visual revolution and a progressive privatization of media in Western Europe. These two global processes, technological and economic, were bound to influence the formation of young democratic media systems developing on the ashes of communism. Now, almost thirty years later, we need to ask: how much of `the old` and how much of `the new` is present in contemporary solutions? Have the old, undemocratic practices become history, or are they still present? And if they are, then in what form? In what direction is the Polish media system heading? Is it prone to globalization and commercialization with all their consequences? Do politicians still control the media and play key roles, like in the old regimes? How do journalists feel about and react to this reality? And the audience? What part is played by Catholic institutions and organizations linked to the media? The last question has particular significance for the considerations on the media system in Poland, especially after 2015.

The researchers of media systems are, undoubtedly, aided by Hallin and Mancini's concept of three models of media systems. Their 2004 book, has influenced researchers around the world and was a significant trigger for further studies on media systems, unrivalled since the 1956 publication of Siebert, Peterson and Schramm's *Four Theories of Press*. The concepts of the Liberal system, Democratic Corporatism, and Polarized Pluralism spark the imagination of communicologists, political scientists, sociologists, and other researchers.

It kindles appreciation, reservation or criticism, but never indifference. Today, also the authors themselves see some shortages and deficiencies, point to new trends, possible alterations and areas, where, even in this short period of time, their models have undergone considerable transformations (Hallin and Mancini, 2017), since, beyond any doubt, technological changes, which we witness developing at a dizzying rate, are primarily reflected in the media. They are the first to absorb new technologies and to transform themselves and the whole system in the process. This was perfectly exemplified first of all by the launch of social media, Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube (see: Davis, Holtz-Bacha and Just, 2017; Guo and McCombs, 2016; Jacuński, 2016) (see Fig. I.1). Meanwhile, the transformation of the political and economic system is a more time-consuming process.

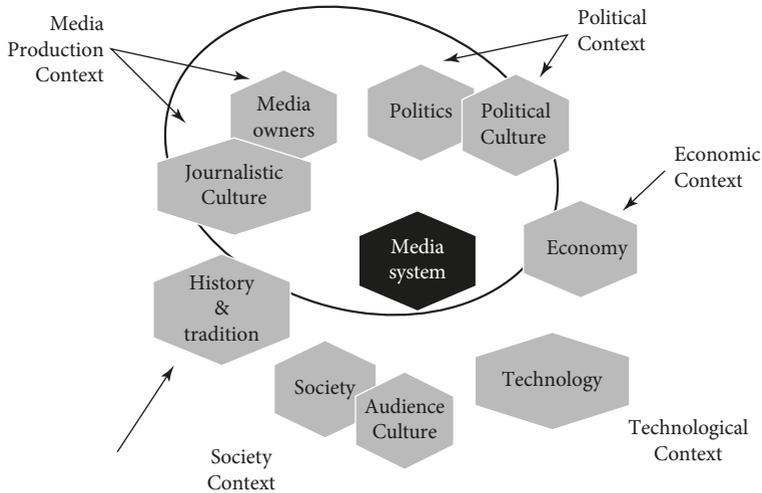


Fig. I.1: *The media systems environment: the area of analysis*  
Source: Author.

## The area of research

The main subject of this work is the dynamically evolving Polish media system, which is under the influence of institutions and external stakeholders. This system has found itself at a crossroads, and it is uncertain which way its development will go. The analysis would be limited and unrepresentative if we enclosed it with one country's border, omitting the broad global, European and Centro-European context. For this reason, a comparative perspective is employed from

the first to the last chapter. Thanks to this, it is easier to understand that the 'crossroads' is not only a problem of the Polish media system, but a global one.

This work is not about the whole, complex media system (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2007:116; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012:49–50; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c:15–16), but its fragment – the relationship between the core of the system – the mass media on the primary market, and the political actors present on the secondary market (Fig. I.1). I am particularly interested in the relationship between the mass media and the political parties, which constitutes the foundations of every democratic political system, in which the authorities are chosen in regularly-held elections. The analysis of these interactions is conducted on two levels: from the point of view of the participants on the political scene i.e., politicians, parties, party leaders; and the media itself, that is owners, publishers, journalists, and media workers. In the first case, I pose the question how much media is present in politics? I focus on media strategies (or lack thereof) of political actors, the way they perceive the media, and their expectations on them. In other words, I consider what politicians in practice do or would like to do with the media. The focal point of the second analytical plane is the media content devoted to politics, that is, publicizing politics in the media. This is the best way to assess the political engagement of journalists, publishers, or owners; the distance from the world of current political events. Thus, I ask how much politics is present in the media? This approach, naturally, leads to Hallin and Mancini's two-dimensional media system – political parallelism, which allows us to explain the first analytical level (what do politicians do with the media?) as well as journalistic professionalism, which I see as the leading instrument on the second level (what do the media do with politics?) I leave the two remaining dimensions of Hallin and Mancini's media system, i.e., the development of the mass media and the importance of the state, outside the mainstream of my analysis. I refer to these aspects occasionally, to exemplify a discussed process or a specific situation.

The subject of this work is, therefore, a fragment of the Polish media system: the relations that evolve in the middle ground between the core of the system – that is the media, its owners and journalists—and the political actors of the 21st century, i.e., in the second and third decades after the fall of communism. The choice of the time frame is not coincidental. After years of intensive transformations of the first decade, a slow stabilization of both systems was progressing. Initially, six relevant entities remained on the political scene (2001–2007), and after that, four (2007–2011 and 2011–2015). Following the 2015 parliamentary elections, two parties dominate the political scene: Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość - PiS) and Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska - PO). Three middle-sized political formations, such as Kukiz (Kukiz - K), The Contemporary (Nowoczesna

- N) and the Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe - PSL) play a secondary role. For the first time is The Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej- SLD) left with no representation in the Sejm. The media market was appropriated by economically equipped organisms, which, despite fierce competition, do not allow themselves to be marginalized. I leave the third participant of the process, the citizens, on the margins of my considerations, as they are clients of both political actors and mass media. Research shows, however, that, on the one hand, they are not particularly interested in politics, quite often do not understand it and are not willing to be involved in it, yet on the other hand, they do not like business and do not accept conflict (Szczęciło, Cześnik, Markowski, 2013: 107–108).

The scope of the work includes an analysis of journalistic professionalism and culture, which, in turn, are determined by the attitude of the media and of journalists toward politics, politicians, and political parties. This is reflected in the intensity of the mediatization process and the quality of publicizing politics in the main, stable countrywide media, such as the two newspapers (the leftist *Gazeta Wyborcza* and the conservative *Rzeczpospolita*), the four opinion weeklies (*Polityka*, *Wprost*, *Newsweek*, *Gazeta Polska*), the three main television broadcasters (TVP public broadcaster, and private -TVN and TV Polsat) and the three radio broadcasters (the privately-owned RMF FM and Radio ZET, and the public Polish Radio). It has to be mentioned that, after 2015, the importance of Catholic media has considerably grown (with Radio Maryja and TV Trwam in particular) due to a much higher interest and strengthening of relations with the governing party — Law and Justice.

Among the political actors, I focus on the biggest, relevant political parties which have been active in political life, and which have set the direction of the political process and have influenced the quality of democracy: Civic Platform (PO), Law and Justice (PiS), the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), and the Polish People's Party (PSL). I exclude from my considerations Self-defence (Samoobrona) and the League of Polish Families (LPR), which, though both present in the years 2001–2007 in the Polish Parliament, vanished from political life following the elections in 2007. The year 2015 marked a considerable change on the political scene, which has been monopolized by two parties - Law and Justice and Civic Platform. The Polish People's Party has been visibly marginalized, the Democratic Left Alliance has no representatives in Parliament the first time after the collapse of communism and its role in politics was seriously limited. The new actors such as small parties Nowoczesna and Kukiz'15 have entered the political scene. This part of my analysis is concentrated on the media strategies of individual political actors and political parallelism. I attempt to determine whether,

almost thirty years after the fall of communism, political parallelism is still present in Poland.

## Literature base

This study places itself in the field of studies on political communication, which emerged at the turn of the 1950s and the 1960s on the edge of political science and communication studies. It is, therefore, no coincidence that so many experts in the field come from political science. In the last fifty years a vast amount scientific literature, as well as numerous key concepts and theories were created. Researchers have established new analytic methods during their more and more frequent participation in international projects. Particular attention should be paid to the achievements of American, German, Scandinavian, and British scholars who are leaders of this sub-discipline.

In this analysis, I refer to the most important theoretical accomplishments, in addition to the, aforementioned Hallin and Mancini's conception of three models of media systems (2004, 2012, 2017). Blumler and Gurevitch' 1995 proposals of politicization levels and models of the relations between political actors and the media still remains up-to-date and extremely useful. I implant also the concept of media logic and party logic developed by Mazzolini in 1987, as well as the models of politics coverage in media (Patterson, 1980, 1993; López-Escobar, Sabada, Zugasti, 2008; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011b). The concepts of colonization of politics by the media (Meyer, 2002) and the mediatization of politics (Strömbäck, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011; Kaid, 2008) are particularly valuable. The monographs *The Contradiction of Media Power* (Freedman, 2014), *Content is King* (Graham et al. 2015), *Political Communication in Real Time* (Schill et al. 2017) have also considerably broadened the research perspective. The studies on media systems have been intensively developing in the last decade, which has repeatedly been emphasized by Hallin and Mancini (2017). The authors initiated the research on media systems beyond fully democratic countries, which they presented in their 2012 work *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*. The results of their studies are of key importance to the analyses of the Polish media system. In 2013 Chadwick developed the concept of a Hybrid Media System. Hybridization was also of interest to Mancini (2015). At the time, a significant article by Brüggemann et al. (2014) was published. The authors for the first time used empirical methods, and they presented their findings in their article *Building Empirical Typologies with QCA: Toward a Classification of Media Systems* (Büchel et al. 2016). The first notion of four media systems in post-communist Europe – Hybrid Liberal, Politicized Media, Media in Transition,

and Authoritarian – was presented in 2015 (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c). This issue was also taken by a Swiss-German team of scholars two years later (Castro-Herrero et al. 2017).

In the field of journalism and media studies, I refer to several theoretical findings, such as Hanitzsch's (2007, 2010) journalistic culture. Patterson's (1980, 1993) and Donsbach's (2010) works have proven helpful in the analyses of journalism. Their co-authored article *News Decisions: Journalists as Partisan Actors* (1996) which was the result of extensive comparative studies on American, British, German, Italian, and Swedish journalists, contained conclusions on the subject of media bias. Witschge and Nygren (2009), Zalizer (2004) and Demers (2007) analyzed global changes in the profession. Waisbord's publication (2013), as well as Aamidor's, Kuypers' and Wiesiger's (2013), Albaek van Dalen's, Jebri'l's, de Vreese's (2014) or the work of de Vreese, Esser and Hopmann (2017), have proven highly valuable. The concepts presented in those publications have formed the theoretical tool and they have aided the exploration process, which has led to answering the posed research questions.

## **Studies dedicated to Central and Eastern Europe**

An intensification of research in the field is visible among authors from Central and Eastern Europe. In the first period after the fall of communism, the leading researchers in the field were Jakubowicz from Poland and Spichal from Slovenia. Their publications are still well-known and valued. In subsequent decades, they were joined by members of the younger generation. The process was, undoubtedly, enhanced by the participation in international research projects, funded, among others, by the European Union's Seven Framework Programme (*MediaAct* 2010–2013), European Research Council (*Media and Politics in New Democracies*, 2013–2015), The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies (*Journalism in change. Journalistic culture in Poland, Russia, and Sweden*, 2011–2014; *Symbiotic leader-media relations? Exploring interactions between prime ministers and the media in Finland, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden*, 2015–2017). Particular interest is due to the publications resulting from these projects (Fengler et al. 2014; Nygren and Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015; Zielonka, 2015), which have considerably enriched the knowledge on the processes taking place in this part of Europe. Thanks to these projects and several smaller ones, a group of leading researchers in the field has emerged, among them Volek (2010, 2011) and Štetka (2008, 2013, 2014, 2015) from the Czech Republic; Školkay (2008, 2016, 2017) from Slovakia; Balcytiene (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2017) from Lithuania and Lauk (2008) from Estonia; Bajomi-Lázár (2008, 2014, 2015a,

2015b, 2017a, 2017b) from Hungary; Vasilendiuc with Barczyszyn and Lauk (2014) and Milewski (2017) studying media in Romania and Moldova; Peruško (2013, 2014) from Croatia. Vartanova (2012), Anikina (2015), Bodrunova and Litvininko (2015) as well as Pasti (2015), who have focused on Russia, and whose interests revolve mainly around journalistic professionalism, and, to a lower extent around the media-politics relationship. Thanks to those authors, the changes occurring in the womb of the Polish media system can be placed in the context of this part of Europe.

I refer to the rich scientific contribution of Polish researchers studying political and party systems, among them Wesołowski (2000), Antoszewski (1997, 2004, 2007, 2010), Herbut (1997, 2002), Markowski (2007, 2015), Sobolewska-Mysłik (1999, 2004, 2007), Grabowska and Szawiel (2001), as well as Żukiewicz (2013) and Markowski (2015). The fundamental findings of experts from this field are essential in the context of political parallelism analyzed in Chapter Two.

In the field of communication studies, the scientific contribution of Polish authors can be divided into three thematic areas: 1) an analysis of the functioning of the media system and of the political communication within it, 2) an analysis of media content, and 3) journalism studies.

There are few publications dedicated to the media system in Poland, and those that do exist are devoted mainly to television. An unquestionable contribution to the development of research in the field was made by Jakubowicz, who is the most recognizable Polish researcher of media systems in the world. His numerous English publications, such as *Rude Awakening. Social and Media Change in Central and Eastern Europe* (2007), or *Media Reform. Democratizing the Media, Democratizing the State* (2002) are well recognized among scholars in the world. The author focused, first of all, on the electronic media market, he was a distinguished expert on media politics, as well as on the public media (Jakubowicz, 2008a). In my book, I refer to his concept of systemic parallelism, which constitutes the theoretical base for the analysis of Polish Radio (PR) and Polish Television (TVP). Goban-Klas (1997) wrote about the Polish media system in the 1990s, and he was one of the first scholars who pointed out possible directions of development. He returned to the topic a decade later in an attempt to answer the same questions (Goban-Klas, 2009).

One of the few compilations concerning all segments of the media system is Mielczarek's (2007) book. The author focused primarily on the market changes after 1989, but one of the chapters is devoted to public television in the political context. Ociepka's (2003) work was one of the first analyses of the position of public broadcasters in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, and of the effects commercialization had on the process of exercising their mission. Ociepka

is also the co-author of an important comparative analysis of the content of two newspapers belonging to the same German owner (Ociepka and Woźna, 2009).

The authors, who published chapters in the collective book *Comparing Media Systems in Central Europe. Between Commercialization and Politicization* (Dobek-Ostrowska and Głowacki, 2008), concentrated on various aspects of interesting problems: Głowacki (2008) focused on media politics and political pressure; Łódzki (2008) analyzed the process of shaping of the dual model of broadcasting media; Jędrzejewski (2008) researched public radio, Woźna (2008) concentrated on the local press. Szynol (2004) wrote about the presence of foreign media groups in the local market in the context of the forming of (or disappearance of) pluralism.

Valuable works, which undoubtedly developed the discussed research area are *Comparative Media Systems. European and Global Perspectives* (Dobek-Ostrowska et al. 2010), as well as two thematic issues of the journal *Central European Journal of Communication* (2008, 2009), dedicated to the evolution of media systems and taking up the subject of media politics in Central European and Eastern European countries.

In contrast to Western research, in Poland a definite deficiency is visible in the field of empirical research concerning media content in the context of publicizing politics and political campaigns. The first generation of researchers who took up this challenge is affiliated with the academic centers in Wrocław, Poznań, Katowice, and Lublin. The pioneers include Kolczyński and Mazur (2007, 2009), who were the first to publish studies based on the content analysis of information TV programs broadcast during the political campaigns in 2005 and 2007. Crucial research was conducted by Mazur (2014). This trend also includes the publications of Łódzki (2009, 2011a, 2011b). The article by Nowak and Riedel (2008) is also important. The authors used the concepts of framing and priming in their study on political communication in Poland. Original research is also conducted by Piontek (2002, 2009b, 2010, 2011). The main subject of her studies is the tabloidization of political discourse in the media, which, in the context of media logic and negativism of private broadcasters, gains particular significance (Piontek, Hordecki and Ossowski, 2013). A valuable contribution was made by the authors of the work *Studia empiryczne nad komunikowaniem politycznym w Polsce* [Empirical Studies on Political Communication in Poland] (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011), where for the first time research results dedicated to coverage of the election campaign to the European Parliament in 2009 were published. Political parallelism in weekly magazines was analyzed by Furman (2010). The studies of media system in Poland by Głowacki (2017), as well as empirical studies conducted by Anaszewicz and Dobek-Ostrowska (2013), Anaszewicz (2015), Jacuński (2016) and Dobek-Ostrowska and Sobera (2017), deserve particular attention.

The third group of publications concerns studies on journalism, which in Poland have a long tradition. Its origin is connected to the Centre for Journalistic Research in Cracow [Ośrodek Badań Prasoznawczych - OBP] led by Pisarek. Ironically, one of the most valuable and complex monographs on Polish journalists, entitled *Poland's Journalistic: Professionalism and Politics*, was published by Curry (1990) - an American specialist in Polish media. Some conclusions formed there have not lost their relevance even today. In this field, the lead was taken by researchers from the OBP, from the Jagiellonian University and the University of Warsaw. These academic centers were the first, and for a very long time the only ones to offer journalism studies. The scholars from the University of Silesia in Katowice, and authors from other academic centers were joined in the 1970s and 1980s. After 1989 several significant monographs and numerous articles, as well as chapters in collective books were published. The list of publications, offering many interesting conclusions and observations on the subject of journalistic professionalism, includes the works by Pisarek (1994) and Kononiuk (1996, 1997, 2001). The issues of journalistic autonomy and of ethical standards were developed by Szot (2003, 2010, 2013), and Gierula (2005), as well as Jachimowski (2006). Numerous articles by Bajka (1991, 2000) Chorążki (1996, 1997), Kowalczyk (2003) and Pepliński (2001) are worth mentioning. The reasons for the de-professionalization of journalism, at least partially, were explained by the report on journalistic education in Poland by Gawroński et al. (2009). The interesting research findings have been presented by Stępińska and Ossowski (2011) and Stępińska (2017). The knowledge on Polish journalists and their role in political communication was considerably deepened by Mocek (2015), as well as the monographs edited by Nygren and Dobek Ostrowska (2015) as well as Dobek-Ostrowska and Barczyszyn (2016).

### **The main aims, methods and research questions**

This monograph is in a certain research niche and one of the first attempts at diagnosing the media system in the context of its connections to politics. My aim was to go beyond a simple description of the phenomena and processes. I based my research primarily on the comparative method, attempting to situate the examined issues in a global, European, and first and foremost, Central European context. I use primary and secondary data analysis. This data was gathered in my individual research as well as in the research conducted at the Department of Social Communication and Journalism at the University of Wrocław in the years 2005 to 2018 by Ph.D. and graduate students. The experience I have gained during my work on various international research projects was a great asset, including

'Election News Coverage Around the World', 2006–2007, coordinated by Lee Kaid and Strömbäck; 'Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World', 2008–2009 coordinated by Hallin and Mancini; 'Campaigning for Europe 2009', 2008–2009, coordinated by Meier and Strömbäck; 'Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe', 2010–2013, financed by the 7th Framework Program of the European Union; Government Communication, 2011–2012, coordinated by Sanders and Canel; 'Journalism in change in Poland, Russia and Sweden', 2012–2014, financed by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies; 'Symbiotic leader-media relations? Exploring interaction between prime ministers and the media in Finland, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden', 2015–2017, financed by Södertörn University in Sweden. Thanks to the cooperation with skilled scientists, who had been conducting empirical and comparative research for years, I could learn from them how to use research tools and methods.

In this book, I also quote secondary data published by commercial institutions, such as the Center for Public Opinion Research (OBOP), Press Service and others, which are very useful. Analysis of scientific literature and of the content of Polish media over recent years, allows us to verify certain theses and opinions that emerged at the beginning of the political and economic transformation, and, which naturally also encompassed the media. In the 1990s and 2000s, the authors of studies about Poland and Central Europe, most often compared media systems in this part of the world to the systems present in South European countries, most often to Italy (Goban-Klas, 1997; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012). At the time, it was the most thoroughly researched media system in this part of Europe, moreover, the global access to English literature on the subject was the easiest. At the beginning of the transformations, when it was still unknown as to what direction the development of the media systems in post-communist countries would take, a Slovenian researcher Spichal (1994), formulated a thesis of the 'Italianization' of the media. Later notions of 'Berlusconization' and 'Mediaterranization' of the media in Central Europe appeared. This fundamental thesis of media systems gravitating toward the Mediterranean model found numerous supporters. Considerable fundamental changes have since then taken place in politics, media, and in journalism. Literature studies, as well as an analysis of the mainstream media content conducted since 2005, supported with primary as well as secondary data accessible in various sources, have allowed us to pose several research questions:

RQ1: Does journalism in Poland go to a lower quality of political coverage in the media? How deep is a process of de-professionalization in the third decade of the democratic experience?

RQ2: Has the place of political parallelism in the Polish media been taken by political and economic instrumentalization? If yes, how does it work?

RQ3: Does media logic lead to structural bias of commercial broadcasters? What about the result of this process?

RQ4: Does party logic produce a systemic parallelism of public broadcasters? Which consequences are noted of this process?

## Structure of the book

Three chapters help answer these questions. The first of these constructs the foundation for the examination of the relationship between media and politics, and begins with a reflection concerning the definitions of journalistic professionalism and journalistic culture. I continue with an analysis of individual components of these two complementary concepts. I see journalistic culture as a corset, in which journalists and the media exist. In the context of Polish journalism, I discuss issues such as professional autonomy, ethical norms, the role of institutions, including the interference of political actors, the distance of the media from power, engagement of journalists into politics, orientation of media (commercial versus civic) and professional standards, such as objectivity, responsibility etc. Many researchers analyzing these subjects in the USA and Western Europe come to the shared conclusion that a serious decline in the quality of journalism occurred in the last decade. This concerns even those countries traditionally associated with a high level of journalistic professionalism, such as Sweden, Great Britain, or Germany. The growing reach of commercial media, which are interested in profit and not in the quality of the content, or the well-being of the viewers, has led to a de-professionalization of journalism on a global scale. The consequences of this process are also visible in Poland, and result in a much lower quality of media discourse, which in turn results in a biased and superficial coverage of politics.

The media in politics is the main topic in Chapter Two. The position of the media in political actors' activity is the main topic of analysis. A starting point is the concept of party logic as a construct opposed to media logic. Party logic suggests to political actors to impose their will and to control as well as subordinate the media to political interests. Generally, political parallelism occurred in the 19th century in those countries where the parties were strong since the beginning of their existence on the political scene, and they had their own press. In the Democratic Corporatist Model, with deregulation and liberalization of the broadcast media, and the commercialization of the press, the phenomenon

was limited step by step in the 20th century. Political parallelism is still strong in Southern European countries belonging to the Polarized Pluralism Model, which are characterized by a lower political culture and where legal-rational authority is weak and clientelism has developed. In this chapter, I attempt to find the answer to one of the fundamental research questions – did political parallelism develop in Poland after the fall of communism? I analyze and describe indicators of parallelism with regards to their presence in the Polish media system. I continue with an assessment of media strategies of particular political parties and their relations with the media. I focus on the parties themselves, regarding them as the most important actors of the political system, since, after a won election, the successful party fills the key positions of state with their members or supporters. I had presumed that political parallelism is present in Poland. Research findings have led to the conclusion that beside it, political instrumentalization has developed, and is present in the media that are systematically connected to the power apparatus, i.e., in public radio and television. The possibility to influence and subordinate commercial media is considerably limited, which does not mean that the media do not show political preferences or dislikes. In the case of Poland, a particular role is played by the Catholic media. Some of them, such as TV Trwam or Radio Maryja visibly favor the party governing after the 2015 election.

In Chapter Three, I focus on the presence of politics in the media. I refer to the results of a content analysis conducted between 2005 and 2017, concerning publicizing of the parliamentary campaigns of 2005, 2007, 2011 and 2015 as well as presidential campaigns (2005, 2010, 2015). The starting point for my considerations is a mediatization of politics. It is an important concept that has drawn a lot of attention in recent years, especially in Western research. I define it and present the main indicators of mediatization of politics, which have fundamental meaning, and whose presence has been confirmed by content analysis. This research method is particularly useful for researchers working in the field of political communication, since it allows to define the types of media coverage and political bias. Leaning on the quantitative data gathered since 2005, in this Chapter I attempt to establish the way the main media in Poland cover politics, and whether one universal model can be recognized, or do each of them choose their separate paths. The conducted analysis has allowed to distinguish several media groups which behave in distinct ways — commercial media follow their own logic; public media are distinctly partial, in the case of which systemic parallelism can be found, and a small number of media broadcasters attempt to resist the de-professionalization of journalism.

In the Conclusion, I refer to all four research questions and try to answer them. I also attempt to draw certain conclusions concerning the future of the Polish media system and the development of the media system in the world.

It took several years to finish this book, during which not only did the conception form, but also partial studies were conducted, which allowed me to capture the process in a longer perspective. This was possible thanks to the research done under my supervision by co-workers, Ph.D. graduate and undergraduate students over a period of ten years from 2005 to 2018. At the end of the book, the reader will find a list of their unpublished reports and papers. I owe my thanks to all of these authors for their valuable input into this study. I am also grateful to Michał Głowacki for his help and valuable suggestions. I hope that the research direction undertaken by the researchers in Wrocław will be continued in the future in other academic centers in the country, also during upcoming political campaigns.

# 1 Polish journalists and their professional culture

The starting point for analysis of the participation of media in politics, reflected in media coverage of political actors and political issues, is journalistic professionalism and its professional culture. These two concepts – ‘journalistic professionalism’ and ‘journalistic culture’ – are crucial to an understanding of the mutual relations between two powerful elements of the process of political communication (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2004:60–62). Media content is the result of a process, invisible to the audience, of negotiations between political actors and the media. All journalistic output, be it an editorial article in a newspaper or a single news item in a television information program, reflects the power, autonomy, and the level of control over it, of each of the participants of the process. Let us therefore consider the assets of journalists and the media, as well as their weaknesses in the relations with political actors.

Hallin and Mancini (2004, 2012), in their comparative studies pay enormous attention to issues of journalistic professionalism, which they assess to be very high in the model of Democratic Corporatism (especially in Nordic countries), as well as in the Liberal Model, but which is by contrast, low in the Polarized Pluralism model observed in Southern European countries (see Fig. 1.1). Using the research tools employed by the authors of *Comparing Media Systems*, such as the indicators of professionalism: journalistic autonomy, professional norms, public service, media instrumentalization, and the concept of journalistic culture developed by Hanitzsch (2007), we will attempt to position journalistic professionalism in Poland after 1989 on the scale: high – low.

Similar to Mediterranean countries, Polish journalism has deep literary roots. The journalistic profession was already well developed before 1939. Professional organizations and journalistic trade unions were relatively strong, which is typical for the Democratic Corporatism Model. The first journalistic school was founded in 1927. In the communist period, formal journalistic education was well developed and belonged to the best in the Soviet bloc. Curry’s (1990) research devoted to journalists in communist Poland, together with Hallin and Mancini’s considerations (2004:39), became an element of the discussion on the nature of the journalistic professionalism. Curry suggests that numerous aspects of professionalism emerged in spite of a lack of division between political and media institutions, which could be seen as confusing, as the definition of professionalism presumes a division of these two institutions. The author argues that despite the

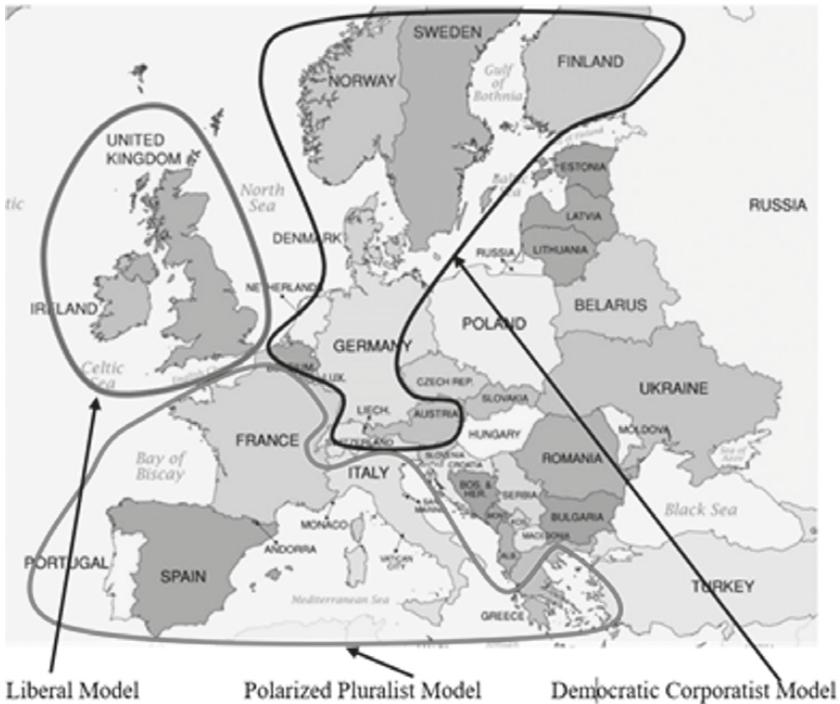


Fig. 1.1: Countries with a similar journalistic culture in Europe according to Hallin and Mancini's concept

Source: Author on the base of Hallin and Mancini, 2004.

official ideology and censorship, which make the media an instrument of the party, Polish journalists have developed a strong professional culture (Curry, 1990:23–24), and have demonstrated both a high level of politicization, as well as professionalism (Curry, 1980:177). Journalists were more flexible and better prepared for freedom of speech and independence than their colleagues in other communist countries were. They have developed a high sense of identity and of a particular role in society (Curry, 1990:30; Hallin and Mancini, 2004:39). Besides journalists, who were absolutely subordinated to the regime, a group of renegades emerged, thanks to whom the Solidarity underground media developed. It needs to be mentioned, however, that also the official press, the censored journals, and magazines were able to find their own independent niche. Opinion weekly magazines, such as *Polityka*, *Kultura*, *Przekrój*, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, are good examples. The over

sixty-year-old *Polityka* today was a phenomenon in the communist period. The best Polish journalists, such as Janina Paradowska, Jacek Żakowski, Jerzy Baczyński, and many others worked there before and after 1989. After the fall of communism, a new group of journalists started to work for the free and politically independent opinion-newspapers. The changes concerning the employment of journalists were not as radical in Poland as they were in the Czech Republic Slovakia or in the Baltic States. With the exception of the most servile and discredited by cooperation with the regime journalists, others still exercised their profession.

At this stage of our research, we will attempt to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do journalists function in the new political reality in Poland after 1989?

RQ2: What do the terms 'journalistic professionalism', 'professionalization of journalism' and 'journalistic culture' mean thirty years after the fall of communism?

RQ3: What professional skills should journalists have nowadays?

RQ4: Is professionalism as highly developed in Poland as in the Democratic Corporatism Model?

RQ5: Is its standard as low as in the Polarized Pluralism Model?

RQ6: Is comment journalism eradicating objectivity?

RQ6: What professional culture has developed in thirty years of democratic experience?

## **1.1 Journalistic professionalism and journalistic culture – some conceptual remarks**

As mentioned above, Hallin and Mancini (2004:37) distinguish three primary dimensions of media professionalization: professional autonomy, professional norms, and public service orientation. They pay a lot of attention to instrumentalization, which they do not define as a separate dimension, but in the context of professionalization. Instrumentalization, both political and economic, is closely related to the quality of journalists' work.

Autonomy is the ability to act independently, to make free, unrestrained, self-governing choices (Demers, 1995:92; Waisbord, 2013:4; Nygren, Dobek-Ostrowska and Johansson, 2015:43). Media autonomy and journalistic autonomy are by no means synonymous, although, in the system of media accountability there should be a consistency between them (Fengler et al., 2014:10). The autonomy of the media, that is, of publishers and broadcasters, is independent formation of content in accordance with the accepted ethics and values as well as

with their needs and beliefs, naturally, within the framework of the existing law. Journalistic autonomy encompasses the same values and refers to the representatives of the profession. Very often media autonomy and journalistic autonomy do not go hand in hand. When there is no agreement between them, a conflict arises, in which journalists, as employees, do not stand a chance in the dispute with the employer. For McQuail (2001:271) autonomy is determination and hard daily work; opposing external forces, organizational hierarchy, and media logic; forming sovereign views, opinions and judgments; resistance to political, economic or any other pressure, and, in consequence an independent journalistic statement. The autonomy of the journalistic profession is analyzed in depth by Waisbord (2013:59), who draws rather pessimistic conclusions. The researcher expressly declares a de-professionalization of journalism and a loss of autonomy, which are the result of a combination of factors such as commercialization and bureaucratization (Waisbord, 2013:60).

Professional norms are one of the criteria enabling the construction of a horizontal system of values and ethical norms, relevant for all representatives of the profession, regardless of their views and beliefs. Axiological values developed in many Central and Eastern European countries after 1989 (Jakubowicz, 2007a:311). Likewise, Polish journalists have developed separate professional norms, which include legal regulations and ethics codes, and founded institutions to guard them. These include also journalist associations, which should play an important part in the process of the implementation of these norms.

Hallin and Mancini (2004:36–37) believe, that the ethics of public service could be particularly important in the case of journalism, as well as necessary to fully comprehend the role of the media in a democratic society. Although the researchers do not touch upon the issue in their considerations, most researchers today are certain that the highly-desired model of public sphere media has been replaced by the market model (Croteau and Hoynes, 2006:39), which carries numerous threats for the quality of democracy and civil society.

The concept of journalistic professionalism is complemented by the category of journalistic culture, which was developed by Hanitzsch (2007:368). This category has been present in literature since the 1970s, hiding also under the name 'news culture' (Deuze, 2002), 'newspaper culture' (Knott, Carroll and Meyer, 2002), 'occupational culture' (Pasti, 2005) or 'occupation ideologies' (Golding, 1977:298–300). Drawing on more than forty years of research on the issue, Hanitzsch has created his own model of constitutive dimensions of journalistic culture and based it on three pillars: 1) institutional roles, 2) epistemology, 3) ethical ideologies, which develop and deepen the understanding of the three dimensions of journalistic culture described by Hallin and Mancini.

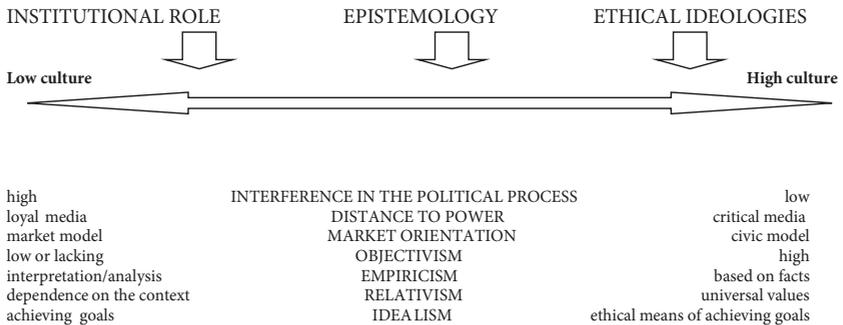


Fig. 1.2: *The quality of journalistic culture with regard to its constitutive dimensions*

Source: Author on the basis of Hanitzsch, 2007.

In the first pillar of ‘institutional role’, the researcher included interventions of media in the political process, distance to power, and market orientation. Intervention is understood here as the implementation of a certain mission and the promotion of values declared by journalists (and the media that employ them). Hanitzsch, after Himelboim and Limor (2005:9), defines it as a gradable level of media engagement from passive (lack of or low) to high, which involves the interference in politics. Passivity, in this case, means the implementation of journalistic principles, such as objectivity, neutrality, factuality, lack of bias. It serves ‘the ideology of professionalism’ and the focus on the informative function. At the other end of the scale, we have engaged journalism, biased, actively participating in politics, siding with particular political actors or opposing them. Journalists with this attitude take on the roles of ‘missionaries’ or ‘attorneys’ and interfere in politics. Hanitzsch proposes to measure the distance to power on the scale, ranging from hostility to loyalty toward certain political subjects.

Journalism based on the adversarial model has a long-standing tradition in the Liberal Model of media systems, e.g., in Great Britain and the USA. It is based, first of all, on the watchdog function, critically assessing the activities of the authorities (Gans, 1979:295; Schramm, 1964:127). At the other end of the spectrum, there are the media loyal toward political actors in the position of power, accepting the role of propagandists, reinforcing certain political formations or politicians with agitational practices (Pasti, 2005:99). The third characteristic of institutional roles concerns the level of media commercialization. A low journalistic culture manifests itself in the market (consumer) model

when the media are guided entirely by their own profit-oriented logic (Croteau and Hoynes, 2006:39). The civic model locates itself at the other end of the scale. Its primary goal is the implementation of public interest, also analyzed by Hallin and Mancini as one of the dimensions of journalistic professionalism.

To sum up, high journalistic culture, and thus also a high level of journalistic professionalism should be marked by the lack of or low interference in the political process, a critical attitude toward authority, focus on the fulfillment of public interest, objectivism, fact-based approach, being guided by universal values and a high level of idealism in the choice of means of action and goal achievement.

In that case, where on the low-high journalistic culture scale can we place representatives of the profession in Poland? Can we put the whole group in the same place? Is it diversified or homogenous in terms of professionalism? We will attempt to answer these questions below, analyzing the characteristics and the structure of the group, its professional ethics, norms, and constitutive dimensions of journalistic culture.

## **1.2 Characteristics and structure of Polish journalists**

The majority of changes taking place in Polish journalism does not have a local character and is not country specific. The transformation of the journalistic profession, taking place in recent decades, is visible in every corner of the democratic world and needs to be seen as a global process. The only difference can lie in the pace at which the changes take place. Witschge and Nygren (2009:37) state that technological and economic changes taking place in the contemporary world had to influence the nature of journalistic work and media organizations which employ them. This becomes particularly visible in news media, where professional journalistic culture is more diversified, open, and dynamic. As a result, the traditional role of the journalist evolves toward a media worker who must be more flexible and possess many skills that were not needed earlier. Witschge and Nygren (2009:3) consider whether journalism should still be considered a profession, or maybe already a semi-profession. Empirical research proves that currently, journalists generate three times more material than twenty years ago (Lewis et al., 2008), and that it is far more varied thematically. They are required to have highly-developed adaptation skills, at ease with handling various journalistic genres, for example, they have to combine the abilities of a reporter, editor, and publisher. They spend much more time in newsrooms and editorial offices. The new media logic means that time is of the utmost importance, style is less formal, and to maintain the interaction with the recipient, the texts are shorter and reader-friendly. The indicators that allow us to understand media logic and

the level of interference in the world of politics are the level of journalistic visibility, the length of statements (sound-bites and ink-bites) of politicians and the journalistic comment that accompanies them, jamming the politicians statement with the journalist's voice, the debate over whose voice is more important and who has the last word in the news – the politician or the journalist, treating campaigns and elections as games, the negative image of politicians, interpretative style, publicizing negative information, etc. The routine starts to dominate, the lack of norms and rules ails. Hanitzsch (2007:372–375) even speaks about a deconstruction of journalistic culture, which is stimulated by the interference of media into politics resulting from the politicization of the media, closing of the gap between power (the watchdog function is falling), and market orientation of the media as discussed above. All this leads into a straight path to the de-professionalization of journalism (Witschge and Nygren, 2009:14). Wisboard (2013:47) also touches on this problem. He asserts, however, that it would be a mistake to see journalism as completely devoid of autonomy. Empirical research conducted in Poland, Russia, and Sweden on a sample of 1500 journalists has confirmed, on the one hand, the deteriorating condition of professionalism, but on the other hand, has demonstrated that a section of journalists and media groups, primarily in Poland, guards its independence against politicians and political parties (Nygren, 2015:120,144–148,151).

One of the crucial aspects of journalistic professionalism is vocational education and training of journalists, which lie at the foundation of the quality of journalistic culture.

### **1.2.1 Development of journalistic education after 1989 and access to the profession**

The question of where journalists come from and how to train them is as old as the profession itself. Numerous authors are of the opinion that formal journalistic education, its scale, scope, quality, and accessibility are fundamental factors translating into the level of culture and journalistic professionalism, which Hallin and Mancini listed as one of the determinants of the models of media and policy relations. In the Liberal and Democratic Corporatism Models, this professionalism is high, and the vocational education training for media purposes has developed the quickest. We know, however, that although in the case of legal and medical professions the basic recruitment criteria are professional education and a graduation certificate from the right university (closed professions), in the case of the journalistic profession it is not so. It is an open profession, which can be exercised by anyone, regardless of his or her substantive merit or education. In

many countries, including Poland, very often known and valued representatives of the profession do not have a journalistic education. In the USA, for instance, this also relates to a large group of people fulfilling the criteria of professionalism, employed at the most prestigious television networks or countrywide, highly regarded, opinion-forming press. The situation is similar in Germany, where there are no formal requirements concerning education, restricting the access to the profession. The only condition is to register with the relevant commune office and obtain a license to practice. An interesting case in this context is Sweden, where the profession is formally open, and a journalistic education is not required. Competition is however, so fierce that a person without a relevant university diploma stands no chance of finding employment (Głowacki, 2015:70–77). In practice, this means that all Swedish journalists, perhaps with the exception of the older generation, who entered the profession twenty or more years ago, have a formal journalistic education.

There are countries, like Spain or Poland, where journalistic studies are very popular. In both cases, not hundreds but even thousands graduate each year. However, this does not translate in any way into rising standards or higher professionalism. An extreme case provided by Hallin and Mancini (2004) is Italy. There, to exercise the profession you need to be a member of the journalists association. The condition for obtaining a membership card is completing an appropriate education cycle and the passing of an exam. This, however, does not guarantee a satisfactory level of professional culture.

To sum up, journalistic training is important and necessary to maintain a high level of professionalism. Therefore, it is not surprising that the best journalistic schools are located in countries belonging to the Democratic Corporatism Model, in which professionalism is at the highest level (among others the Danish School of Media and Journalism in Aarhus or the Swedish school at the University of Gothenburg). On the other hand, the obligation of journalistic education and closing off the profession to people from outside of the circle, without proper tradition and high journalistic culture developed over centuries does not automatically guarantee an improvement (as evidenced by the example of Spain or Italy). How does vocational education in Poland place itself in this context? Does its quality and scope translate into journalistic professionalism and the formation of high professional culture?

The tradition of journalistic education in Poland is long and dates back to 1927, when the first Higher School of Journalism in Warsaw offering regular studies was founded. Several years later schools in Cracow and Poznan were opened, which, as Hadamik (2005:214) puts it, shaped future adepts of the profession. In that period, they played an enormous role in the dynamic process

of development of the Polish media and journalism, they strengthened norms, deepened the process of self-regulation and self-organization of work, they contributed to raising the rank and prestige of the profession.

After the Second World War, education was rebuilt very slowly. In 1946, press courses were opened in Warsaw (Higher School of Journalism), in Poznan (Faculty of Social Sciences at the Adam Mickiewicz University) and Cracow (Higher School of Social Sciences). At the beginning of the 1950s, the University of Warsaw and the Jagiellonian University opened regular journalistic studies. In the 1960s, a certain regression was observable. It was not until 1970 that the Institute of Journalism was established at the University of Warsaw, and it became the most important center for training journalists in Poland. In the mid-1970s, a new educational scheme was introduced, involving an institutional link between journalistic studies and political sciences. This took place, among others at the University of Silesia, the Adam Mickiewicz University, or the Jagiellonian University. The students had to complete at least two years of political science studies in order to be able to take up journalistic studies. This was undoubtedly supposed to enhance indoctrination and political instrumentalization of the profession. The fall of communism in 1989 has opened a completely new chapter in the development of vocational education of journalists. Next to old public schools, which offered integrated 5-year master studies (University of Warsaw) or combined with political science studies (Poznan, Katowice, Lublin, etc.), less often with philological studies (Wroclaw), in the middle of the 1990s private schools emerged. The education boom had started; journalistic studies have since become very trendy and have been attracting enormous numbers of candidates. Those unable to get into university enrolled into one of the private schools. Firstly, Polish academic centers, both public and private, each year accept and promote a number of graduates so high that the media market is not able to absorb them as their number considerably exceeds the number of available jobs. Secondly, a considerably large group of journalistic students does not intend to work in the profession. Thus, education does not correspond with the market structure. In 2017, nineteen universities offered full Bachelor's and Master's studies. Both were altogether available at thirty-four public and private Schools of Higher Education. Moreover, also employers themselves, such as *Polskapresse*, *Axel Springer*, *Bauer*, etc., as well as all three journalist associations, organize courses and training. Hence, when it comes to scope, journalistic education is impressive. Can it be also said about the quality of the training, though? Gawroński et al. (2009) tried to answer this question in their report. They were the first in Poland to conduct extensive research and attempt to diagnose the state of education in the field of journalism. The authors have pointed out the

varied nature and mass character of the training and the consequences of the phenomenon (Gawroński, 2010:11).

Whereas at public universities attention is paid to the teaching standards and quality of education, in the case of private schools it is not necessarily so. The most serious problem is non-compliance with the curriculum. In spite of the fact that a ministerial curriculum for Bachelor's and Master's studies has been developed, a list of subjects and teaching standards has been determined. Numerous centers do not implement them. The teaching staff is sometimes random, inexperienced, and poorly prepared. One lecturer teaches many subjects and is burdened with an excessive number of hours, which hinders effective teaching. If workshops in radio or television studios take place at all, so many students take part that they are not even able to touch a microphone or a camera. The profile of students who choose journalistic studies completes the list of problems. Better and more ambitious candidates typically end up at public universities, which are also usually able to choose their students from ten and more applicants per place. Students who are unable to get into universities, or choose their major by accident, very often pursue studies at private schools. They are often interested more in obtaining any Higher School diploma, rather than the knowledge and professional skills. Moreover, these studies, the popularity of which has not faded over the last thirty years, have become a profitable business for many owners of private schools.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that a low or a very low level of vocational education must have an influence on the journalistic standards and culture in Poland. In the course of education, no attention is paid to professional ethics and determinants of culture, which is a serious obstacle restricting the development of journalistic professionalism. In this regard, education in Poland diverted from the path taken in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, or the Baltic States, where access to this type of studies is limited, and they are themselves considered elitist. Whether it translates into a higher journalistic professionalism in those countries is a separate issue.

### **1.2.2 The professional profile of Polish journalists**

As discussed above, in contrast to Germany or Sweden, no legal restrictions to the journalistic profession were developed in Poland, nor were any criteria for candidates specified. In addition, it is a profession like no other, which undergoes constant changes and faces challenges. This is caused by globalization, technological transformations, and growing independence of the recipients, who have gained access to an ever-growing number of information sources (the internet,

cable and satellite TV, and in the last decade to social media) and can make self-reliant choices. These processes, as emphasized by Kononiuk (2001:15), have radically changed, and are still changing the face of journalism. Waisbord straightforwardly announces a post-professional journalism era, and advances the issues of reinventing professionalism (Waisbord, 2013:218–221) and hybrid professional cultures (Waisbord, 2013:229).

There are opposing concepts of the profession in the subject literature, which reflect the traditional division present within communication studies. On the one hand, in accordance with the functional paradigm stemming from Anglo-Saxon tradition and Protestant work culture, the foundation of journalism is based on the concept of civil service. Such factors as professional competence and standards, ethics, and teamwork, are of major importance. They regulate the nature of relations between media owners and employees. In this context, the journalistic profession is seen as an important element of social and economic development, which is strongly emphasized, for instance, in Nordic countries. The critical paradigm opposes this concept. It stems from Marxism and the Frankfurt School and appropriated by the supporters of the political economy of communication, hegemonic theories, and cultural studies. According to this approach, journalism is treated as support for the interests of certain groups and social classes, political and economic elites. They strive to satisfy their own needs and to achieve their own goals, at the expense of wide social masses and citizens. Journalists are not in service of the public; they are in the service of the owner and thus harm democracy. Hallin and Mancini in their comparative study refer to the first concept. For the researchers, professional competence, journalistic culture, the style in which the profession is exercised, the relationship between information and comment, autonomy, professional norms, service to the public need are primary factors determining the level of journalistic professionalism (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:33–36). A vital element of this consideration is the described above vocational education.

Let us try to answer the question, to what degree are these features characteristic of the representatives of the profession in Poland, and if they relate to local and national journalists equally.

Whereas, until 1989, in-depth research on journalists from national media was conducted, mainly at the OBP in Cracow and at the University of Warsaw, after the fall of communism, this study field has been seriously neglected, mainly due to the lack of financing for empirical research. Consequently, the state of research is much worse than in the Czech Republic (Volek, 2010), Slovakia (Brečka et al., 2010), Romania (Coman, 2010), Estonia (Lauk, 2008), or Lithuania (Balčytiene, 2008), where this type of research was conducted notwithstanding the high

cost. In Poland, few authors undertook this effort, and because of that, we know very little about Polish journalists after thirty years of transformations. Bajka's (1991:149–159) research, the results of which were published at the beginning of the transformation, demonstrates that about eleven thousand journalists were then employed in the country. Less than ten years later, about eighteen thousand were employed (Bajka, 2000:42). Surveys conducted in the 1990s within "The Global Journalists" project lead by Weaver (1998), in Poland, were performed by Olędzki (1998). In 2009, Stępińska and Ossowski (2011) took up the challenge, within the framework of a project run by the same American researcher. However, it needs to be noted that in all three cases (Olędzki, 1998; Bajka, 2000; Stępińska and Ossowski, 2011) the surveys were not conducted on a proportional sample. Olędzki (1998:289–290) conducted face-to-face interviews in two stages, in 1992 and 1997, on a sample of two hundred and forty journalists selected from the eleven biggest newspapers. Bajka, (2000:44) sent his surveys via the Internet to two hundred and fifty journalists, under which young people under thirty constituted the majority (53 percent of the participants). Stępińska and Ossowski (2011:18) commissioned the research to the Pentor group, which has conducted three hundred and twenty-nine surveys, and among the participants, the majority were press employees (58 percent). Although we are aware that we are dealing with results not applicable to the complete journalistic population, they allow us to capture certain tendencies and features of the process. The first conclusion concerns changes in the profile of the professional group in that period. More people had higher education (in the 1990s – 78 percent; in 2009 – 84.2 percent), but the percentage of people with journalistic education dropped from 45 percent to 31.6 percent (Stępińska et al., 2012:261).

In the next decade, calculations carried out at the University of Wrocław for the purpose of the 7th Framework Project "Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe" (MediaAcT), have shown that in 2011 the number of full-time journalists, as well as freelancers, has reached eleven thousand nine hundred and eighty-nine (Eberwein et al., 2014:71). The subsequent research, carried out a year later, within the framework of the "Journalism in Change in Poland, Russia, and Sweden" project, this number was estimated at ten thousand and ten (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2016:26; Nygren, Dobek-Ostrowska and Johansson, 2015:57).

It must, however be mentioned that there is a visible drop in Poland, not only in the number of those employed in the profession but also of those with journalistic education. In the 2012 survey, only 40 percent of the Polish participants (in relation to 75 percent in Russia, and 55 percent in Sweden) confirmed the ownership of such a diploma (Głowacki, 2015:74). This state of affairs diverges

from the tendencies observable in some Central European countries, where a gradual increase in the number of people with a journalistic diploma is noted, e.g., Romania – 78.4 percent (Vasilendiuc, 2010:190) and Slovakia – 39.1 percent (Brečka et al., 2010:128).

A slight elongation of service of the respondents and low interest in the membership of journalist associations is characteristic. Whereas in the 1990s about 25 percent of journalists belonged to them (Bajka, 2000:48–49), Stępińska and Ossowski's (2011:20) research shows that this percentage has dropped to 14.3 percent and mostly covers the older generation, the research was not, however, conducted on a proportional sample. In the 2012 comparative study, 29 percent of the respondents declared membership of one of the journalist associations (in Russia – 23 percent and in Sweden – 89 percent) (Głowacki, 2015:88). It was one of the lowest results in Europe, though not the lowest, as only 19 percent of the respondents in the Czech Republic declared membership of a professional association or a trade union (Volek, 2010:178).

Interesting conclusions can be drawn in reference to the issues of journalistic autonomy as well as the political engagement of journalists. Olędzki's (1998:291) research, on the one hand, has uncovered that the representatives of the Polish media are concerned that the media could perform a function of the government's or the president's propaganda tool (62.6 percent versus 38.7 percent in the USA); or mobilize the society (58.4 percent versus 39.5 percent in the USA); on the other hand, it has shown that over 40 percent of respondents had nothing against political engagement or party activity of journalists. Quite significantly, the 2009 research on professional autonomy has demonstrated that journalists had a feeling of full or partial freedom to choose how to exercise their profession. Moreover, their number (full freedom 47 percent, partial freedom 18.5 percent) has risen considerably in comparison to the 1990s (42 percent) (Stępińska and Ossowski, 2011:21–22). Based on this data, we could draw the conclusion that the pressure from publishers, editors-in-chief, owners, colleagues, as well as political and economic pressure has eased. Polish journalists were very satisfied (21.6 percent) or satisfied with their job (over 70 percent) and rated the media organization they worked for highly. Relatively, the lowest marks were given by television employees, but the published data does not, however, specify what percentage of them worked for public television, and what percentage for commercial stations. The journalistic milieu employed or linked to nationwide media is diversified. All over the world, there are stars among them; recognizable and influential journalists, sought by the media, which try to attract them with high salaries. There is a middle class, and an even more numerous group of the media factory workers, very often nameless, as well as devoid of talent and rules.

Which Polish journalists could then be considered as models for others exercising the same profession? Hadamik (2005:220) claimed that they could be divided into three generations: those from the interwar period, journalists who worked during communist times, and the generation that entered the profession after 1989. We can distinguish two types of journalists which can be considered the elite, at the top of the professional hierarchy. The first one consists of the most popular and visible television journalists and anchors working for evening news or current affairs programs. They are famous not only for their brilliant TV analyses but also for their analytical and critical articles or columns published in opinion-forming newspapers and magazines. Journalists who entered the profession in the 1980s, such as Monika Olejnik, and those who started at the beginning of the political transformation, like Tomasz Lis or Kamil Durczok, represent this group. Journalists of prestigious newspapers or opinion-forming magazines should also be included in the second group, along with renowned publicists, commentators, and columnists like Janina Paradowska, Adam Michnik, Jacek Żakowski, Daniel Passent and Dariusz Fikus who are associated with high-end titles. The peak in this group is reserved for legends of Polish journalism — reporters Ryszard Kapuściński and Hanna Krall, as well as Jan Nowak Jeziorański. Most of them were nominated for numerous awards and awarded the titles of best journalists of the 20th century. In contrast to other post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, in Poland the generation of experienced journalists is not connected with communism, neither are they associated negatively. Young journalists consider them masters, the very best representatives of the profession, from whom they can learn and imitate. Only very few manage to climb to the top of this ladder. What, then, is the average Polish journalist like?

After 1989, a deep change occurred in the structure of the professional journalist's group. Sonczyk (2001:40) calls this process a 'personnel revolution', as the term 'generational change' seems too weak to reflect the essence of the problem. In the course of just a decade, the number of people exercising the profession grew from ten thousand in the 1980s, up to twenty-five thousand at the end of the 1990s. Before 1989, those were press, radio, and television employees. Employment in editorial departments was their primary source of income (Sزت, 2010:213). Along with the transformation of the media market and the rapid development of commercial media, there also occurred the possibility of finding employment in the so-called semi-media professional areas, such as spokespersonship, public relations, advertising, online media, etc. The market was in need of new employees and was able to absorb anyone who sought employment. The growing demand for journalists has resulted in attracting ever fewer prepared individuals, who Sonczyk (2001:40) called volunteers, enthusiasts of the

profession, amateurs, or even dilettantes. The excessive and uncontrolled influx of individuals without the relevant education or professional competence was the result, among other things, of unnecessary openness, which according to Załubski (1997:89) has caused the profession to cross the safety line. Media owners, mainly local, have also contributed to this state of affairs. In order to cut costs of the salaries, they chose to hire young, inexperienced, flexible people with low financial expectations.

The generational exchange and change of working conditions have thrown journalists into a growing uncertainty about their identity (Kowalska, 2005:70). A question arises: to whom does the journalist owe allegiance — the owner, the publisher/broadcaster, the politician, or the society? Mocek (2006) and others, took up the issue of journalistic attitudes, ethical dimensions of the profession, the line between the service, the market, and commerce. He notices a division in the milieu of Polish journalists into those who have pride and write about issues dear to their hearts; and those who write to order.

The first group usually works for media which aspire to have standards, place high demands and expect appropriate professional competence from their journalists. This group includes opinion-forming magazines, a few newspapers, and radio and TV stations. They offer jobs to the best journalists, often hiring them away from competition, which is an option only for the richest and the most powerful. The owners of TVN and TVN24 stations apply the star strategy on the widest scale in the country, hiring the most popular Polish journalists. Countrywide/National radio stations, such as Radio Zet, Classic FM, Radio Tok FM or thematic TV channels like TV Biznes also place high demands on their employees. Positions in the leftist weekly magazine *Polityka*, where it is very difficult to be employed, or in the liberal Catholic *Tygodnik Powszechny*, are highly esteemed on the press market. *Gazeta Wyborcza* has a rather unique staffing policy; they set appropriate requirements for the applicants, and still organize in-house training courses. High standards are kept by Infor Holding, which provides professional legal and economic information. This, in turn, requires properly-educated and trained staff. The newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* was recognized as one of the most opinion-forming medium.

Mikułowski Pomorski (2008:86) has noticed an interesting aspect of the personalization of contemporary journalism. In his opinion, personalization of the media, reflected in the recognizability of the chief editors, publishers, or journalists, quite typical before 1989, has nowadays begun to fade. This phenomenon is caused by the replacement of people who are moral authorities, with fast information, pieces of news edited by nameless teams employed by Springer,

Polskapresse, Bauer, etc. Only a few media have managed to retain a personality, and it is the case only for those who, thanks to the work of people with well-known names or faces, have achieved a high level of professionalism or recognizability.

The media are exposed to growing pressure from the side of the owners, advertisers, or politicians, they therefore, lower their requirements toward professional employees. Hence, journalism becomes superficial and less inquisitive. It focuses on slogans, simple phrases, ideological portmanteau words, falling from the lips of politicians in parliament, which they later gullibly repeat without verifying (Kowalska, 2005:78–79).

Journalists working for big media organizations are less exposed to corruption than small regional editorial offices. Local journalists are more susceptible to pressure from the interests of local political, economic, or Church - groups around them. In the case of national media, journalists are not so prone to external influences or cliques. Symptoms of clientelism or cronyism, so visible in small municipalities and counties (as will be discussed further) do not appear in Poland at this level. The absence of these negative phenomena positively sets Polish national media off against the media in Southern Europe, where nepotism, interference of political elites and journalists (e.g., the *amiguís* model PSOE in Spain), corruption and cronyism between party leaders and media owners (Spain, Italy, Greece) are on the daily agenda.

An economically strong media organization such as the Agora Group and the TVN Group (from 2015 - 2018 belonged to the Scripps Networks Interactive, and since 2018 to Discovery, Inc.), TV Polsat (in the hands of one of the richest Polish businessmen Zygmunt Solorz) or owners of large radio stations like RMF FM (owned by German Bauer Media Group) or Radio ZET (the holding Eurozet, have belonged since 1993 to Groupe Lagardère, and since 2018 to Czech Media Inves.) are much more resistant to the pressure of advertisers than small, local businesses. What poses a threat to journalistic autonomy is the pressure of the owner, who decides whom to hire and whom to let go, punishes and insubordinate or disloyal, journalists. Another danger is, undoubtedly, the lack of economic stability, resulting from the temporality and uncertainty of the employment, which is illustrated by the following statement:

I am not a full-time employee at my company; I work based on a civil-law contract, which, however, includes a non-competition clause. Hence, I am, automatically not a freelancer. [An anonymous journalist, the 7th Framework Program of the European Union, MediaAcT]

A considerable group of journalists do not have a permanent contract with their employer, they work on commission, flat rates, are paid by lineage, or forced to

open their own, one-person companies, and have to patiently wait for their remuneration, often for quite some time.

Interesting conclusions can be drawn from survey polls conducted in 1994 by the Centre for Journalistic Research in Cracow among press chief editors (Pisarek, 1994:156). One of the most significant issues the respondents faced at work at the time was the inability to acquire advertisers (41.4 percent). Only 13.7 percent pointed to unfamiliarity with journalistic ethics, especially in the case of newspapers. These results clearly show what the biggest threat to journalistic autonomy and media freedom in the first period after the country entered a new economic system based on competition.

During the last thirty years, more research was conducted on the subject of countrywide / national journalists than on local ones. Most comprehensive studies and empirical research come from the Centre for Journalistic Research in Cracow (Chorążki, 1996, 1997) and Upper Silesia, where analyses of this type have been conducted for many years by various research teams (Gierula, 2005, 2006; Jachimowski, 1990, 2006). Similar research, dedicated to the press in Wielkopolska region, was conducted at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (for instance Kowalczyk, 2003). Individual authors analyzed Lublin's regional press (Pokrzycka, 2008) and other regional press, where published. A lack of comprehensive studies is a serious obstacle, making it impossible to present the issue of journalistic professionalism and culture in Poland after 1989 on a local scale in full. The existing publications, however, clearly point out the directions of development and main tendencies.

The tradition of local press originated in the interwar period. Five hundred and seventy six newspapers were issued in 1937 (Dziki, 1996:84), and, although they were strongly politicized, they performed an important opinion function and integrated the local societies. The Second World War (1939–1945) and the later takeover of power by the communists (1945–1989), closed this stage, destroying the already fully-developed system. The first post-war years meant complete stagnation. The local press opened by the governing authorities, did not respond to the needs, traditions, and activities of the local circles. Only in the 1960s, thanks to a takeover of local and regional editorial offices through the Workers Publishing Cooperative (Robotnicza Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza), was this type of press stabilized (Gierula, 2006: 82). Research on groups of local journalists conducted by Jachimowski (1990:73–74) twenty years later, allowed the author to conclude that this group was not only numerous but had developed its own professional distinctiveness, resulting from the nature of their tasks. In the first decade after the fall of communism, a rapid development of the local media sector took place. In the 1990s, about two thousand five hundred

local and sub-local newspapers were printed, and more than one hundred and fifty radio broadcasters were in operation (Sonczyk, 2001:43). This growth in the number of operators was bound to cause a further dynamic development of journalism, which gained new opportunities resulting from the freedom of the press and the introduction of the mechanisms of the free market economics into the media sector. Chorążki's calculations (1996, 1997) demonstrated that six to seven thousand people worked in five hundred and eighty-six offices in 1996, and in two hundred and ten editorial offices in 1997. Compared to five hundred employed before 1989, this established a fourteen-fold growth of the size of this group.

It needs to be emphasized, however, that a considerable diversification of the regional, local, and sub-local press took place in that period, compared to the previous one. Next to titles which belonged the RSW Książka Prasa Ruch (closed in 1990), and those which were privatized and later taken over by one of the foreign publishing groups (French group Socpresse which belongs to Hersant, German group from Passawa Verlagsgruppe Passau GmbH, Norwegian Orkla Media), new types of press appeared, such as commercial titles, self-government newspapers, newspapers issued by political parties, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and Church or factory newspapers. They differed not only in structure (67.1 percent of all surveyed editorial offices hired one or two people, and only 3.4 percent more than 8 journalists), but also in the employment process. Only two thousand journalists worked full-time; most of them in privately-owned publishing houses (54.4 percent). The quota of full-time employees remained on the level of 15 percent in the self-government or Church parish press, as well as in the non-governmental press.

Significant changes, in comparison to the 1980s, occurred in journalism education. Private publishers did not expect their employees to have a university diploma, let alone a journalistic one. In consequence, as confirmed by Gierula and Jachimowski's 1998 research conducted in the circles of local journalists and based on one hundred and thirty interviews with journalists employed at eighty-two editorial offices in the country, the number of journalists with higher education dropped from 80 to 50 percent (Archive of Department of Journalism, University of Silesia in Katowice, 1998). Among the people holding a university diploma, only 3.4 percent employed in the local media graduated from full journalistic studies or postgraduate journalistic courses. The lack of restrictions has caused an influx of unskilled, inexperienced people to the profession, which, in turn, was bound to have an influence on the quality of the work and journalistic professionalism. One needs to agree with a sad observation of Chorążki (1996, 1997), that at the time, the local press remained in the hands of people

(more than 90 percent), who were completely unprepared for the profession, and gained basic skills only in the course of their work in the editorial office. There is an enormous number of graduates of journalistic studies and postgraduate journalistic courses in Poland, yet work at local media has always been unattractive for them because of limited possibilities for personal growth, professional career, low wages, as well as a lack of stable of employment and uncertainty of employee rights. In the 1990s and 2000s, only 16.6 percent of editorial offices were linked to associations and organizations supporting the local press. Publishers were not, and are still not, interested in improving the skills of their employees. In the 1990s the profession attracted people who were usually active in completely different professions (68.8 percent), for example teachers, engineers, clerks, workers, and culture employees. It frequently was their first position after graduation. The interviews conducted by Gierula and Jachimowski prove that these people ended up in the profession by coincidence (about 35.9 percent), or that it was their only opportunity for employment (more than 11 percent). Only 34.4 percent of the respondents stated that they chose the profession consciously and that they feel that this work suits them best (Gierula, 2006:87).

At the end of the 1990s, a generational change took place among journalists employed by the local media. Young, very often poorly prepared employees, inexperienced and sometimes without any journalistic training, pushed those who had been employed full-time and at that point were retiring. The lack of qualifications was a convenient reason for employers not to hire them full-time, but to offer them some other form of cooperation. For instance, the *Dziennik Bałtycki* employed ninety one journalists; however, four hundred other people were connected to this title (Pepliński, 2001:56). This type of employment causes another problem — the fluctuation of the personnel. Employees who are loosely connected to their editorial offices, move from one place of work to another, treating their affiliation to the medium as temporary. At the same time, strong competition on the market and the lack of social security results in a higher availability of young people on the job market. They become instruments in the hands of the owners, publishers, editors-in-chief, etc. They attempt to cover every subject, even when they lack the expertise, and very often write texts to order of their supervisors without any second thought or critical reflexion. The watchdog function of the media, as well as their involvement in the public sphere, suffer because of that. The lack of professional stability in the case of the younger generation of journalists makes freedom of speech available only to the owners, broadcasters, and publishers. It also reduces the former to the part of obedient tools in the hands of the latter. This particular situation on the job market, allowed researchers to form a thesis that we are dealing with a certain

type of social censorship (Pepliński, 2001: 56), which emerged after 1989 and has been omnipresent until now.

The specifics of the local press is that contacts between journalists, representatives of authorities on the level of municipalities, counties or voivodships, local business and readers are more frequent and intensive, as well as more complex. This means that news in the media is instantly verified and assessed. Moreover, local journalists, are to a much higher degree than their colleagues working for the national media, exposed to the influence of local politicians and organizations (local-government media), the pressure of the church and the clergy (parish and Church media) or local businessmen – advertisers (private media). The control over the work of local journalists is much noted and deeper than in the national media. In consequence, various pathologies develop, as well as political instrumentalization reflected in politicization (using the media for one's own needs by local political elites), and economic instrumentalization (leading to commercialization, nepotism, and clientelism). Both are highly visible at the local level.

The local press, to which the local and sub-local media market is limited, is usually weak and dependent. In most cases, we can observe an asymmetrical model of relations, based on the dominance of local elites (political, economic, Church, etc.) and subordination of journalists. If it is a private newspaper, it conditions itself on local business, which is the main advertiser, and, thus guarantees its survival (confirmed by 25.8 percent of journalists) (Jachimowski, 1990:89). If it is a local government press, it becomes an instrument in the hands of municipality authorities, the mayor, the voivode or the president of the city (*wójt*), as confirmed by 16.4 percent of respondents. In addition, there is pressure from the media owner (6.3 percent) and management of the editorial office (6.3 percent) (Jachimowski, 1990:89). It seems that the tendency to control the local press still continues and has even deepened over the last thirty years. On the one hand, it has led to an intense politicization, noticed by 45.5 percent of the journalists interviewed by Jachimowski (1990). On the other, local executives exercise economic control. They, as advertisers, determine the survival of the private titles on the market. In both cases of political and economic dependency, we are faced with restrictive practices aimed at journalistic autonomy, and ethics and professional standards are not the key features of the profession. Merits, highly-valued in journalistic culture, yield to bias and loyalty toward patrons. This results in engaging in relations with local business, supporting of cliques and interest groups. These problems are complemented by other obstacles, impeding the exercising of the profession; such as overwork, problems with access to information, the necessity to tackle a large number of subjects, ineffective

organization of the work in the editorial offices, or areas too large to be successfully covered by the medium (Gierula, 2005:174). Pepliński (2001:55), in his analysis of the situation of journalistic circles on the Gdańsk coast in the 1990s, observed similar problems. The author placed in this context also pauperization of the profession caused by low wages, exploitation, publishers' frauds, state tax policy, and a general drop in prestige of the profession. These were followed by a limited access to information caused by a distaste for press speakers and public relations personnel by journalists, and a lack of their motivation to co-operate with the external environment.

The above-mentioned problems of local journalists, hence dependency on local political elites and advertisers, low level of education and professional qualifications, non-compliance of rules of professional ethics, lack of career stability, low wages, overwork, etc., are persistent issues that do not promote a feeling of optimism. In this context, the future of this segment, additionally burdened with the consequences of the economic crisis and of critical readership breakdown, does not guarantee an improvement in the condition of local journalism. The same problems pester journalists from other Centro-European and East European countries. Czech (Volek, 2010; Volek and Urbániková, 2017) and Slovakian (Školka, 2008; Brečka et al., 2010) media studies research, confirm that local journalism in those countries is troubled by the same difficulties as in Poland. From the year 1990, a particular threat to quality and professionalism faced by the publishers, is commercialization. Both the Czech and Slovakian regional and local press has been completely taken over by corporations belonging to the German Verlagsgruppe Passau GmbH (VGP) – Vltava-Labe Press in Czechia and Petit Press in Slovakia. Not even the appearance of pluralism and diversification is maintained. Czech journalists name such limitations as commercialization of the content, low wages, politicization, low autonomy of the profession and lack of prestige (Volek, 2010:190). Volek and Urbániková (2017:171–171), who have drawn very sad conclusions from their analyses, have researched the issue of the spiral of mistrust in Czech journalism in recent years. The state of the Slovakian press is even worse, because the small market does not guarantee profit. In the face of the 2009 crisis, when *Polskapresse* closed half of its most poorly sold titles; *Polska The Times*, VGP after ten years of market presence, has withdrawn from Slovakia (Petit Press was taken over in 2009 by another German group — the Rheinische Post -RP Media Group), justifying this move by stating its will to focus on its core activities on the Polish and Czech press markets.

In this part of Europe, similar to Mediterranean countries, professionalism of local journalists is low. Their work uncovers all the flaws and degenerations of the profession, which do not exist or have a weaker form in national media.

This, of course, happens to the detriment of the reader and the citizen, who is deprived of a platform for debate at the local level; an intermediary connecting him with representatives of power and representing his interests. This severely limits the public sphere and the development of civil society. One needs to agree with Kowalczyk's (2003:124) pessimistic reflexion. He maintained that the local press is unable to be a mature and conscious participant of the public sphere, a loyal and prudent servant of society, whose task it is to provide the society of the municipality or voivodship with credible and confirmed news created by unbiased, independent, and competent journalists. This opinion, formed at the beginning of the 2000s is unfortunately still valid.

### 1.3 Journalistic autonomy

For Hallin and Mancini (2004:34), one of the most crucial dimensions of journalistic professionalization is autonomy. They define autonomy as a process of self-improvement, which is supposed to help journalists control the performative part of their work. Journalists have never reached a degree of autonomy comparable to doctors or lawyers, as they are only constituents of media institutions, and outside of which, exercising their profession is virtually impossible. Moreover, journalists have no means of exercising full control over these institutions. Besides, media work is teamwork. The final product is sometimes the result of the effort of a very large team. Hallin and Mancini (2004:35) also emphasize this aspect, stressing that journalistic autonomy is, in practice, the autonomy of the team and not of the individual representative of the profession.

The media and the journalists employed by them are not in a vacuum (see Fig. 1.3.). Their autonomy is determined at the legislative level (regulations) of a country, through legal acts like media law, legal regulations for broadcasters and operators, audio-visual law, press law and copyright, advertising law, etc. On a lower level of co-regulation, the creation of norms and regulations is done with active media participation (Peters, 1998:69–70). The research on these processes, primarily on electronic media, belongs to new branches of media studies. There is already a group of researchers in Western Europe dealing with this issue, in Poland, Jakubowicz (2008a, 2008b), Stępa and Kołodziejczyk (2006) were the first who took up this subject. Examples of co-regulation are known in many European countries, for example the agreement of the German WAZ Mediengruppe in 2007, the Dutch regulation on the protection of minors (in 2006 or the French system of co-regulation in advertising.)

An important factor is self-regulation done on the level of the media institution when the owner and the journalist make decisions concerning the program



Fig. 1.3: *Levels of journalistic autonomy*

Source: Author.

line or journalistic culture. In scientific literature, this process is termed the Media Accountability System, and it requires a broader analysis. Self-regulation, as emphasized by Jakubowicz (2008:37), is a well-known voluntary form of employing ethics in practice in journalistic groups, mainly associated with television, radio, the Internet, social media, advertising, etc. Media institutions freely and upon their own initiative impose restrictions on themselves or adopt rules of conduct. Those institutions are active at all levels – design, control, performance, and introduction of changes into standards and norms. Self-regulation is very often inspired by the state, through an appropriate system of incentives and subsidies. However, such solutions are not frequently chosen in Poland (Dobek-Ostrowska, Głowacki, Kuś, 2014: 153–154).

The individual professional ethics of each journalist is the deciding factor shaping the lowest level of journalistic culture, as well as professional autonomy. According to Blumler and Gurevitch (1995:66), only a highly internalized system of values adopted by the representatives of the profession, and the firm belief of reporters, commentators, producers, publishers and people in charge of the content, that the medium cannot yield to external pressure, allows them to maintain the highest level of professionalism and, thus, of journalistic culture.

Professional journalistic autonomy emerged in Great Britain at the beginning of the 18th century, when the first independent reporters and parliamentary correspondents distinguished themselves in the context of abolished political censorship. Democracy, a free market and guaranteed freedom of speech enhanced the development of autonomy. The result of this process, however,

differs depending on numerous factors, such as the political system, tradition, political culture, the degree of economic and public sphere development, as well as of the civil society, the quality of which to a high degree, modified by journalistic autonomy.

The journalistic profession is connected to an unresolved dilemma (Czyżewski, 2005:46). First of all, the journalist performs his work in a media institution – an editorial office of a newspaper, radio or TV station, or an internet portal. As an employee of this institution, he is forced to manufacture a product attractive for the buyer. He always acts within the framework of certain norms and regulations defined in advance. Secondly, the product has symbolic character, as the journalist uses signs and symbols in the creative process. The journalist requires a certain degree of autonomy and freedom of action for the product to be built. To bind him with regulations and norms could prove fatal for his talent and statement. In closed systems, journalism is reduced to a service function; freedom of speech does not exist. However, in liberal-democratic systems journalists play a crucial role; they not only inform and educate society but also shape public opinion and control the political debate. However, has it always been so? One cannot help but agree with Taylor and Willis, who state that:

The assertion by broadcasters that their professional perspective on events, along with broadcasting's rational and 'democratic' codes of practice, creates a distance from content which is cast into some doubt when one considers some of the highly charged, ongoing political situations they are involved in. (Taylor and Willis, 1999:129)

The authors' base their position on an analysis of the behavior of journalists in the context of the conflict in Northern Ireland and accounts of acts of terrorism. They have noticed that in this case, there is a sharp discrepancy between the idea of independent professionalism and impartiality of the broadcast, which until then had been controlled by politicians (Taylor and Willis, 1999).

However, at the turn of the century, and the age of intense technological changes, which allow the audience to diversify their sources of information and to access them freely in time and space, the position of the journalist and his autonomy can be unclear. Some researchers claim that the profession undergoes a serious transformation leading to its marginalization (Kononiuk, 2001:18). Journalists lose their subjectivity and visibility; they cease to be representatives of an esteemed profession, recognizable by name, voice, or appearance. There is no space for their unique talents or building a bond with the audience. They become elements of organisms, cogs in the news machine (Mrozowski, 2001:266), transporting the information manufactured in the production team. There is no place in this process for their own, original input (Kononiuk, 2001:18), they

passively use, or copy information coming from various news agencies, public relations departments, press speakers, etc. More and more often, journalists are referred to as staff or media workers, whose job is to select and provide information and entertainment.

Does the journalistic profession still exist in Poland thirty years after the fall of communism, or is it better to speak about media workers? What is left of traditional journalism? Have the representatives of the profession kept their subjectivity and professional autonomy? Is it opinion, neutral, or engaged journalism? Is the information separate from the comment? To which of Hallin and Mancini's models is Polish journalism closest? Although Poland was not included in their comparative study, they have devoted some attention to it, and it is in this context that they refer to Curry (1990:39).

Bortnowski's (1999: 53) research shows that information accounts for about 70 percent of all materials published in the Polish press. The remaining 30 percent are texts looking for or presenting solutions, opinion articles, reportages, and other genres. According to Hadamik (2005:220), media content is dominated by hard news and narrative forms. It needs to be emphasized, that journalistic genres, that is, those which are based on interpretation and comment, such as commentary, feuilleton, essay, reportage, or opinion article, have a long-standing tradition in Poland, similar to Germany or France. In the past, it was an independent branch of journalism, and even today, the talent for opinion journalism and the abilities that go with it are still highly valued (Hadamik, 2005:220). An analysis of the practical aspect of journalism shows that opinion journalism, deeply rooted in the Polish tradition and the culture of the profession, still plays an important part. This press genre, absent or, at best, poorly-developed in Western media systems, is typical for Polish journalism and co-exists with other information-oriented formats characteristic for the Liberal Model.

Not all journalists are, however, skilled in the opinion article genre or brilliant feuilleton writers. We can notice a lack of explicitness of the professional position and a severe conflict between normative assumptions and practice. Sükösd (2000:160) claims that the art of journalism in the whole Centro-European region needs constant improvement. The rapid development of media in recent decades in Poland was also accompanied by a serious drop in the quality of journalism, which is a global and not a national phenomenon. Young journalists and novices lack appropriate skills and basic knowledge. To cut costs, tabloid publishers and owners of entertainment media, prefer to employ amateurs, whose wages are much lower compared to professionals. Not without reason does Szot (2013:316–17) place journalism between professionalism and the need to survive, which has an enormous influence on professional autonomy. Low

standards go hand in hand with publicizing scandals, breaking news, and cheap entertainment. Indeed, we are dealing with two different levels of journalistic cultures. There is a small, yet influential group of journalists, who maintain high standards in the scope of institutional roles, values, and ethical ideologies. The majority, however, does not comply. The weak consensus between journalistic standards and the restrictions on the development of self-regulation pushes Poland toward the Mediterranean Model (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:113), in which journalism is not autonomous, but acts under the pressure of politics and business. Just like in Southern Europe, the majority of Polish media are treated instrumentally by various actors (as discussed further) as tools of intervention into the public or political scene. On the one hand, the control over public media is the aim of every party or coalition elected after 1989. On the other, journalistic professionalism is highly influenced by commercialization and tabloidization of the media imposed by the logic of commerce (Dobek-Ostrowska and Głowacki, 2008). In both cases, journalistic autonomy is disturbed, which is directly reflected in journalistic culture (Szot, 2013:360).

## **1.4 Norms and professional ethics**

Another determinant of journalistic professionalism are professional norms. This category presented by Hallin and Mancini has gained a deeper dimension due to Hanitzsch' concept of constitutive dimensions of journalistic culture, which develops epistemological categories such as objectivism and empiricism, as well as ethical (deontological) ones like relativism or idealism. Professional norms essentially concern legal and ethical principles, which, apart from knowledge and professional training, constitute the so-called triad, on which the profession of a journalist is embedded. Poland is one of those European countries characterized by three journalist associations, individual media, as well as a deontological system with numerous ethical and moral codes and normative regulations. There is a gap in Poland between legal norms or the provisions of the codes and journalistic practice. To confirm this, let us look at the contents of the most important documents, which we will confront with the results of media content analyses.

### **1.4.1 Codes of journalistic ethics and normative regulations**

The most important media organizations, including public television and the daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, have their own journalistic codes; other smaller media apply generally accepted norms and ethical codes. Additionally, the existing journalist associations have their own, internal codes of professional ethics and a developed system of journalistic courts (Szot, 2013:333).

What these circles have in common is the short, seven-point Media Ethics Charter, received after long consults and vigorous debates. In January 1994, a consult was held on the subject of freedom of speech and media freedom in Poland; a debate concerning threats to these fundamental values and the need to integrate the divided journalistic milieu. On March 29th, 1995, the Journalist's House (Dom Dziennikarza) hosted a ceremony of signing the Media Ethics Charter (Karta Etyki Mediów)— the most important deontological document in Poland. This document draws attention to the universal principles on the basis of which a journalist should build his statement. Polish journalists, publishers, producers, radio and television broadcasters, by signing it, have accepted the rules of truth, objectivity, separating information from commentary, honesty, respect, tolerance, the well-being of the audience as well as freedom and responsibility. The Charter has been signed by the following, organizations and institutions:

- journalist associations: the Association of Polish Journalists (Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy Polskich - SDP), the Association of Journalists of the Republic of Poland (Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy Rzeczpospolitej - SDPR), the Catholic Association of Journalists (Katolickie Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy- KSD) and the National Chaplain of Creative Communities (Krajowy Duszpasterz Środowisk Twórczych);
- media institutions: public Polish Radio S.A., and TVP S.A, private TV Polsat and TV4;
- press agencies: Polish Press Agency (Polska Agencja Prasowa - PAP), Catholic Information Agency (Katolicka Agencja Informacyjna - KAI);
- trade unions: the Syndicate of Polish Journalists (Związek Zawodowy Dziennikarzy), the Syndicate of Radio and Television Workers (Związek Zawodowy Pracowników Radia i Telewizji), the Syndicate of Polish Journalists (Syndykat Dziennikarzy Polskich);
- the producers: The Chamber of Press Publishers (Izba Wydawców Prasy), and National Audiovisual Producers (Krajowa Izba Producentów Audiowizualnych, and the National Reportage Club (Krajowy Klub Reportażu) since 1997.

After the Media Ethics Charter (Karta Etyczna Mediów, see Appendix 1) has been signed by its signatories – heads of journalist associations and organizations, radio and television stations, publishers, broadcasters, and media producers – have created the Polish Media Conference. The most important task of the Conference is to spread the ethical principles included in the Charter, notifying non-compliance to it and filing complaints to the appropriate body, i.e.,

the Media Ethics Council (Rada Etyki Mediów). The signatories of the Charter and the participants of the Polish Media Conference have called to life the Media Ethics Council – a body designed to protect the values and principles indicated in the Charter. The Council's responsibility is also to analyze cases of violation of those accepted standards and inform about them. Journalists and journalist associations are responsible for the implementation of these rules.

Additionally, associations, journalist trade unions as well as employers, who have signed the Media Ethics Charter, have also adopted the Code of Journalistic Ethics (Dziennikarski Kodeks Obyczajowy, see Appendix 2), which precisely states that the journalistic profession serves society, it also indicates which practices are acceptable and which are undesirable.

A form of control over the media and their practices is the Press Freedom Monitoring Centre of the Association of Polish Journalists (Centrum Monitoringu Wolności Prasy Stowarzyszenia Dziennikarzy Polskich). The Centre's tasks include defending freedom of speech in accordance with Art. 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, in particular journalistic freedom of access to information sources; it reinforces the freedom of the press and broadcast media, as well as the extent to which freedom of speech can be exercised. The Centre publishes reports and provides support, advice, and consultation.

An interesting self-regulating and self-control solution, rarely seen in other media systems, is the Code of Good Practice for Press Publishers (Kodeks Dobrych Praktyk Wydawców Prasy, see Appendix 3), received by the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Press Publishers' Association (Nadzwyczajne Walne Zgromadzenie Izby Wydawców Prasy) in 2005. The document promotes independence, responsibility, and credibility of publishers, defines good practice and indicates what rules should be followed by competing operators on the press market and how to integrate society's faith in publishers. Numerous other forms of controlling journalistic responsibility have emerged, for instance, the Journalistic Ethics Council or Press Monitoring Centre. These forms are virtually or completely absent in other European countries, especially in those which are associated with the Polarised Pluralism Model. It can therefore be said that in legal and formal terms, the Polish media system is close to the solutions that exist in the model of Democratic Corporatism, that is, where journalistic professionalism and professional culture is high.

In Poland, the membership of a journalistic association is not compulsory and does not entail formal and legal consequences concerning employment status, as is the case in Italy or Sweden. In the first case, membership is obligatory; otherwise, employment in any medium is impossible. In the second,

it is officially voluntary, yet, in practice, it is a necessity, as only the Swedish Journalist Association has the right to issue identification cards, without which the journalist cannot exercise his profession, e.g., participate in a press conference or take an interview. In Poland, the journalistic milieu is heavily divided, which has resulted in the formation of different active journalist associations.

The Association of Polish Journalists (*Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy Polskich - SDP*) was founded in 1951. In 1980, it supported Solidarity. Because it sided with the opposition, the communist authorities decided to dissolve the organization under martial law. The Association of Polish Journalists was reactivated in 1989. In the 2000s the association had around three thousand members, the majority of whom declared conservative values and supported center-right parties. The association has adopted an extended Code of Journalist Ethics (see Appendix 4), which draws attention to separating comment and interpretation from information, the procedures for collecting materials, the treatment of the interlocutor, conflicts of interest, relations with colleagues and supervisors, and the consequences in cases of violation of the rules of the Code.

The second is the Association of Journalists of the Republic of Poland (*Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej - SDRP*), which was founded in 1982 replacing the organization of the dissolved by the communists. This association represents Poland in the International Journalists' Association. In the 2000s, the SDRP had more than eight thousand five hundred members, with rather leftist beliefs. It is an efficient structure consisting of sixteen local branches throughout the country. The organization has a wide spectrum of activities, it has a social fund, and it brokers jobs, organizes vocational training, supports unemployed journalists, and helps in the event of a dispute with an employer. The association has worked out its own deontological system in the form of a Journalistic Code of Conduct (see Appendix 5), which describes the rights and obligations of its members and ethical principles that have to guide them in their work.

The third and smallest organization is the Catholic Association of Journalists (*Katolickie Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy - KSD*), created in 1991 by Catholic journalists. It adopted the Ideological Declaration of the Catholic Association of Journalists (see Appendix 6). It has approximately three hundred members, acting in ten local branches. In addition to organizing prayers, the Catholic Association of Journalists conducts training and prepares journalists for work in the Catholic Church and secular media, so that they can endorse the ideas of the Catholic faith. This organization, although, it stays on the side of the main conflict, plays an important part in Poland, where Catholic media, owned both by

the Church and by private owners, constitute an important section of the market. Additionally, after 2015 its importance has considerably risen.

The two biggest organizations are severely conflicted. Their members differ on practically all counts – their assessment of history, ideology, and political sympathies. This conflict is reflected not only in the existing antagonism inside the journalistic milieu but also in the media content and its publicizing. This applies primarily to public media and often takes a grotesque form, when after an election, at the moment of the transfer of power, the winning party treats public media as electoral booty and seeks to take control over them through the exchange of personnel. Supporters of the victorious camp are put into important positions, abandoned by those who supported the defeated party. Quite often, this cleansing is not initiated by the government but by those journalists who are related to or supporting the new government.

#### **1.4.2 Ethical norms in journalistic practice**

In Poland, legal norms, journalist associations, their charters, mission, etc., are comparable to those that function in the Liberal or Democratic Corporatism Models (Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012), as well as in the Hybrid Liberal Model observed in Central and Eastern Europe (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c: 26–27). From formal and legal aspects, the Polish media system should therefore be qualified as a system characterized by high professionalism. Is this the case in practice?

The professional norms described in codes and declarations are a categorization of universal ethical values, which should accompany each individual journalist. Ethics is the way they should think and act, it is a collection of ideas and practices, the conscious or unconscious role played in the society and an understanding of the meaning of their work.

The Media Ethics Council or the Press Freedom Monitoring Centre of the Association of Polish Journalists can only inform those in charge of the unethical conduct of a journalist or of the editorial department, and express their disapproval. However, these organizations have no legal means to punish a journalist who acts unethically. The Association of Polish Journalists (SDP) annually awards the title of ‘Hyena of the Year’ for the most reprehensible journalistic practices. This infamous Freedom of Speech Prize was in 2008 awarded to Axel Springer for instigating anti-German sentiment in Poland (Ociepka and Woźna, 2009:237–257).

Polish journalists are conflicted and divided by their intense political opinions, and this process has been more visible after the change of power in 2015. They reveal their political sympathies and antipathies as well as ideological

convictions without second thoughts (Pokorna-Ignatowicz, 2008:127–145). They differ in values and the way they perceive their work and its mission. The matter of daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* and Piotr Pacewicz contesting the 2008 title of Journalist of the Year awarded to Bogdan Rymanowski, was widely commented on. In accordance with the rulebook of the competition organized since 1997, the distinction is awarded for professionalism, promoting world standards in media work, and complying with ethical canons of the profession. Meanwhile, Pacewicz wrote:

[...] let us praise journalists, not arbitrators of elegance in washerwomen brawls  
[...] What kind of journalism is that? Is there anything of importance that Bogdan Rymanowski can communicate to Polish society? What is his field of expertise? What does he reveal that we did not know previously? (Pacewicz, 2008)

TVN24 chief, Adam Pieczyński, answered these accusations sarcastically:

You can criticize Rymanowski; complain that Lis invites these and not those guests. Maybe Durczok, Pochanke, Olejnik are simply pseudo-journalists? Just like Rymanowski. They just seat those guests and talk to them. They explain nothing, they are not as inquisitive as *Gazeta* [Wyborcza], and they are not as smart as *Gazeta*, nor as professional as *Gazeta*. (*Laureaci nagrody Dziennikarz Roku*, 2008)

The polemic between journalists at TVN and at *Gazeta Wyborcza* has uncovered a severe dispute over the way journalism should be practiced and revealed different visions thereof. The expressive and partial, politically engaged and precisely locating itself on the value scale of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, took a stand on the one side. TVN journalists – more toned-down and distanced from the political world, although after the 2015 election more engaged and, hence, deepening the political parallelism of the media system — are on the other. This dispute has revealed the weaknesses of Polish journalism in the first decades of the 21st century. It has shown the depth of the divide in the milieu and the crisis of the quality of media, which chases higher ratings and income from advertising and forgo solid, reliable information.

A manifestation of the crisis of ethical values among journalists, publishers, and broadcasters is the amendment of the civil code, which after 1997 has caused a rapid increase in the number of lawsuits for violation of personal rights. These, in turn, end more and more often in the loss of the media.

Journalists themselves increasingly often notice the fall of values and professional ethics. In 2010, Ewa Wanat, the chief editor of TOK FM, in her interview with the portal Wirtualnemedia.pl formulated a dramatic thesis, stating that:

[...] journalism in the form known from a dozen or so years ago is dying, and there probably is already nothing to save [...] labor-intensive and difficult genres, i.e., reportage or

serious opinion journalism will be displaced by lighter and easier forms, which are also cheaper. (*Dziennikarstwo- umierający zawód*, 2010)

Another journalist summed up the level of journalistic professionalism:

I worked as a producer for the BBC World Service for 2 years. The gap between the application of journalistic standards in that corporation and Polish media is proof of our civilizational backwardness. [An anonymous journalist, the 7th Framework Program of the European Union, MediaAcT, 2011]

Another journalist upholds this view with his statement, recorded in a 2013 interview conducted within the framework of the project “Journalism in change”:

In Poland, journalistic ethics were not [...] and are still not taught. In the USA, journalistic ethics is one of the most important subjects taught at [University] faculties. When I speak to my colleagues, Polish journalists, they open their eyes wide with astonishment when I tell them. [Polish Respondent 6, <50 years old, private TV, editor/journalist] (Barczyszyn, 2016:36)

An ever-decreasing amount of knowledge, skills and talent are required from a journalist. Nevertheless, we need to remember that there has always been an elite who has sought deeper, more expert knowledge, which may give hope that not all media will become either commercialized, tabloidized, or deeply politicized.

The quality crisis is not only the problem of Polish journalism. Researchers all over the world have noticed the same issue, also in those countries associated with the Liberal and Democratic Corporatism Models, in which Hallin and Mancini assessed journalistic professionalism as high. Witschge and Nygren (2009) describe this phenomenon of the constant fall of value and the decrease in quality as de-professionalization of journalism, and the results of their empirical research conducted in Great Britain and Sweden support this theory. The authors advance a thesis that journalism is evolving in the direction of a semi-profession and attempt to support the argument with an analysis of ten areas in which considerable changes have taken place, such as:

- increased concentration on every-day challenges, lack of time for in-depth research, a focus on current events;
- spending more time in editorial offices, using the phone and the Internet more often, instead of directly contacting sources and working in the field;
- expecting from journalists many skills that reduce production costs, they should preferably be reporters, publishers, photographers, and operators all in one;
- A result of the internet is changes in the system of access to and flow of the media content, which appears in different formats and spreads over different channels, for instance, a television station and the webpage of this station;

- limiting creative journalism at the expense of media formatting, standardization of the message;
- development of new media logic expressed in a growing time pressure which, in turn, is reflected in the quality of the content, a less-formal style, dependency on the sources, such as police speakers, public relations specialists; in shortening of forms (although there is no reduction in the volume of the material), and measuring the position of the web journalist by the number of clicks;
- the emergence of interactive journalism and the creation of content by internet users themselves, the editorial departments increasingly often use materials such as videos or photographs taken by eye-witnesses, which are less professional, but cheaper and result in a faster publication;
- dynamic development of new technologies that allow the creation of new applications and solutions which was hitherto impossible;
- acting under pressure of financial results of the owner, the profits are crucial, thus the portfolio of the publisher/broadcaster and the content must correspond with the needs of the target group (Witschge and Nygren, 2009).

Although Witschge and Nygren's research was conducted among British and Swedish journalists, their conclusions are universal. Volek (2010:188) supported these results based on his empirical research done among Czech journalists. The author speaks not only of the process of de-professionalization, but also of proletarianization of the media (confirmed by the highest number of the surveyed journalists), commercialization of the content, low wages, influence of politicians on the content, low professional autonomy, and low prestige of the profession (Volek, 2010:190).

Balčytiene and Harro-Loit (2010:200) go even further in their description of journalistic practices in the Baltic States – Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The researchers write about exploitation journalism, defined as the publishing of sponsored advertising and public relations materials, which seem to be journalistic. The most surprising aspect is that this issue does not only affect entities operating on the economic market but also on the political one. This is perfectly illustrated by the example of a paid electoral debate of two Estonian party leaders in March 2007 broadcast by the TV3 commercial station (Balčytiene and Harro-Loit, 2010:201). Such practices are possible because of the low professionalism of the media, where profit is more important than moral principles, a lack of professional, journalistic ethics, as well as the attitude of journalists who see these phenomena as natural and do not counter them. In Poland, such extreme cases of appropriating journalism by advertising are unknown. This does not mean, however, that the problem is non-existent, especially in the local and regional press, which make a much lower profit on copy sales.

The conclusions that can be drawn from the research conducted in Sweden, Great Britain, the Czech Republic and Baltic states, confirm Donsbach's (2010:157) opinion, who believes that we can already speak of 'global journalism' and of diminishing differences between low and high journalism, and, hence, of the progressing process of flattening of its structure, which is also observable in Poland.

### **1.5 Journalism as a public service**

Hallin and Mancini's (2004:36–37) view, that the ethics of public service are particularly important in the case of journalism, is necessary to understand the role of the media in a democratic society. In their considerations, the authors do not elaborate on these issues, however, today most researchers are certain that the market model has replaced the public sphere model (Croteau and Hoynes, 2006:39). Croteau and Hoyes indicate that the market model has serious limitations and carries numerous threats to the quality of democracy and civil society. They assess that the market is undemocratic and amoral, it feeds inequalities, and is unable to fulfill social and democratic needs (Croteau and Hoynes, 2006: 23–26). They believe that because of globalization, the concentration of ownership and the resulting risk of monopoly, protection of economic interests, internal and corporate censorship, favoring trivialization, negativity, and sensationalism (Michalczyk, 2008:123); this model seriously endangers journalism seen as a public service. Distancing from the public sphere model is a global process and concerns Poland, Europe, and the rest of the world to the same degree. Private groups, instead of serving citizens, sell their product to them (consumers) and the profit that the media (the productions companies) bring, becomes more important than the promotion of the activities of a civic society. This particular duty of preserving and developing the public sphere model falls to the public radio and television stations, which are statutorily charged with the public service mission and obliged to serve society. In some countries, like Denmark or Sweden, even the commercial media, although, to a limited degree, are also charged with the public service mission. This idea is not a dead letter in statutes and codes, but a part of journalistic practice, and sometimes even the need to limit and unsay, like in the case of terrorist attacks in Ireland, or military actions in the Persian Gulf. In this case, British journalists, both from the public and private media in the name of social responsibility submitted to the interest of the state (Taylor and Willis, 1999).

It is more and more difficult to find newspapers, radio, or TV stations in Poland that can be described as upholding the ethics of public service, even

though these values are emphasized in the above-mentioned codes and in the Media Ethics Charter. Numerous studies confirm that Poles see journalism as a profession whose very essence and purpose is to serve precisely these principles. According to the results of the GfK Polonia survey, 58 percent of Poles trust the media and journalists, which is a far higher percentage than in other European countries (Sora, 2007:190). In the two countries where journalistic professionalism has reached the highest level, fewer respondents trust journalists: in Great Britain – 20 percent, in Sweden – 30 percent (Waniek, 2007:163). An analysis of the content of the TVP1 *Wiadomości* evening news programs in the years 2005 and 2007 (Łódzki, 2009; Kolczyński, 2007; Kolczyński and Mazur, 2007, 2009) does not allow us to state that the public broadcaster has accepted the public service mission. After the 2005 presidential and parliamentary election, not politicians, but very often journalists supporting Law and Justice eliminated or contributed to the departure of those colleagues who supported the Alliance of Democratic Left (SLD) or Civil Platform (PO). From the beginning of the 1989 transformation, public radio stations, as well as TVP channels, favored the ruling party in a visible way. An analysis of the content shows that, although Krzysztof Skowroński, who was the station's head in the years 2006–2009 had obvious political inclinations, the news broadcasts themselves were aired at peak viewing times and upheld highest journalistic standards, such as pluralism of information sources (Nieroda, 2008).

The public media in Poland are in a state of crisis, threatened by digitalization, globalization, and commercialization, but also strong politicization after 2015. Mrozowski (2000:56) maintains that these hazards endanger only producers and suppliers, and not the widely understood public interest; on the contrary, they even favor it. It is because of digitalization that the citizen has access to a greater number of sources. It also allows for the development of institutions of civil society, due to the protection it awards to small groups and their interests (Jakubowicz, 1998:21–22), which have now acquired a wider access to the public sphere, previously limited by powerful political and economic groups. Undoubtedly, this process supports the intensive growth of social media.

In Poland, another threat to the public media are irresponsible politicians, who with their actions and lack of imagination push them toward an abyss. The political actors not only deny the media the possibility to exercise the public service mission but also lead them in the direction of structural chaos and organizational collapse. The issue of public service ethics has been present since the public media evolved after 1989; it gained, however, a new dimension after the 2015 election, and the profound changes it caused. Within two years, confidence in all media clearly decreased. In September 2017, 29.8 percent of Poles trusted

the public media and 46.5 percent — commercial media. This was influenced by the sharp and progressive nature of the political dispute (*Spada zaufanie do mediów*, 2017), not observed in previous years.

Whom should a journalist serve - the public, the state, or the owner? According to Szot (2010:210–211; 2013:337), it is one of the biggest dilemmas this professional group has to face. It is not only Polish journalists who encounter this problem, it is present in all models analyzed by Hallin and Mancini (2004, 2012, 2017). Its scale, to a high degree, depends on the size and type of the medium. In private corporations, the control of the owner and his interests move to the foreground. In the case of public media, which are statutorily charged with the public service mission, the situation becomes more complex. They are endangered by entities active in the external environment, which see in them stepping-stones to achieving their own goals. These are, on the one hand, advertisers, who control the profit of the media in full or in part, and on the other hand, the governing parties and their leaders, who use legal tools, e.g., personnel policy, to subdue them and it is a widespread process in Poland. In such circumstances, the idea of public service becomes a dead letter. The consequence of such an approach from political actors and owners is the instrumentalization of the media.

## **1.6 Instrumentalization and institutional roles of media**

Hallin and Mancini (2004:37) have introduced the term instrumentalization, which has allowed them to explain media professionalism. They define the notion as control, exercised over the media through various external forces – institutions, groups, individuals, social movements, lobbies, etc. – in order for them to achieve their particular goals. In this understanding, the media become tools in the hands of those who have control over them. We can distinguish two basic forms of instrumentalization – political and economic.

The first refers to a situation in which control over the content (because that is what it really is about) is exercised by political actors, such as political parties, the government, the president, various bodies of public authority at the state, regional and local levels; leaders and leadership groups, formal and informal formations, cliques, fractions and interest groups. All of them share one goal – to gain or to maintain a grip on power.

Economic or commercial instrumentalization is closely connected to the free market economy, with its high level of competition. The owners, who are connected through a web of interests with competitors, advertisers, information providers, producers, distributors, suppliers of technology, trade unions, etc.,

primarily control it. The media are seen as businesses which are supposed to bring high income (huge enterprises and media groups e.g., Murdoch, Berlusconi, and in Poland GK Bauer), ensure sustainable development and investments (e.g., Grupa Medialna Agora SA, or the ITI Group - from 2015 to 2017 on Scripps Networks Interactive, and since 2018 on Discovery, Inc.) or allow for survival and help to maintain the position on the market, like small media companies, mainly local press (e.g., *Kurier Szczeciński* - owned by Kurier Szczeciński Sp. z o.o. or *Tygodnik Podhalański* - owned by Zakopiańskie Towarzystwo Gospodarcze Sp. z o.o.). In this case, the goal is to gain as big an audience as possible, because this brings advertisers and an increase in profit.

The consequence of political instrumentalization is the politicization of the media (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015a:190–122; 2015c:26–31), and of economic – commercialization (Dobek-Ostrowska and Głowacki, 2008:19; Nygren, 2015:33–36; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015b:216–219). In both cases of instrumentalization, professional autonomy ceases to exist, ethical norms are broken, and service to the public interest moves to the background. The opinion of one of the journalists reflects this very well:

The problem of journalism and journalists in Poland stems from the dependency of the media (owners and producers) from the political class. Lack of independence translates into weakness, which, in turn, translates into a lack of trust and low quality of the work at the bottom. [An anonymous journalist, the 7th Framework Program of the European Union, MediaAcT, 2011]

Journalistic practice is completely subordinated to political or economic criteria, which translates into certain personnel policy. The media prefer loyal, undemanding employees, lacking moral fiber, who are able to execute any command, even if it is in conflict with their own beliefs. Professional standards are replaced with bias, lack of criticism, shortening of contents, tabloidization and, as a result, loss of legitimacy of the media.

Instrumentalization is a highly useful concept in studies on Centro-European media (Waschková-Cisařová, 2008:190; Woźna, 2008:155; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c: 26–31). Firstly, all democratic societies in the region have to fight the strong political instrumentalization of the media deeply rooted in the communist tradition (Wyka, 2008:56). Secondly, entering a free market economy has triggered competition between media, which leads to economic instrumentalization. They both pose a serious threat to the independence of the media.

Political instrumentalization of the media is deeply rooted in the Polish tradition, and what is worse, politicians and leaders of political parties see nothing wrong in it (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2010:19–20). They believe, as has already been

discussed, that taking control over the media after a won election is natural behavior. One of the journalists confirmed this:

In public television and radio, journalists are dependent not so much on advertisers but on politicians, who after the change of power co-determine our further employment. I worked for three radio stations and three TV channels, including public radio and television. [An anonymous journalist, the 7th Framework Program of the European Union, MediaAcT, 2011]

Each successful formation aspires to control the media, treating them as electoral booty, although it is not possible in every case. Within twenty years, huge private, countrywide media, have gained a position that allows them to retain political independence. Political control has practically been limited to public radio, television, and the daily newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* (after 2006), of which the State Treasury owns 49 percent. Media independence is also not obvious on local and regional levels because there the media are usually dragged into a web of various arrangements and interests of local formations, their leaders, and local businesses.

Nothing can stop the politicians' drives in the public media. They build up a system of managers and personnel to exercise control. They interfere with the content of evening news and opinion programs, exert financial pressure, take away subsidies, or try to cancel the radio-television subscription. Undoubtedly, since 1989, the public media in Poland have been acting under strong or very strong political pressure. They have become instruments of political communication and propaganda of the governing party. At present, it is difficult to imagine that this situation could change. Similarly to the Mediterranean, also in Poland, public media are a tool of intervention in the political world, which clearly brings the Polish media system closer to the Model of Polarized Pluralism. After a short period, during which the Polish media system could be categorized as a Hybrid Liberal Model, after 2016, it needs to be located in the group of countries included in the Politicized Media Model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c: 24–31).

In the case of private media, economic instrumentalization has replaced the political. Hallin and Mancini indicate several forms of instrumentalization, such as product placement or advertisers' requests concerning media content. The latter case is particularly visible, which was emphasized by one of the interlocutors:

Advertisers shape the press. No material that could be inconvenient for potential advertisers, will be published. I know of cases of huge corporations withdrawing advertising campaigns (for a lot of money) because of articles which were problematic.

[An anonymous journalist, the 7th Framework Program of the European Union, MediaAcT, 2011]

Another journalist spoke in the same tone:

Private media organizations have become too dependent on advertisers, which forces them to acquire the biggest possible audience. I was pressured to hunt for sensational information or stretch information to sensational proportions. This, eventually, has an enormous influence on journalistic ethics and discouragement to the profession. It is difficult to fight the publisher, who has certain expectations, and in the end, co-decides about my continued employment; and act in accordance with one's own conscience. [An anonymous journalist, the 7th Framework Program of the European Union, MediaAcT, 2011]

Economic instrumentalization causes escapism, that is, avoiding political subjects. Foreign and Polish tabloid and entertainment media owners are not interested in commenting on politics, as favoring a particular political formation might limit the number of recipients with differing political preferences (structural bias). The owners treat the media like a business, a tool of increasing profits, which leads straight to commercialization and deeper tabloidization (Röger, 2010:261). This type of instrumentalization afflicts all media, regardless of their ownership structure, not only private but also public ones, which act on a competitive market and have non-commercial income sources. We need to agree with the statement that each type of instrumentalization is harmful to the media, their independence and the quality of journalistic professionalism (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:37), of which Poland is a good example.

Television personalities and journalists are recalculated into points and money they can be offered, like Tomasz Lis (560 thousand zlotys), Kamil Durczok (worth 541 thousand zlotys), and behind them Szymon Majewski and Andrzej Morozowski. They become trademarks and are placed in show business rankings (*Spadła wartość Lisa i Durczoka*, 2008).

Mariusz Ziomecki claims that professional journalism depreciates in value, the editor-in-chief is less important than the head of advertising and even the head of marketing (Dziwisińska, 2009:24). This reflects badly on the quality of media content, and journalistic personalities and reportage stars are lost in the background. They make place for corporate journalism, created by those who are neither required to have a diploma, nor talent, but can adapt to dynamic situations and write about anything (and not necessarily well or competently).

Economic instrumentalization gained a new dimension with the economic crisis that started in autumn 2008. It afflicted particularly brutally the press all around the world. In 2009, in the USA, one hundred and five newspapers

were closed and tens of thousands of employees lost their jobs. Such giants like *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Sun-Time* fell prey to this economic collapse. Costs were drastically cut in the *Boston Globe*, and *The New York Times* was even put up for sale. In 2008, the publishing of a further five hundred and twenty-five, and in 2009 again three thousand and eighty-three newspapers was suspended. The crisis did not omit Poland, where publishers and broadcasters reduced employment to cut costs. At the beginning of 2009, more than two thousand journalists from the twelve thousand exercising the profession (so from 20 to 30 percent) lost their jobs, the majority of whom were employed in the press (which noted the biggest decrease in income from advertising and copy sales).

Most journalists were let go from public TVP, Agora, Presspublica, TV Puls, Infor, Eurozet, and Polsat TV. Żakowski said openly that printed media should be included in the industries threatened with extinction, like shipbuilding and mining. He also stated that qualitative journalism was given over to the market which is devouring it (Żakowski, 2009b:16). Ewa Siedlecka – the 2011 winner of the Dariusz Fikus prize, also expressed a negative opinion of Polish journalism and indicated that:

The editorial offices hire young people cheaply and make them work every subject. No wonder that the product is of low quality. Lack of experience, knowledge, and standards has generated a phenomenon called by me, journalism known by reputation, in which a journalist who has no idea about anything, needs to rely on what others tell or even dictate to him. In the best-case scenario, he might call someone else, to get his statement, but he cannot even properly formulate the problem because he does not understand it. And so materials-repetitions get created, with attractive leads and content that don't make any sense (*Ewa Siedlecka... 2011*)

The issues raised in the interview are not only specific to Polish journalism but are of a global character. Economic circumstances, bad working?? conditions or vulnerability of the owners, force them to make decisions which considerably change the journalistic profession in financial and content terms, causing an erosion of professionalism. To a greater degree, this concerns the prestigious segment of opinion-forming weeklies, whose quality is falling rapidly. The catastrophic decrease of readership and outflow of advertisers causes a situation in which good publicists, reporters, commentators, and talented journalists are replaced by fewer but more flexible “providers” of fast information, who are younger, substantially less prepared, usually poorly paid and having the lowest financial expectations (Szot, 2010:218).

What can help the media free themselves from these negative de-professionalization tendencies or, at least, limit them? Is it still possible?

## 1.7 Media accountability system

High journalistic culture cannot be achieved on the path of an individual journalist's awareness, nor can it be based on his ethics and professionalism. Blumer and Gurevitch (1995:66), have no doubt that only high ethical standards adopted by the media and exercised in practice by journalists, resistant to economic and political pressure, are the best protection against all pathologies threatening the media. The journalist does not act in a vacuum but in a certain context of the media system. In a broader context, he needs to be aided by various forms of media regulation — on the state level, and the levels of co-regulation and self-regulation (as discussed previously). Expressions of these are media policy, media law and all legal regulations on media functioning. Jakubowicz (2008a:26) explained that regulations of this type can affect a process when it is being defined in the following aspects: firstly — the goal and the method of achieving it; secondly – the goal, but the way of achieving it is left to self- and co-regulation with key stakeholders, on which the media depend, such as owners, media managers, journalists, and citizens (see Fig. 1.4.).

The notions of regulation, co-regulation, and self-regulation are linked to the concept of media accountability system – MAS, introduced by the French researcher Bertrand in the 1990s (1997; 2007). The author has defined MAS as a set of means that do not come from institutions of power and which are designed to shape the ones accountable toward recipients and the society (2007:167). McQuail (2001:180–181) adds that these are both voluntary and forced processes, which allow the media to directly or indirectly influence the quality of their content and its social consequences.

The concept proposed by Bertrand (2007:169) was received coolly by numerous representatives of the profession, not only in France but also around the world, who thought that imposing certain ethical frameworks, codes and regulations on the media is totalitarian in character. Meanwhile, the quality and journalistic professionalism, transparency of the media and accountability to society depend on the media themselves, that is on the owners, managers, editors-in-chief, journalists, and the recipients – readers, listeners, viewers and internet users. The media accountability system is a lengthy process, the beginning and foundation of which is journalistic education. In the course of their studies, future journalists should not only receive a sound education but also be infused with ethical and moral principles, as well as resistance to manipulation, which will guide them in practice. The next stage of strengthening journalist' accountability takes place in the work environment — in the editorial office. During the work, a systematic assessment of each team member is required, through both substantive

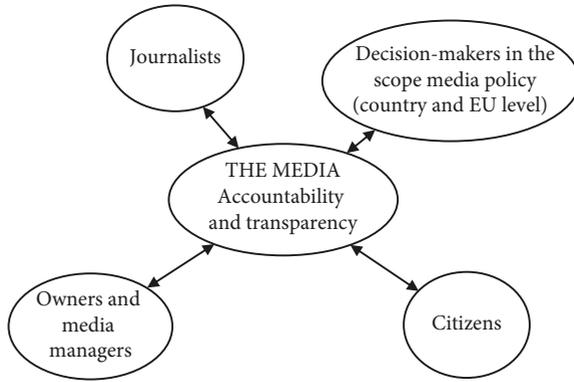


Fig. 1.4: *Key decision-makers (stakeholders) in the scope of media transparency and accountability*

Source: Based on Karamasin, 1998:138.

criticism and praise from supervisors. The next link of the process is outside the media structure – it is the frequent surveillance conducted by researchers and experts studying the media market, and their in-depth research and analyses. These observations should, however, be made available to people making strategic decisions in editorial offices, who are willing to improve or eliminate faulty practices. Thus, the process ends with a kind of loopback.

In the 1990s, before the expansion of the internet, about eighty media accountability instruments (MAI), supporting the media accountability system, were counted. Bertrand divided them into two main groups — official documents, and individual, group and institutional activity. The first of these includes official and publicly available documents branded by media institutions and journalists. These are primarily deontological codes, which are a well-developed instrument in Poland. All three Polish journalist associations, as discussed above, have their own ethical codes as the Association of Polish Journalists (SDP) and the Association of Journalists of the Republic of Poland (SDRP) or an ideological declaration (the Catholic Association of Journalists (KSD), which take on this role; and have led to the signing of the Media Ethics Charter (see Appendix 1). Moreover, it should be noted that Press publishers have signed the Code of Good Practice for Press Publishers (see Appendix 3), although it is not standard practice in Europe. Some publishers and broadcasters, such as the national daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* or public television TVP, have their own code of ethics. Besides that, in daily practice, the media have developed less spectacular, but important

forms of regulation like critical reports from their activity, retractions, surveys on diligence and impartiality sent to people quoted by them, publication of letters to the editor, public declarations of VIPs verifying the activity of the media, debates with journalists and publishers, petitions from citizens concerning breaking of media standards, deontological chronicles, reports, news clippings, critical radio and TV programs, fiction and films showing media activity, e.g., *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* by Heinrich Böll and its film adaptation *All the President's Men*, or *The Web*. With the development of the Internet, new possibilities have emerged, such as webpages, internet forums, blogs, weblogs, social media, where journalists, politicians, and citizens can express their thoughts concerning the functioning of the media.

The second group of instruments, as described by Bertrand, encompasses the activity of individuals, groups, and institutions aimed at strengthening the responsibility and transparency of the media. The most important units are those initiated by the media, which were created to assess their conduct. These are first of all journalist associations, deontological committees, disciplinary boards, press advisory boards, internal critics, ethical advisors, who specialize in media ethics, opinion journalists, media ombudsmen, associations of media owners, publishers, broadcasters, non-governmental organizations working for the media, state regulatory institutions, and public media. In Poland, the manifestation of co-regulation at this level is the appointment of the Ethics Council of Media, as well as the presence of the Press Monitoring Center, which were both founded by the media itself. Many of the remaining instruments have not developed or have a very weak form. Neither a national nor a regional press council has ever been created. In mature democracies, it is one of the most known media accountability systems (MAS) tools, especially where the level of journalistic professionalism is considered the highest, such as in Germany, Scandinavia or Great Britain. Press councils also exist in Israel and Chile, and among new European democracies, in Estonia. Such a council usually seats the most eminent journalists, media owners, and representatives of the audience. Its task is to consider charges against the media propounded by various actors in social life, as well as to defend the freedom of the press. In contrast to the Media Accountability Systems of some Western European countries (see more: Fengler et al., 2014:12–15; Eberwein, Fengler and Karmasin, 2018), where the country speaker for media recipients is quite firmly anchored, there is no similar position in Poland. This representative is elected by and can cooperate with the media or be an independent entity. His main tasks include admitting audience complaints about journalistic practices and content published by the media.

A particular place in the group of MAS instruments (Urbaniak, 2011) is taken by public media and regulating institutions. In the case of Poland, the practice of functioning of public TVP, public Polish Radio and of the National Radio and Television Council does not prove their positive and constructive role in the MAS process. Since the beginning of their existence, instead of strengthening the concept of social media responsibility, these institutions have been colonized by political actors, and have served their particular interests, with higher or lower intensity (Dobek-Ostrowska, Głowacki and Kuś, 2014: 152).

In countries where MAS tools are at the highest level, also the scientific research (documented with rich subject literature) is most advanced. Studies in this field have been conducted for decades in academic centers in Great Britain, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, as well as in the USA, Canada, and Israel. Students of journalism in those countries, besides ethics classes, also attend obligatory MAS courses, which, as Bertrand emphasizes, constitutes the foundation of the process. In this scope, Southern Europe, as well as Austria, not to mention the new Central European democracies, except Estonia, are gravely behind. In Poland, the Media Accountability System tools are poorly developed. Neither a press council nor a media spokesperson for the recipients exist. None of the three journalist associations is strong enough to be the voice of the profession and to fight malpractice. Additionally, as Stępińska and Ossowski's (2011:20) research shows, only 14.3 percent of journalists are their members, among which people over the age of 40 are the biggest group (Głowacki and Urbaniak, 2011:135). The Media Ethics Council is negatively assessed and very often criticized, as it does not fulfill its functions, refraining from interventions and actions, and even if some actions are taken, they are discredited or disrespected. The higher education institutions do not pay attention to deontology, the students are not instructed in the system of social responsibility, and none of the academic centers leads research in this field. One of the first publications on this subject introducing the MAS problematic appeared in Poland in 2011 (Urbaniak, 2011) and constituted an introduction into deepened scientific analyses (Dobek-Ostrowska, Głowacki and Kuś, 2018), conducted within a broad international research project 'Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe' (MediaAct<sup>1</sup> (see more: Fengler et al., 2014; Eberwein, Fengler and Karamasin, 2018).

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1 The project was conducted within the seventh Framework Program in the years 2010–2013 with the participation of twelve countries: Germany, The Netherlands, France, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, Finland, Poland, Romania, Estonia, Tunisia,

## Summary: De-professionalization of journalism also in Poland

The above analysis allows us to determine the level of journalistic professionalism in Poland as considerably lower than the one characteristic for Hallin and Mancini's (2004, 2017) Democratic Corporatism and Liberal Models. In the scope of autonomy, service to public interest and instrumentalization, it is much closer to the Polarized Pluralism Model. As reasoned by Hallin and Mancini, journalism in the Mediterranean region is not an autonomous institution. In Poland, as well as in other post-communist countries, which are EU members at present, it is guided, to a greater or lesser extent, by the world of politics and economy, which is illustrated by the Hybrid-Liberal and Politicized Media Models, specific for this part of Europe (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c: 25–31). Key stakeholders in the aspect of media accountability and transparency, such as political parties, politicians, political leaders, and media owners, treat the media as a means of attaining their own goals. However, Poland is not a copy of Spain, Italy, Portugal, or Greece. Big media conglomerates based on industry, e.g., construction (Italy, Berlusconi), telecommunications (Spain), shipbuilding, tourism or oil (Greece), have never developed here, nor entered from abroad. As this is the case, we cannot speak of integration or a connection between media and journalists with big business. On the other hand, in Southern Europe, these are local corporations and industrial groups, whereas in Poland and in the whole of Central and Eastern Europe, powerful, foreign media groups are present, which expect their media companies to be, first of all, a profitable business. The autonomy of Polish journalists, despite the existence of journalist associations, monitoring institutions, ethical codes, and social norms, is seriously endangered by instrumentalization and weak consensus of journalistic standards. Another problem is the regulation of media on various levels. The mechanisms of self-regulation and co-regulation are a subject of debate in Poland since its entrance to the European Union. Self-regulation of the media is a process that has been going on for years, the access to European Union has sped it up. We should pay attention to an external factor - the influence of the European Union, which encourages Member States, or even requires them to adjust their laws to EU solutions and standards. Thanks to the legal solutions and state interventions into the media system, the mechanisms

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and Jordan. The Polish part of the project was conducted at the Department of Social Communication and Journalism of the Institute of Political Science at the University of Wrocław.

of self-regulation also take place in Poland. However, the growing conflict between the media world and governing elites after the 2015 election has considerably delayed it. The solutions in the field of journalistic ethics, standards of publishers and broadcasters, as well as the ethics of the public are the most significant. As a member of the European Union, Poland is obliged to respect European Union standards at the level of national law and self-regulation, but there is a visible gap in this respect between the standards that are desirable and those that exist in practice.

The analysis of journalistic professionalism in Poland might suggest that at the legal and regulatory levels, it has many features that are appropriate for the model of Democratic Corporatism or the Liberal Model; it is, however, a misleading claim. According to Jakubowicz (2002:210), in spite of economic reforms, democratization, de-monopolization, autonomy, and decentralization, professionalism is still crucial in preserving a free media. The author believes that, although some elements of professionalization have emerged in Poland, the tradition of politicized journalism is still strongly rooted. Most journalists have been, and still are, far from objective, and represent biased political positions. Ironically, they are convinced that their civic responsibility requires their personal involvement in the political course of the events.

It is impossible to conclusively determine what level of professionalism Polish journalists represent. One should agree with Hadamik (2005:222), who argues that it is a combination of the old and the new. She believes that, on the one hand, many values of journalistic culture still exist today; but on the other hand, it evolves and updates itself under the influence of global developmental trends. Polish journalism, which is not a lonely island on the world map, is affected by all global problems, such as de-professionalization, lowering of journalistic standards under the influence of commercialization, a tendency to tabloidize the political message, sensationalism, presenting politics as a race and a battlefield. The analysis of the processes taking place in the country must, therefore, be placed in the context of these particular issues.

Global trends are reflected in the culture of Polish journalists, who, despite the continuous process of flattening of the structure described by Donsbach, are strongly differentiated in terms of institutional roles and the degree of intervention of political actors, distance to power and adaptation to the market model. Significant differences can also be observed in the area of technical skills and application of professional media performance principles such as equality, open, equal and proportional access, diversity and objectivity, neutrality, fairness, and truth (McQuail, 2001:169). A discrepancy is also observable in the third

component of journalistic culture – ethics and values the representatives of the profession believe in.

The problems arising here will be analyzed in the following chapters on the basis of empirical material which focuses on the complex relations between the media and political actors' (Chapter 2) and on the publicizing of politics in the media (Chapter 3).



## 2 Mass media in the logic of political actors

Three main participants take part in political communication: political actors, the mass media and the public, each of them from a different position. The political actors and mass media are the stronger links of the process, and paradoxically, the public, who, according to the idea of trademocracy, should be in a dominant position are in practice the weaker link (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2007:163–164). The more developed the civil society and the richer the public sphere, the higher the quality of democracy and, thus, the greater the importance of the public – the electorate. However, in emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland, there is a serious lack of democratic and civil values, which is reflected in a low level of political culture and which affects the condition of the political system. This chapter is dedicated to the dominating strong participant of political communication – the political actors, with a focus on their interactions with the media (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, 2012; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c). In this context, a fundamental question arises as to whether political parallelism has developed in Poland and how the state is regulating the media market. The issues central to our analysis are the connections between politics and the media, the perception of the media by the political actors and their policies, as well as strategies toward the media (the owners and journalists), i.e., the mechanisms and the practice of shaping relations with the media from the point of view of the political actors.

The very concept of ‘political actor’ in political science can be interpreted narrowly or broadly. Ryszka (1984:247) defines it as an individual or a group that is the subject of a political situation, such as a politician, the nation, the elite, a society, an army, etc. From this point of view, all three participants of the political communication process – the politicians, the media and the public – are political actors. My attention, however, focuses on the narrow understanding of the concept ‘actor’, which defines it as those entities which are directly responsible for the taking and implementation of political decisions (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2007:169).

In parliamentary democracies, a political actor of a particular character is the political party, which firstly binds political activity at the level of the state and its institutions, and secondly, at the level of social activity by involving the public through acting for specific social groups and in solving their problems. Political parties are the core of democracy. They are the main subjects of electoral competition, and many places in governmental institutions are reserved only for their members. As the practice of Western European democracies shows, the political

careers of individual politicians start and evolve within party structures. Similar mechanisms have developed in Poland after the fall of communism in 1989.

In the first decade of the transformations in Central and Eastern Europe, which included the preparatory phase and the transition to democracy (Rustow, 1970; Dobek-Ostrowska, 1996:15–25), new groups were formed, which became the primary channel for recruitment to the ruling elites, allowing their members to develop their political careers. Following the first parliamentary election in 1991, the representatives of twenty-nine political formations entered Parliament, out of which nineteen were not able to introduce more than ten representatives into the Sejm. Thus, the Parliament was disintegrated to such an extent that it was unable to make decisions. The following earlier elections were held in 1993. This time, the representatives of eight formations were able to enter Parliament, out of which four had a vast majority, but only two survived until the next elections. The research of Wesołowski (2000:114–115) clearly shows the ‘lopsided’ professionalization of the political scene during this period, the slow process of the formation of stable political parties, as well as of the category of professional politicians. In the consolidation phase, which took place at the turn of the first and second decade of transformations, the party system became gradually more stable, although the issue of its openness still seems to be relevant.

The processes of ‘parliamentarization’ and ‘Europeanization’ of political parties described by Herbut (2002:106–108) was crucial in the new democracies in Central Europe. In this period four political formations — Civic Platform, Law and Justice, the Democratic Left Alliance, and (until 2011) the Polish People’s Party — set the tone. These were the parties which, following the democratic parliamentary elections in 2001, 2005 and the snap elections in 2007, entered the Sejm and the Senate. They formed coalitions and governments or were in opposition, they had their presidents, prime ministers, ministers, they appointed voivodes and heads of public institutions, i.e., colonized the state apparatus.

In the third decade, elections were held in 2011 and in 2015, and a stable party system with two leading subjects – Law and Justice and Civic Platform – emerged. Following the 2015 election the parties switched places, Law and Justice became the governing party, Civic Platform went into opposition. As the result of the very same election, the Democratic Left Alliance became marginalized, the Polish People’s Party and two newly-formed parties – Kukiz’15 and Nowoczesna — still remain in the background (Fig. 2.1).

Political parties are the most important entities in the Polish political system, and the state power apparatus reflects that. This is why, in our evaluation of the relations between political actors and the media, we focus on the activity of four

relevant political parties – Law and Justice, Civic Platform, the Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish People’s Party. The starting point of the analysis is the year 2000 and it covers the second and third decade after the fall of communism in Poland.

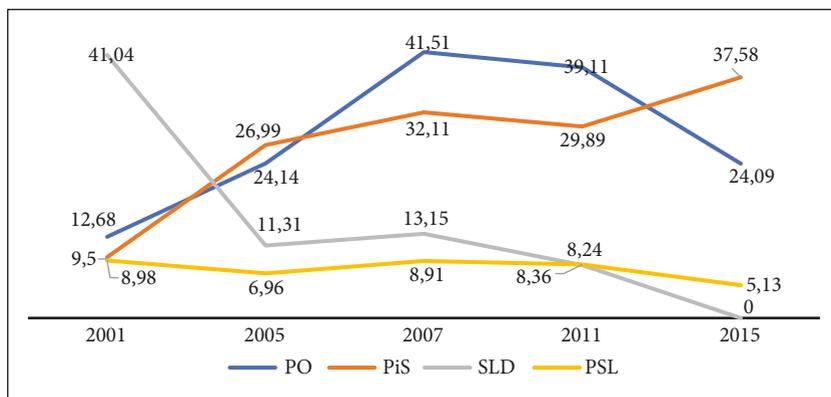


Fig. 2.1: *The results of the main political parties in the parliamentary elections in the years 2001–2015 (in percent)*

Note: PO- Civic Platform, PiS - Law and Justice, SLD- the Democratic Left Alliance, PSL- the Polish People’s Party. Parties which entered Parliament only once: 2011 - Ruch Palikota (10 percent), 2015 – Kukiz’15 (8.8 percent) and Nowoczesna (7.6 percent)

Source: Author on the basis of the National Electoral Commission (PKW) data.

## 2.1 Party logic versus media logic

In the era of political mediatization, the efficient performance of the electoral function, i.e., presenting candidates in elections, and of the governing function, i.e., filling of state positions and exercising power, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter three, require the party and its elites to be particularly capable of sustaining the popularity and support of the electorate. In this case, an indispensable ally and instrument aiding fulfillment of the above functions are the mass media, without which the process of political communication is unmanageable for political actors. Thanks to them, parties can inform the wider masses about their intentions and decisions, promote their programs, and take part in public debates. The politicians believe in the driving force of the media, thus, they want their activities to be presented in a positive light, and their opponents negatively. Van Aelst et al. (2008:194) have found ample proof to sustain their thesis that an intensified exposition of good news, which is very often

the result of a conscious media strategy of the party and its candidates, especially in the final phase of the campaign, translates into electoral success. The authors give the examples of Ronald Reagan in 1984 (Schudson, 1996:121), ten subsequent elections in Great Britain in the years 1960–1990 (Norris et al. 1999) and the elections in Belgium in 2004 (Swyngedoiw et al. 2004). A good illustration supporting this thesis are the presidential elections in Poland in 2005, when after the last television debate between Donald Tusk and Lech Kaczyński, part of the electorate switched support to the Law and Justice candidate, who made a better impression. The Belgian researchers conclude that from the perspective of the politicians, every ten seconds of positive media coverage can help gain votes, particularly when it comes to the undecided electorate (van Aelst, et al. 2008:194). At the same time, as demonstrated by the Polish example, not in every case is the support and the sympathy of the media — open or hidden — reflected in a good election result. Aleksander Kwaśniewski, who won the 1995 presidential election in an environment of hostile media, has proved this. However, regardless of the media attitude to specific candidates, along with the deep mediatization of politics in the last decades of the 20th century, they have become a central and an autonomous player in electoral campaigns (Mancini and Swanson, 1996:20).

The political action, i.e., the drive to take and keep power, makes political actors want to convince the media to be on their side, to cooperate, and even further to control them, ensuring a say in the media coverage of politics. At this point, the party logic emerges, as the political formations are the main subjects of democratic elections and governance. Mazzoleni (1987:85) has developed the concept of party logic. Based on an analysis of a political campaign in Italy in 1983, the author has reconstructed the process of colonization of the media by political parties. This is achieved by forcing the party agenda on the media, information control, and by using journalists as members of electoral staff, which ensures enormous amounts of free airtime for debates and political advertising.

Party logic suggests that it should actively create the structure, agenda, and the content of political news; or that it should attempt to influence them significantly, to strengthen its position in the political system (Blumler and Gurevich, 1995:82–83). This leads to instrumentalization of the media and appointing them the role of propagandists, which serve the particular interests of particular formations. The creation of such logic is in practice influenced by numerous factors, among others, by the degree of media autonomy, the level of journalistic ethics, and the culture of political actors. In the conditions of communication symbiosis, autonomous, transparent and responsible media, which employ journalists with high moral integrity, will be impervious to the actions of politicians and will retain a strong position in the process of content creation. Politicians committed to the

tradition of respecting media autonomy will not allow themselves to interfere with the media content (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2007:168). Such conditions allow for the creation of symmetric relations, in which all participants of the process are relevant subjects contributing to the content creation. Politicians are the fundamental and the most important source of news for journalists, and without them, information media could not exist. However, as Strömbäck and Nord (2006:148) metaphorically put it, it takes 'two to tango' and the question arises as who will lead this dance. As Gans (2003:46) notices, journalists present what politicians 'sell' them, thus, politicians have the advantage, as they can smuggle their own agenda into the media program. Strömbäck and Nord (2006:160) confirm this conclusion. It demonstrates that between 65 to 77 percent of political news published in five daily newspapers and aired in three main television channels in 2002 in Sweden, was based on direct sources, i.e., the politicians, and that they had an essential impact on the final content of the journalistic material. However, in the interviews conducted by the researchers with the politicians, some expressed the view that the journalists control the news through their own interpretation, which is frequent and, to a lesser extent, through a neutral description. Hence, in the case of such media systems as the Liberal and Democratic Corporatism Models (Hallin and Mancini, 2004), characterized by a high level of journalistic professionalism, party logic is limited by the media logic to which it has to adapt. Party spin-doctors and consultants adjust its mechanisms to the needs of political parties and politicians.

Party logic appears and dominates where the media are weak (asymmetric relations) and are unable to counter political actors (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2007:168). This occurs in media systems characterized by high political parallelism and low journalistic professionalism, i.e., in the Polarized Pluralism Model, the emanation of which are Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. An extreme case in this system is Italy, where public and private broadcasting media were absolutely instrumentalized by a single political entrepreneur, Silvio Berlusconi during his term of office as Prime Minister, and where the logic of the media has merged with party logic (Amoretti, 2003:173).

Party logic in a democratic system, in which pluralism is present on the media market, must coincide with media logic, which derives from its interests. The concept of media logic has a longer history than party logic in communication studies and has been described numerous times. Altheide and Snow (1979:194), used the notion itself for the first time, and defined it as a specific tendency in the process of media content creation toward achieving popularity and satisfaction of the recipients and to maintaining their attention. Media logic demands to create content in accordance with the professional standards and formats

adopted by them, transmissions that are compatible with the needs of the audience and the interests of the owners. This gains particular importance with the development of commercial media and in the context of the fierce, ever-growing competition on the media market when the number of the recipients determines not only the income but also the survival of media companies. Hallin (1992:5–6) believes that an expression of this logic in the news media is infotainment, favoring simplified messages containing dramatic images (photographs or film material), brief statements of politicians and others (ink/sound-bites), presented by attractive anchors in a relaxed format called ‘happy news’. During election campaigns, media logic is manifested with all its might through personalization, simplification, emotionalization, a dramatization of events, spectacularization and entertainment, emphasizing conflict, sensation and scandals, in strong negativity and in coverage of the horse-race type (Graber, 1976; Hallin and Mancini, 1984; Mazzoleni, 1987). As a result, a certain ‘partiality’ of media logic arises, which imposes a specific style of work and organization of the process of producing political information on the editors (McQuail, 2001:296; Fras: 2010:68). This will be discussed in the next chapter.

This issue gains a broader dimension in the era of the internet, social media and in the situation created by WikiLeaks in political communication. Chadwick (2013:19) analyzes the changes the new media cause in the media system and the creation of a new quality, which he terms the hybrid media system. In his considerations, he follows the path from media logic to hybrid media logic, which determines the status of the media system’s hybridity:

The hybrid media system is based upon conflict and competition between older and newer media logics but it also features important pockets of interdependence among those logics. Actors in the interpenetrated fields of media and politics simultaneously generate and shape the very hybridity that they then seek to exploit (...) Power in political communication is relational. It is shaped by hybrid networks of social and technological actants whose agency derives from their interdependence with other social and technological actants in interactive exchange. (Chadwick, 2013:207)

The analysis of the relations of political actors and the media in terms of two indicators proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) – the presence of political parallelism and state control (regulation) over media institutions — will help determine which of the described types of logic dominates in Poland.

## **2.2 The concept and the indicators of political parallelism**

The print media in the USA and in Europe have developed differently. In the United States, newspapers have been privately owned since they came into being,

and they had to compete among themselves and meet the requirements of the market, whereas 19th century Europe was dominated by a press issued and financed by political parties, which meant that as a rule, it was biased and ideologically loaded. The American press was directed toward a wider public, regardless of the political opinions of its readers, whereas in Europe it reached members and supporters of a specific political group. In consequence, newspapers on the two sides of the Atlantic reported differently on political issues and differed in their portraits of political actors.

The relationship between the media and politics has also formed in a different way. A strong bond between political parties and the media has developed in Europe, which was reflected in a similarity of party and media systems. Such a correlation is not traceable in the US. The first researchers of the problem (Seymour-Ure, 1974; Blumler and Gurevitch, 1975, 1995) called this phenomenon 'party-media parallelism' and defined it as the degree to which the structure of the political (party) system is reflected in the media system. The best-known example is probably the Danish 'four paper system', where each of the four relevant political parties had its own newspaper not only on a state level but also in each region and city (Thorsen, 1953:13; Søllinge, 1999:36–37, Hoyer, 2005:76). It can therefore be said that the Dutch party system was mirrored in the press system until the 1970s. Hallin and Mancini call for this issue to be addressed in a broader context and introduce the concept of political parallelism. The authors take into account not only the relations of the media with political parties but also with all political actors, for instance through the lens of the management of the public electronic media, which formed in the second half of the 20th century.

Political parallelism arises where political actors (e.g., government, parliament, president, local authority, etc.) exert pressure on the media, which they are unable to oppose for various reasons. The relations of political actors and the mass media are seen as a type of invisible negotiations and unwritten transactions. With this assumption in mind, it is important to consider what the interests of each party are and how they try to force them onto the emerging interactions.

Fully free and independent media do not exist, as they do not function in a social vacuum. Even if they attempt to comply with norms and maintain high standards, they are always exposed to external influences; this also includes those countries with a long democratic tradition. From the historical perspective, in Europe, since the beginning, the first newspapers and later radio and television, were instruments in the hands of those in power or those striving to gain it. However, with the privatization and deregulation of broadcast media in the 1980s and the emergence of market mechanisms, it was no longer as easy.

In addition to political pressures leading to the politicization of the media, strong economic pressure emerged, which resulted in commercialization. Thus, party (political) logic was gradually replaced by media logic, shaped by market mechanisms and competition. The already-introduced categories of party logic and media logic, i.e., the strong links in the process of political communication, is extremely useful in the analysis of political parallelism. These concepts describe the two opposing models of political message production spread by the media.

### **2.2.1 The dimensions of political partisanship**

Parallelism is chiefly determined by the politicization of the media, which is expressed in partiality. The issue of bias is a leading subject in political communication studies, especially in the field of media relations and politics. It was also the subject of a wide academic discussion. Some authors express the belief that bias has negative consequences for democracy, as it reduces its quality. In a democracy, no group should be treated differently than another and given more media coverage, nor should one group's interests take precedence over others. Researchers argue that non-objective information contributes to the formation of misjudgments, which in turn deform democratic practices and processes. It should, however, be noted that the difference in media coverage and exposure concerns not only political actors, i.e., parties (ruling and opposition) and politicians (presidents, prime ministers, party leaders, etc.), but also ideologies, value systems, ethnic and national groups, gender, countries, and religions. We can speak of bias in the media when its content, on the one hand, clearly favors and strengthens, and on the other hand, criticizes and weakens certain views or participants of political or social life. Bias is the contradiction of objectivity. Journalists may express their own political preferences, values, and religious convictions in private contexts, but journalistic ethics in democratic systems forces them not to articulate these in the press, on the radio or on television, nor to convince of their superiority. Where journalistic professionalism developed, media employees responsible for production of news, focus on representing facts and refrain from commenting in an attempt to create a balanced and neutral description of events. But what does 'neutral' and 'impartial' mean? Is it possible in practice?

This issue is in detail analyzed, among others, by Street (2001), who embarks on Newton's (1989:16–17) research. Being aware that perfect neutrality does not and cannot exist in practice, Street proposes to define 'what is acceptable or reasonable', and what is essentially conditioned by communication systems and political culture:

There is always a distinction drawn between where it is acceptable and where it should be condemned. This is not an argument for discounting bias as a viable concept in analyzing media content. The fact that it is definitionally complex and institutionally mediated does not reduce it to an empty category. Quite the contrary, its continued usage in discussion of media, and its place in the idea of a legitimate political order, underline the need to give it attention. (Street, 2001:20)

One has to agree with Street that this category is complex and difficult to define. It is, however, very useful in the study of media relations and political actors, and indispensable in the analysis of political parallelism. There are several levels of bias – ownership, content, and audience – all worth exploring.

Media ownership has been and continues to be a key determinant of media bias. In open democratic systems, in Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's (1956) four theories of press, in Hallin and Mancini's (2004), three models, and four media systems in Central and Eastern Europe (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c:22), and numerous other concepts, the ownership of the means of mass communication is an important focal point.

Gurevitch and Blumler (1995) also highlight this issue, in their concept of the five levels of media partisanship, which will be assessed in detail in the next section. One of the leading aspects of Hallin and Mancini's considerations are the public media. They believe that the way the media are managed reflects precisely the connections to governing parties, as shown by the analysis of the functioning of two companies belonging to the State Treasury – Polish Television (TVP SA) and Polish Radio (PR SA). With the exception of public media, which are to a greater or a lesser degree influenced by politicians, in democratic Europe it is difficult to identify private media that belong directly to political parties or to the state.

Private ownership in the press market is a standard also in Poland. Privately owned radio and television gradually push public media off the market, and it is becoming increasingly difficult for public broadcasters to compete with commercial ones. In some countries, like Greece, the Czech Republic, Latvia, and Slovakia, we can even speak of a collapse of public service broadcasting. Private owners, besides willing to expand their profits, favor certain ideologies and have political views. They are sometimes members of political parties and in some cases, their leaders or even prime ministers, as was the case in Italy (Silvio Berlusconi) and the Czech Republic (Andrei Babiš). Depending on the strength of their convictions and their personal relationships with political leaders, media owners apply varying strategies. Those which are most politically distinct impose a certain editorial line, often codified in official documents, statutes, etc.; and engage their media in political debates, such as for instance Rupert Murdoch in

the USA (Fox TV), Jesus Polanco in Spain (the daily *El Pais*), Sir David Barclay and his twin brother Sir Frederick Barclay in the UK (*The Daily Telegraph*), or Father Tadeusz Rydzyk in Poland as co-founder and chairman of Foundation Lux Veritas (Radio Maryja, TV Trwam, the daily newspaper *Nasz Dziennik*). Another strategy is avoiding political issues altogether. On the one hand, this could be understood as escapism, i.e., withdrawal from the political sphere, in order not to limit the audience to the supporters of a single option. On the other hand, it is the application of Hotelling's model, which is in opposition to the concept of a differentiated product on the market (Doyle, 2002a:74–75). This model (also known as Hotelling's law) is based on the strategy of distancing oneself from ideology, choosing the political 'center ground' and offering similar content to other media, so as not to stand out on the market; to be 'the same'. The analysis of the party and media system in the United States is a very good illustration of Hotelling's law. In political practice ideological dissonance is rejected, the voters are guided by the rule of rational choice, and the candidates and the political parties are 'almost the same'. The escapist approach, or the attitude conforming with Hotelling's law is also present in Poland. These attitudes are chosen primarily by foreign owners, for whom investments on the Polish media market need to be economically beneficial, e.g., the Polska Presse Group (regional newspapers), which is a part of the Verlagsgruppe Passau, or Bauer Media Polska (RMF FM radio, women's, lifestyle and other categories of magazines) belonging to the German concern Bauer. In this context, the attitude adopted by the Axel Springer Polska publishing house is interesting, as it has chosen a different strategy. Its titles do not avoid the political sphere, of which the weekly *Newsweek* and the tabloid *Fakt* are good examples. They do not shy away from publishing explicit political opinions. The partiality of the owner, as the examples of Murdoch or Berlusconi show, can lead onto a straight path to bias in the media content.

The mass media can play various roles in relation to political parties and governments. Firstly, they can be mouthpieces, supporting the programs that the political actors propose and the policies they implement, as well as preserve the image of organizations, leaders, and politicians (friendly media). Secondly, they offer neutral information, they are passive and do not forge any alliances with political parties, avoid conflict, comments, and assessments, neither support nor criticize, and generally distance themselves from the world of politics (neutral media). Thirdly, they publish a wide range of comments and critical opinions, but they can do so in two ways: on the one hand, independently and impartially express balanced views, supported by rational arguments and substantial knowledge (critical media), on the other hand, behave aggressively and attack certain

parties and formations, express biased opinions tainted with negative emotions, stereotypes, etc. (hostile media) (Blumler, 1974).

Blumler (1974:125) demonstrates how relations between political parties (politicians) and the media (their owners and journalists) affect the content. One of the consequences is the already mentioned escapism and the avoidance of political issues, so as not to provoke conflict with politicians, moving from the public sphere into entertainment and trivial topics, exemplified by TV Polsat or the tabloid and entertainment press. When information is annotated with a comment and clearly expresses the position of the journalist or the editorial office employing him, it limits the reach of the medium. The recipients, who do not share these views, will not reach for it or will do so much less often. For instance, supporters of the Democratic Party in the USA will be reluctant toward the pro-republican Fox News; similarly, people with leftist and liberal views in Poland will not listen to Radio Maryja or watch TV Trwam.

The consequence of the subordination of the media to political control, is a dominating visibility of politicians over journalists and media staff, and their influence on content, which is very often observable in public media, e.g., in Dutch television (so-called pillarization), or in Poland when the content of TVP news programs is consulted with the ruling or controlling party. Another effect is the removal of defiant journalists, the elimination of inconvenient messages, either in full or in part, at the express request of parties and politicians in control of the medium. The practice of public media in Poland provides numerous examples, such as the employment policy after the 2015 elections won by Law and Justice.

Politicians focus their attention on television, as they see it as the most influential medium (Williams, 2008:74). Political commentators and television journalists with clear-cut views, who favor a certain political party or a politician, when they are interviewing, broadcasting, speaking in front of cameras, become political figures in their own right. Sometimes their media visibility is higher than that of politicians themselves; for example Adam Michnik (*Gazeta Wyborcza*), Bronisław Wildstein, Tomasz Sakiewicz (weekly *Gazeta Polska*), Father Tadeusz Rydzyk (Radio Maryja, TV Trwam). This may result in growing tensions between the elected politician, party, state leaders, as well as journalists and the media they work for (e.g., Law and Justice versus TVN) and translate into an unfavorable or even hostile content. At the same time, journalists can support politicians, like in Poland TV Trwam endorses Jarosław Kaczyński, in Italy Mediaset supports Silvio Berlusconi and in Spain TVE Felipe promoted first González, and after the Partido Popular (1996–2004) took over power Jose Maria Aznar. If politicians do well on television and believe that their success is

a derivative of their media image, they insist with increasing determination on strengthening the relations with the media and building steady relationships. As a result, party logic adapts media logic. The organization of media events, e.g., conventions, press conferences, etc. is scheduled according to the production rhythm in the media. It was, therefore, no coincidence that Andrzej Lepper, at the peak of his popularity in the mid-2000s held press conferences on Sundays until 4 p.m. latest, in order for the material to be aired in the evening news. The choice of the day of the week was also not coincidental. There are far fewer news releases on Sunday that could compete for a place on the media agenda. The announcement of Lech Kaczyński's candidacy for the 2005 presidential election at the Law and Justice convention held on a Sunday a week before Easter was a strategically justified action. By adjusting to the media logic, Law and Justice secured itself first place in the media agenda throughout the Easter Week, eliminating political adversaries, who in this period were on holiday or limited their political activity. The desire to control media broadcasts very often leads to various alliances, and attempts to determine common ground and goals for political actors and the media. An example was the license for exclusive coverage awarded to Father Tadeusz Rydzyk's media consortium (TV Trwam, Radio Maryja, *Nasz Dziennik*) for broadcasting the signing of the Stability Pacts in February 2006. The control of political actors over media content gains particular importance and intensity during political campaigns. These practices are most visible in the public media, which the ruling parties can easily subdue (Williams, 2008:118–119).

The media content reflects not only partiality of the owners but also of journalists and media staff. Hallin and Mancini highlight this aspect of media bias (2007:28), pointing on the one hand to the tendency of media staff to undertake activity in the political sphere, and on the other to the importance of political orientation of journalists and media workers, as well as the connections to politicians in their professional careers. In most cases, journalists with clearly defined, expressive political views work for media whose editorial agenda is in line with their beliefs, as confirmed by a comparative study of German and American journalists conducted by Donsbach and Patterson (1996). First, it is the result of personal choices of individuals, secondly of staffing policies of the media organizations (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2004:83). Where internal pluralism is absent, journalists with clearly defined ideological and political preferences must accept the fact that their job opportunities will be limited only to media whose editorial line is convergent with their beliefs. It should, however, be stressed that internal pluralism is typical for the US market and that external pluralism prevails in Europe. We encounter journalistic bias, for instance, in the British

press, in the US media owned by Murdoch, in the Polarized Pluralism and Democratic Corporatism Models.

This phenomenon is also present in Poland, where journalists themselves do not hide their political and ideological engagement. This does not only concern journalists employed by *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Pokorna-Ignatowicz, 2008:128), but also by other media, such as public television and radio, the daily *Rzeczpospolita*, the weekly *Wprost*, *Do Rzeczy*, *Gazeta Polska*, *Polityka*, Radio Maryja, TV Trwam, *NaszDziennik*, etc. The public knows very well the views of such journalists like Bronisław Wildstein, Rafał Ziemkiewicz, Piotr Semka, Adam Michnik, Tomasz Lis, Cezary Michalski, Jan Pospieszalski, Krzysztof Ziemięc, Danuta Holecka, or Michał Adamczyk, and they themselves do not hide their ideological preferences or political sympathies. Such connotations very often decided their professional careers, as was the case with Robert Kwiatkowski (the Alliance of Left Democracy), or Jacek Kurski (Law and Justice), who on the recommendation of the formations they supported were appointed presidents of TVP.

The political and journalistic culture, as well as the norms and journalistic practice adopted in individual media systems, define the degree of bias, the limits of aggressiveness in the discourse, or influence the nature of criticism of parties and politicians of hostile formations. Where journalists see themselves as providers of information and entertainment, e.g., in the liberal model, the political content is neutral and much more balanced, which validates the low level of political pluralism. In most European countries, e.g., in France, Germany, Spain, or Italy, but also in democratic states in Central and Eastern Europe and also in Poland, where journalistic genres such as journalistic articles, columns, commentaries and analyzes predominate, a different style of writing emerges - polemical and sharp. This leads to a polarization of views and can indicate a high level of political parallelism.

The bias on the level of media content is inseparably tied to the already mentioned category of pluralism of content, which can be internal or external in character.

Internal pluralism refers to the content of a single medium and is evidence of low political parallelism. In such a case, one newspaper publishes articles, and a radio or television station broadcasts news which includes all political opinions, involves representatives of various political camps, confronts both sides of the conflict or different visions of solutions to political issues. Journalistic sources are recruited from among politicians from the ruling parties as well as the opposition, and the management of the medium ensures that the balance between their statements is kept. This type of pluralism is typical for some public media in Europe, especially where the model of professional management is present, like,

for instance, in the BBC in Great Britain, or STV in Sweden. These media attempt to remain neutral, distance themselves from political actors and do not engage in the political process. This type of pluralism is characteristic of the Liberal Model and of some media in countries that are part of the Democratic Corporatism Model. In Poland, content based on internal pluralism in its purest form does not occur, although there are media that in some periods of their activity have tried to follow this trend, such as the weekly *Newsweek* and *Wprost* (after 2010), TVN Group, TV Polsat channels or *Rzeczpospolita* (until 2006).

External pluralism concerns the whole media system, within which a high number of biased media exist. They reflect a whole array of political views expressed by the formations functioning within the political system. In other words, every, or almost every political party has allies among journalists and media supporting it, but also adversaries among the means of communication hostile and antagonistic to it. External pluralism can validate the high political parallelism. However, it should not be seen as a negative phenomenon in a democracy, as long as all political formations and ideological options have their channels of communication, and as long as there are media willing to convey their views and ideologies. Such media content is typical for the polarized pluralism model, but it also appears in the two remaining models, e.g., in the Liberal Model on the British press market, or in the Democratic Corporatism Model in Scandinavian countries, in Germany or in the Netherlands. External pluralism is also characteristic for the Polish opinion dailies and weeklies, it also occurs in the television segment – for example in the pro-Law and Justice TVP and anti-Law and Justice TVN, especially after 2015. This type of pluralism is closer to the European tradition, above all in the case of print media. As the examples of Scandinavia and the United Kingdom show, democracy can be well served by it, but only in places where a high political culture has developed. In Poland it has led to a sharp segmentation of the media market and to its extreme politicization.

Politicization of the media and their bias at the levels of owners, journalists, and content would not be possible if the media did not have a loyal and equally biased audience. Readers, listeners, viewers, or internet users are also citizens, who have certain political views, ideological preferences, and have certain belief systems. It is the system of values of each recipient that directs him/her toward the media, whose program line and views are closest to his own. For this reason, supporters of the Republican Party watch FOX TV, British Conservatives reach for the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*, and Labour supporters reach for *The Guardian* (Negrine, 1994:54; Hallin and Mancini, 2004:213). In Spain, supporters of the Partido Popular read *ABC*, and of PSOE – *El País*. In Germany, the newspapers can be organized according to the views of their readers from

the left (*Frankfurter Rundschau*) to the right (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Springer's *Bild* and *Welt*), similarly in Sweden – from the social-democratic *Aftonbladet* to right-wing *Svenska Dagbladet* (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:182; Patterson and Donsbach, 1996:456). Polish press, both in the dailies segment and in the rich weekly segment, also reflects the wide range of political views of Poles. Those with definite left-wing views, buy *Przegląd*, left-leaning voters reach for *Polityka*, liberal Catholics for *Tygodnik Powszechny*, and those with conservative values read *Do Rzeczy* or *Gazeta Polska*. In many countries, it is therefore, possible to define political sympathies and electoral preferences of citizens according to their reading and viewing choices, matching to rule: 'you think and vote how you read'.

At all analyzed levels (owners and journalists, content, audience) bias can take different forms. The most known typology was created by McQuail. He used two fundamental variables: firstly - 'hidden' and 'open', secondly - 'intended' and 'unintended' bias linked with planned effects and unplanned effects. As a consequence, the author distinguished four types of non-objective or biased news performance: 1) Partisanship (an open and intended bias); 2) Propaganda (a hidden and intended bias); 3) Unwitting bias (an open but unintentional bias), and 4) Ideological (hidden and unintended bias) (McQuail, 1992).

The first one - partisanship - is the most extreme type, characterized by an open and intended bias. It is expressed in unrestricted, public declaration of the views and political sympathies of the owner, media managers and journalists employed in the media. It intensifies during political campaigns. Media employees freely engage in political agitation and directly encourage voting for a particular party or a candidate or imply whom not to vote for. This takes place most often when the medium is owned by a political party, or when the owner is formally or informally connected to a certain political formation, e.g., public radio and television in some European countries, like Berlusconi's Mediaset or Murdoch's Fox TV. A classic example in Poland are the public media TVP and Polish Radio, as well as the media managed by Father Rydzyk – Radio Maryja, *Nasz Dziennik*, TV Trwam, but also the right-wing, conservative weekly *Gazeta Polska* and *W Sieci/Sieci* (since 2017). However, these are not isolated examples. An analysis of the content of the most important opinion daily newspapers in the period of the 2007 political campaign, has clearly indicated that this type of bias was present at *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*, which both have clearly defined their position toward the ruling Law and Justice. The first of them declared war on it, the second one supported it (Świdorska, 2009:78). The most prominent indicated clearly which formation should not rule. Bronisław Wildstein strongly advised against the Democratic Left Alliance:

Meanwhile, a party which stems from the Polish United Workers' Party, which collaborated with the Polish slave master — the Soviet Empire; and which has a loan from the KGB at its roots, should long have disappeared from the public life of the Polish Republic. (Wildstein, 2007)

Adam Michnik, on the other hand, did not hide his hostility toward Law and Justice:

Up to now, the rule of the party, which allied itself with Father Rydzyk's Torun radio, as well as with the parties of Roman Giertych and Andrzej Lepper had to make clear to everyone who wanted to look soberly at the world, that Poland is rolling toward Unlawfulness and Injustice. (Michnik, 2007)

Open bias was also confirmed by the titles of articles like *PiS locks witnesses up* (Kublik, 2007a), *The president judges the judges* (Siedlecka, 2007), *Half outraged, one in three in favor of PiS* (Kochanowicz, 2007), *PiS fights corruption for show* (Wielowiejska, 2007), *It's impossible to listen to the Kaczynski's* (Smoleński, 2007). This type of bias was present in the media over the following years, it calmed slightly during the period of Civic Platform rule (2007–2015), to return with full force after 2015, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The second type - propaganda bias is usually recognized as hidden and intended, though camouflaged. It is, however, a deliberate and conscious act on the part of the broadcaster. It is not directly mentioned for whom one should vote for or not to vote for, but by showing specific cases, journalists try to form the viewers' attitudes against or for a political actor, social group, matter, etc. The vocabulary is emotional and the assessments judgmental. Most often, negative elements of social life and pathologies such as corruption, scandals, disasters, and crimes are used to build up this imagery. Biased, negative or positive, descriptions of individual events or situations are supposed to influence the evaluation of whole political groups. Such bias is repeatedly used by Polish journalists. It is present in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which by the lips of its commentators, columnists, or journalists, attempted to ridicule disliked politicians or political groups, for instance during the election campaign in 2007.

When the judges of the Constitutional Tribunal, who sent the lustration law back to the basket, had to be crushed, faithful servants have found fake checks on them at the IPN. In PiS-land, the prosecutor's office is helpful, special services are helpful, and the health department is helpful. Yesterday we saw the helpful CBA in action and the helpful Polish Television, which calls itself public television. Both institutions add glory to the ruling party. (Kublik, 2007b)

This type of bias is still present in the media content in Poland and its intensity has considerably grown after the 2015 election.



Picture 2.1: *Prime Minister Morawiecki and ex-Prime Minister Beata Szydło in the hands of party leader Jarosław Kaczyński, entitled 'A better change'*

Source: Weekly magazine *Polityka*, 13–17 December 2017.

In the leftist, unsupportive of Law and Justice *Polityka*, we can read about 'The Prince and the Minister', i.e., about chairman Kaczyński and the newly appointed Prime Minister — Mateusz Morawiecki (Kalukin, 2018:8). The published photographs (see Picture 2.1 and 2.1) clearly present the prime minister as a puppet in the hands of the Law and Justice chairman, overshadowed by Kaczyński, as was the case earlier with Prime Minister Beata Szydło, whose:

(...) hands were completely tied. She could not make personnel decisions (...) the monopoly in this matter belonged to the chairman [Kaczyński] (...) The chairman publicly set goals for her and made her accountable for their achievement. (Kalukin, 2017:18)

On the other side of the barricade is the national-conservative weekly *Gazeta Polska*, which supports the governing party without any reservations. It writes about the new prime minister: "I, the anti-communist, I the banker", and quotes his meaningful, propagandist statement:



Picture 2.2: '*Książę i minister*' [*the Prince and the Prime Minister*] *The new Prime Minister in the shadow of party leader Jarosław Kaczyński*

Source: Weekly magazine *Polityka*, 19–16 January 2018:17.

For some, I am a banker, for others, I am a boy from 'Fighting Solidarity', whom the esbeks tried to frighten by forcing him to dig a grave in the woods, or pointing a gun at him - probably loaded. I hope that for most of my fellow countrymen I will be the one who by fulfilling the public service, combines anti-communism and patriotism with education, professional experience, and management. (Górska and Sakiewicz, 2018:8).

The text is accompanied by photographs, which show the new Prime Minister in a considerably different light than *Polityka* — as a strong and competent politician (see Pictures 2.3 and 2.4)

The third - unwitting bias is open but unintentional. It is connected to the process of determining the media agenda, information selection and coverage of



Picture 2.3: *Prime Minister Morawiecki – ‘I am an anti-communist, I am a banker’*  
 Source: Weekly magazine *Gazeta Polska*, 13 December 2017.

certain issues. The information printed on the covers or announced at the beginning of radio and television news programs are of vital importance, at least such status the production and distribution teams responsible for media reports want to give them. Bias, sometimes unconsciously, takes place already at the stage of selection of the topics, and the decisions on their order, location, volume, and airtime. Usually, these subjects are chosen which can attract the attention of the viewers, i.e., sensational events, scandals, gossip, at the expense of socially important but boring analyzes.



Picture 2.4: *Interview with Prime Minister Morawiecki*

Source: Weekly magazine *Gazeta Polska*, 13 December 2017:8.

The fourth and final type mentioned by McQuail is ideology characterized by hidden and unintended bias. It is the most difficult to pinpoint. Media releases reflect views and ideologies of journalists, reflecting their understanding of the world, their attitude to issues and people e.g., toward sexual, ethnic, and national minorities, neighboring countries (Russia or Germany), women, Jews, people of different religions, e.g., Muslims, abortions, in-vitro methods, etc. This type of bias is characteristic for the media environment associated with Father Rydzyk, as well as with *Nasz Dziennik*, but also *Gazeta Polska*, or *Gość Niedzielny*. The matter of Alicja Tysic illustrates it well:

Three months ago, extraordinary photographs from Karl Hoecker’s private album, an SS man from Auschwitz, were sent to the Auschwitz camp museum. You can see on them what were the ‘after-hours’ past times – as the author of the reportage writes (p.40–42) of the Nazis “working” in the camp (...). They got used to murders carried out behind the fence of the camp. And what is it like today? Different but equally terrible. The European Court of Justice in Strasbourg has just rejected the Polish Government’s appeal in the already famous case of Alicja Tysic (...). As a result, Mrs. Tysic will receive 25,000 Euro in compensation, plus legal costs, for not being allowed to kill her child. In other words, we live in a world where a mother is rewarded for wanting to kill her child, but not being allowed to (...). What about the judges who passed such an unbelievable verdict? They probably spend their weekends in some charming places. They are relaxed and smiling. They got used to it. (Gancarczyk, 2007)

Researchers of political communication agree on the importance of bias in political communication processes and have no doubt that it should be investigated;

however, they disagree on how to analyze this phenomenon, and what research tools and techniques to use. There are numerous methods, most often the quantitative and qualitative analysis is used; as regards explicit and hidden content, also the semiotic analysis and the agenda-setting method are used (McCombs, 2004; Graham et al., 2015), framework mechanisms are being explored (Olmastroni, 2014), etc. There is no long tradition of empirical studies of media bias in Poland. The first scientific studies based on empirical studies became available (Dobek-Ostrowska and Majdecka, 2011; Nowak, 2014; Anaszewicz, 2015; Nygren and Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015; Dobek-Ostrowska and Sobera, 2017), and there is hope that the young generation of scientists will fill the gaps in this crucial field of research.

### **2.2.2 The degree of media politicization by political actors**

The bias of the media is largely the result of relations with the world of politics. In contrast to the control exercised over the media by the state (media regulation), the degree of media politicization is a phenomenon which is less complex but more difficult to trace and research. McNair (1995) believes that media bias plays a key part in politics, as the mutual connections of the owners and media employees with politicians, especially during election periods, can influence public opinion and voter preferences. It is not without importance as to what kind of relations link the media with political parties. Seymour-Ure (1974:53) called this type of relation between the mass media and political parties parallelism, and listed three criteria defining it: engagement of the party into the media ownership and management, editorial program line, and party affiliation, i.e., the bias of the readers. Blumler and Gurevitch (1995:64–65) later used these criteria to create the typology of politicization, which has been expanded by an analysis of such factors as organizational links to political parties, the permanence and intensity of editorial obligations, and the presence or absence of media law provisions concerning the issue of support for political parties. Different combinations of these elements and their varying intensity allowed the authors to identify five degrees of mass media politicization.

The highest and first level of media politicization is reached when political parties or their leaders own the mass media. Political actors are directly involved in media activity on the level of management, production of content, and financing. The budget of such means of communication can come from membership fees or be supported by party subsidies. Examples of such media can be found in many Western European countries. Scandinavia has a

long tradition of a strong, politically subsidized press. The already-mentioned example of the Dutch 'four newspaper system', which in the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century provided an accurate, if not ideal, representation of the party system (Nord, 2008:102). This system, however, as in other countries, is now a thing of the past. A breakthrough took place in the 1960s when the links between newspapers and political parties became clearly looser. A retreat from such close relations Søllinge (1999:56–57) called political disaffiliation. In the second half of the 20th century, along with commercialization and concentration on the press market, this process occurred in most democratic political systems. However, we cannot forget that disaffiliation occurred, primarily on the level of ownership, whereas politicization occurred and still takes place on the level of the content and the reader. In the Netherlands, politicization extended to separate political boards of public radio and television. The most striking example is Italy, where the private television market is monopolized by Mediaset, a company owned by Berlusconi, who has served as Prime Minister three times (1994–1995, 2001–2006 and 2008–2011). In addition, he is also the owner of a press corporation Mandadori, which publishes one of the three biggest Italian newspapers—*Il Giornale*. In Poland, formally no party owns a newspaper, radio station or a television channel. The highest level of media politicization can be observed in the context of the governing parties, which, when they are in power, try to take over the entities owned by the State Treasury (Polish television - TVP SA, Polish Radio – PRSA).

A high (second) level of politicization entails a voluntary relation of a medium with a political party. In such a case political formation, although not formally tied with the medium, can always count on the unconditional loyalty of its owner and its staff. Such traditional and unwavering support to a certain political option usually has a long-standing history and goes beyond temporary, economic actions. This is illustrated well by the example of the British Conservative Party and the largest British opinion newspaper *Daily Telegraph*, which has been constant in its political sympathies since the 19th century (Negrine, 1994:53; Hallin and Mancini, 2004:213). This level of party politicization occurs quite often in Poland. It encompasses 'ideological' media, whose editorial line is clearly defined, the values they believe in and the parties they support are well known. The media group endorsing the political left wing included the daily *Trybuna* (from 2013 on – *Dziennik Trybuna*) and the weekly *Przegląd. Dziennik Polska Europa Świat*, belonging to the Axel Springer group, gave its support to the Law and Justice party, which was an interesting case, as most foreign owners try to divert into the safe area of entertainment,

preferring social and cultural content and avoiding political involvement using 'media escapism'. *Dziennik*, throughout the entire period of its presence on the market (2006–2009) supported, more or less openly, the conservative right wing and the activities of chairman Jarosław Kaczyński, and of President Lech Kaczyński, who also came from Law and Justice. Radio Maryja and Telewizja Trwam, associated with Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, as well as *Nasz Dziennik* and the conservative strongly right *Gazeta Polska* have earned the reputation of the most biased media in Poland, as they unfailingly support Law and Justice, which is the embodiment of their ideological profile – conservatism, traditional Catholicism, anti-German and anti-Russian phobias, national ideologies, etc.

Awarding conditional support to a political party is the medium (third) level of politicization. In such a case, the editorial line of a newspaper, magazine, radio or TV station is, as a rule, favorable toward a certain political option, but also expresses doubt, reservations and points out the deficiencies of the party and its leaders. If the medium deems it appropriate, it can indicate the advantages of opposition groups and their leaders. It can occasionally refuse its favorite and usual election support and award it to someone else. An analysis of the content of *Gazeta Wyborcza* conducted during the presidential election campaigns in 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2005 clearly showed how its preferences changed. In 1990, it supported Tadeusz Mazowiecki, in 1995, it criticized the candidacy of Aleksander Kwaśniewski, and five years later, it was his silent ally. In 2005, *Gazeta Wyborcza* protested sharply to the methods used by political opponents to eliminate Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz from the electoral campaign. Later, during the presidential election campaign in 2005, it watched from a distance the race between Lech Kaczyński and Donald Tusk. In 2007, the editor-in-chief and the journalists aggressively attacked the Law and Justice party and its leader in the parliamentary election campaign (Świdarska, 2009:77–80). In the case of other private media, it is easier to speak of negativism, which manifests itself in an antipathy toward certain leaders and groups, especially those in power, rather than of clear political sympathies. In 1997–2001, Radio RMF FM criticized the right-wing government of Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) and then, in 2001–2005, aggressively attacked the left-wing government of Democratic Left Alliance. TVN and TVN24 have never been counted among the supporters of Law and Justice (2005–2007 and 2015) and of Lech Kaczyński's presidency (2005–2010). Such attitudes of commercial media toward political actors are typical of so-called structural bias, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Low (fourth) level of politicization comes down to an *ad hoc* media support of the political party in unpredictable forms. This refers to media which do not

have a clear and unambiguous political orientation. The position of the editorial office each time depends on the specific policy of the party and the decisions made by its management, considered in the context of declared social needs and preferences.

This group usually includes tabloids and entertainment media, and such is the case in Poland with *Fakt* (Ociepka and Woźna, 2009), *Super Express* or the cheap women's weeklies. They are not interested in politics itself, but in politicians, who play the part of celebrities and stars of popular culture. Hence, the frequent publication of interviews and articles devoted to prime ministers as Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz and Donald Tusk or the vibrant Civic Platform politician — Janusz Palikot. This level of politicization includes also the media, which as rule, to varying degrees employ the strategy of escapism, e.g., commercial TV channel Polsat (Ociepka and Woźna, 2009).

The lowest level of politicization or a complete lack thereof is manifested in political neutrality of the medium and in denying support to any party or political formation. The non-partisanship of media organizations can be the result of permanent provisions in its statutes, e.g., at the BBC (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995:65), or the decision of the owner or the management board to refrain from openly supporting any political party, and for the employed journalists to abstain from disclosing political views. The journalists' views and opinions should remain a private matter. Nevertheless, the rules of media impartiality and reliability, as desired qualities of democratic media, should not be confused with the escape from the public sphere and distancing themselves from political issues to gain temporary, commercial goals, maintaining high sales, viewership, or listenership and attract advertisers. An analysis of the press, radio, and television content in Poland does not allow us to name such an example on the Polish market. However, it should be stressed that such behaviors are (were) mainly characteristic of the media in the Liberal Model in the USA and are rather weakly rooted in the European tradition.

### 2.2.3 The level of integration of media personnel and political elites

Another dimension of political parallelism is the degree of integration between media staff<sup>2</sup> and the political elites. The representatives of both worlds can

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2 This category includes owners of media companies, members of the supervisory and management boards of radio and television companies, newspapers, editors-in-chief, program directors, journalists, and all those individuals, which have an actual influence on the decision-making process and on the management of the media organization.

interact with each other, which is reflected in the degree of their informal integration. However, an examination of these relations is very complex and elusive. Whereas the level of media politicization can be verified through quantitative and qualitative content analysis, in the case of integration studies the researcher does not have such an empirical tool at his disposal. In this field, the informal mechanisms and relationships can be, at best, observed and described. The key issue here is the degree of political sympathy and socio-cultural closeness that evolves between these diverse groups.

In many political systems, the existing law and regulations structurally separate media organizations and political institutions. Nevertheless, numerous bonds form between them. This can be explained by the fact that the members of both the media and the political elites are recruited and socialized in the same social and cultural circles, in consequence, both groups are likely to share the same values and interests. On the one hand, media personnel can join political parties and even retain a seat on their governing boards, or support political formations they do not belong to but with which they sympathize. On the other hand, many politicians such as President Aleksander Kwaśniewski or Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and MEPs Michał Kamiński, Jacek Kurski, Ryszard Czarnecki, Tadeusz Zwiefka and many others have worked as journalists in their professional careers. Moreover, quite often, due to their media experience and professional skills, journalists find employment in party structures or state institutions as speakers, specialists in public relations and media relations, political advertising, etc. They become advisors, and sometimes even closest associates of party leaders, whom they support with their knowledge and experience in the field of contacts with the mass media and with the audience, e.g., Jacek Kurski and Mariusz Kamiński in Law and Justice, or Sławomir Nowak (former president of an advertising agency) and Paweł Graś (journalism graduate) in Civic Platform. Party members or their declared supporters have been nominated for important positions in the public media. Robert Kwiatkowski (1998–2004) associated with the Democratic Left Alliance was the President of TVP, others as Bronisław Wildstein (2006–2007), Andrzej Urbański (2007–2008) and Jacek Kurski (2015 onwards) were connected to Law and Justice. This leads to a situation in which representatives of both professional groups meet, engage into more or less formal interactions, belong to the same clubs, social circles, share the same views and strive to achieve the same goals.

As Blumler and Gurevitch (1995:27–31) indicate, the relations between representatives of the world of politics and media can, in some cases, stimulate democracy by improving mutual understanding between representatives

of particular elites and explaining their respective views and problems to one another. In practice, however, they more often endanger it. Excessive integration of the two elites can have negative consequences, leading to overstepping of democratic standards and the blurring of the lines between the interests of citizens, politicians, and the media. This problem painfully hit Hungary after Viktor Orbán took power in 2010. Too close a relationship between politicians and journalists often leads to corruption and clientelism, as is visible in the examples of Spain, Greece, and Italy (Piattoni, 2001; Samara, 2000), as well as Bulgaria and Romania. In contrast to Southern European countries, in Poland, at the national level, there is no visible integration of political elites with media owners and journalists. The Rywin affair, though not fully solved, is described as the greatest corruption scandal in democratic Poland after 1989. It showed that the media approach the ruling elites at a certain distance. Private owners of leading media do not engage in close relationships, even if they should prove temporarily profitable, because they fear the long-term negative consequences. The observation of the political processes and research conducted on the local and regional levels, in counties and smaller towns leads to different conclusions. There, these relations are far more distinct and very often have pathological traits.

### **2.2.4 The models of relationships between political actors and the media**

Media partisanship and the level of integration of media personnel and political elites results in the formation of specific relations between the mass media and political actors. An analysis of the issues allowed Blumler and Gurevitch to build a theoretical model reflecting their interrelations. As a result of the mediatization of society and politics (Strömbäck, 2008b:228), which has been progressing at a staggering pace since the middle of the 20th century, political actors and the mass media live in a communicative symbiosis (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2007:164). This means that they need each other, and the quality of their relationship determines the development and success of both sides. However, each is governed by a different logic and has separate goals. Politicians, with the help of the media, want to gain and keep power, whereas media in free-market conditions strive to gain as wide a public as possible, to ensure economic stability (the bigger the audience the higher the profit from advertising and the sales of its own products).

Party logic reduces media to the role of instruments; it is based on the need for media support and sympathy, necessary to guarantee influence over the

media agenda and content. In this context, the mass media are seen by political actors as one of the best and most effective marketing tools and information carriers to achieve this goal. It is not without reason that Semetko et al., (1991:3–9), embarking on the empirical studies by Norris, Curtice, Scammell and Semetko (1999) on the electoral decisions of viewers, speak of the subtle power of the media.

The logic of the media treats political actors as information providers. They are the primary source of knowledge about political matters, decisions, and actions of public authorities, political parties, politicians, and leaders. Deprived of the access to information, the media would not be able to fulfill their basic functions and meet the expectations of the public. Moreover, the owners of private media are aware that their relations with political actors could influence their economic interests, the ability to grow, and hence, their profits. This is too important a premise to be ignored, and it often leads to alliances between the media and the authorities, which are forged to the detriment of the public (Van Dijk, 1996:28). These arrangements allowed Blumler and Gurevitch to distinguish two simplified models of the relationship between political actors and the media – adversarial and exchange perspectives, which are an extremely useful tool in the analytical analysis of political parallelism.

The adversary model is based on the ideological assumption that journalists should regard leading politicians and government figures as opponents, and they should never be in their service. As a rule, mass communicators (owners, managers, journalists, authors, presenters, etc.) should distrustfully scrutinize the conduct and rhetoric of politicians, who might want to hide the truth from the media and public opinion. This model accepts the conflict of sides, mutual criticism, attacks, latent or open critique, or even hostility. However, the answer to the question – to what extent is the adversary model accepted by the contemporary media is difficult, as the issue has not been empirically examined and confirmed. Blumler and Gurevitch list three serious deficiencies of the adversarial perspective. First, the field of adversarial ethics is very narrow, which limits the contacts between opponents and, in consequence, restricts the access of journalists to political sources. Second, this theoretical concept disregards the need for daily contact between journalists and politicians; in consequence, it lacks the mechanisms for understanding, cooperation, and even collaboration. Third, we need to remember that the process of formation of political messages is a joint enterprise of journalists and politicians, e.g., an interview, or a television debate. It is the result of the degree of integration of both sides – of a cooperative and complementary character. The adversary model destroys this natural structure, and hostility or obstructing the information flow blocks the effectiveness

of political communication (Van Dijk, 1996:29). This model is established upon one of the most important functions of the media in the Liberal System – the control function. Journalists adopt the role of watchdogs, who guard democratic values, detect inaccuracies and improper behavior of politicians. In recent decades, the classic understanding of the watchdog function, in the case of commercial media, which operate under severe pressure from the competition, has observably become distorted. It sometimes takes on the form of very sharp negativism on the part of all political actors and evolves in the direction of structural bias, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

The exchange model is the opposite of the adversary model. It covers the interaction of politicians and media broadcasters in terms of social exchange. Blumler and Gurevitch emphasize three advantages of this model. First, it allows to capture the situations in which politicians and journalists decide to share information. Their relations could be described as a gentleman's agreement, a deal, dependency, or even, according to Boorstin (1962:35), mutual 'pampering'. Politicians and political elites are providers of important and vital information, knowledge, but also sensational news, affairs, scandals, etc. The media need both types of news, to fulfill one of its fundamental functions – meeting the information needs of the public. Political actors, on the other hand, need publicity, which can be provided by the mass media. One side meets the needs of the other and vice versa. The statement, quite commonly used by various researchers, that 'the media staff are sitting in the pockets of politicians' may or may not apply. Both sides are compatible. However, they can keep a certain distance, even an opposite mentality. Second, the model attempts to present the relations of politicians and professional communicators and show all their hues with much greater sensitivity than the adversary model, it tries to explain each influence. As long as both sides are in balance and satisfy each other's needs, we can talk about cooperation. However, if this balance is upset and the parties do not benefit from these interactions, the exchange model can evolve into the adversary model. Third, the exchange model, in contrast to the adversary model, explains how to uphold the relations in spite of tensions. Despite having so many advantages, this model also has some weaknesses. It does not have the power to explain political processes and phenomena. It focuses on informal and personal relations between the representatives of politics and media, leaving on the margins the interactions between political institutions and media organizations. In addition, the model does not clarify the normative influence on the stakeholders, as media owners and managers, entities active in media co-regulation and self-regulation processes responsible for the functioning of media organizations, producers of media messages. This model, as an analytical tool, has a much wider scope of

applicability than the adversary model. It was developed much earlier and used by Grossman and Rourke (1975:455–470) to investigate the relationship between the American press and the President. It was also the starting point for McNair's (1998:43–48) criticism of democracy and the media.

Numerous examples of both models can be found with ease in political practice, as there is no single, universal pattern for the relations between political elites and the mass media. These models exist side by side within the framework of one media system because they refer to the interactions that occur between specific media organizations, political institutions, and their representatives. This means that the same newspaper, radio or television station can interact with one party within the adversary model (e.g., Radio Maryja versus the Democratic Left Alliance and Aleksander Kwaśniewski) and with another create relations characteristic for the exchange model (Radio Maryja – pro-Law and Justice, Lech Kaczyński and Jarosław Kaczyński). In the Polish reality, a well-known example is the hostile relationship of Law and Justice with the TVN group. In July 2008, the party chairman accused journalists and TV owners of 'deliberate pestering', and accused them of violating the rules of journalistic decency and called for the boycott of all TVN Group stations TVN (*Kaczyński: w TVN PiS to rynsztokowe gnidy* [Kaczynski: Law in Justice in TVN is as gutter louses], 2008). The boycott lasted several months, and was called off, but in September 2009 the conflict became again more pronounced due to the broadcast of a recording from a hidden camera at a Law and Justice congress and aired during an edition of the television show 'Teraz My!' in front of a studio audience. The tension between the station and the party escalated after Law and Justice won the 2015 election. This was reflected in the 1.5 million PLN fine imposed on the station for reporting on the occupation of the Sejm in December 2016, referred to as a coup (Jastrzębski, 2017). Law and Justice MP — Anna Sobecka, when asked by TOK FM about the issue, assessed this decision as fully justified:

I believe that the KRRiT would not impose such a fine without justification. The unnecessary commotion and 'ripping of garments' occurred. After all, experts have spoken, they spoke about incitement to commit a crime, and TVN must take responsibility for this. (*Posłanka PiS...*, 2017)

When the journalist pointed out to her that the experts who had issued this opinion were connected to TV Trwam and Father Tadeusz Rydzyk's school, which was hostile to TVN, she replied, undaunted:

It is a time when the right side won. It is hardly surprising that we do not ask some lefties for their opinion. We have our own experts and we will use them. (*Posłanka PiS...*, 2017)

There are many examples illustrating the exchange model. Such interactions take place daily, when politicians answer journalists' questions, participate in radio or television broadcasts, and give interviews. A noteworthy event was the signing of the coalition agreement between Law and Justice, Self-Defense, and League of Polish Families after the 2005 elections. The only media that were awarded the right to participate and report live on the event were the media connected to Father Rydzyk's consort – TV Trwam, Radio Maryja, and *Nasz Dziennik*, which caused a protest from the remaining media. After 2015, the most important decisions or events are made available to media favorable toward the government, such as those aforementioned as well as *Gazeta Polska* (see: *Trzy kadencje, żeby zmienić Polskę*, 2018:10–14).

As visible, the cooperation between the media and political actors can have various shades. Its character and scope are conditioned by legal regulations, organizational efficiency and the financial condition of the party, the anchoring and social support of public authorities on the one hand, and professional ethics, standards, and journalistic culture on the other.

Because of these factors, symmetrical or asymmetrical relations between political actors and the media can develop within one system of political communication. These are determined by the level of media autonomy present in the process of creating and distributing political messages. When the positions of the media and of the authorities in the system of political communication are balanced, these relations may be both hostile (the adversary model, the aforementioned example of Law and Justice versus TVN, the Democratic Left Alliance versus RMF FM during left-wing rule), as well as mutually beneficial (the exchange model in the case of Law and Justice and the media, Father T. Rydzyk, and the weekly *Gazeta Polska*). A situation in which the positions of the media and political actors are equal and neither side wants to dominate the relationship is also possible, an example being the BBC and British political parties. Taking into account the rules of democracy, this is the most desired model. Assuming that a low level of media politicization and a high level of public participation of characterize the political system, the development of dialog democracy is possible. However, political practice in Poland indicates that such a model will not be implemented soon, if ever.

Asymmetrical relations between the media and the authorities in the system of political communication are disturbing and highly undesirable, as they distort and deform the process of political communication and, generally, have a negative influence on the quality of democracy. They can occur in two variants: the

first one - the strong position of the political actor versus the weak position of the media, and the second - the weak position of the political actor versus the strong position of the media.

In the first variant, the system is characterized by a domination of political parties over the media, which is reflected in a strong politicization of the media. Public media are subordinate to the governing groups and strongly politicized, staffed by party supporters, whereas in the case of the private media, relations of the buyer-seller type develop around desirable, deficit goods, such as concessions. The outcome of the transaction can depend on the owners' political sympathies or antipathies; this can lead to pathologies and disfigurements of social life, such as behind-the-scenes arrangements, bribery, buying of media laws, etc. This variation is highly undesirable in democracy, as it leads to deformations. This option is found in Southern European countries, especially Spain, where during the PSOE (1982–1996) and Partido Popular (1996–2004) rule periods, the public media were dependent on the governing party, and the private media were linked by ties of camaraderie and interests. It is also present in the whole region of Central and Eastern Europe (see: Bajomi-Lázár, 2017), and in Poland, in the relations with broadcasting public media. It also concerns weak, local media, which are very often financed by councils and are strongly connected to local governing groups. However, this option is not applicable or is questionable in the case of private media, for which rather the second variant is relevant.

Strong commercial media are practically immune to political influence. When faced with a weak position of power in the communication system, the media themselves become a political entity, able to influence laws and political decisions. Such relations are characterized by the dominance of the media and its owners, who can freely exercise their economic interest, e.g., Berlusconi's Mediaset in Italy or Murdoch's FOX TV. In Central and Eastern Europe there is the example of Andrej Babiš in the Czech Republic — former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and since December 2017 the Prime Minister and, at the same time, the owner of the private concern Agrofert and the media group MAFRA, which publishes two of the three main Czech newspapers *Mladá fronta Dnes* and *Lidové noviny*.

In the case of Poland, the main commercial television stations belonging to the TVN Group, TV Polsat, and also commercial radio stations RMF FM or Radio ZET, have developed a relatively strong position in the relationship with political parties. They do not seek favor from political parties, which are rather the objects of their critical reports.

## **2.3 The mutually dependent party and media system in Poland**

As pointed out in the first part of this chapter, relations between parties and the media are a key issue in the study of political parallelism. In the case of Poland, as well as other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the party systems, and also media systems are the result of the political, economic and social transformation that began with the fall of communism in 1989 (Curry, 2006:93). In this region, the condition of political parties and mass media, their mutual relations and the level of political parallelism are the results of a more or less successful process of democratization. (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2006; O'Neil, 1997; Milton, 2007; Goban-Klas, 1997:24). In this context, I will try to answer the questions:

1. How did the democratization process affect the level of political parallelism in Poland?
2. How did Polish political parties behave and build their relations with the media?
3. What factors stimulated the level of political parallelism in the thirty years that followed the fall of communism?
4. Is it as high as in the Polarized Pluralism Model, or is it low or non-existent as in the Liberal Model? Perhaps we should look for another model typical for Poland and CEE?

### **2.3.1 Democratization of the political system and political parallelism**

Whereas the functions role and the tasks of mass media in mature, democratic systems have been analyzed and described and as a result rich subject literature has emerged (Gunther and Mughan, 2000), the problematic mass media in the period of transition to democracy and consolidation of this democracy in post-communist Europe is still to be addressed. The issue is touched upon in works of political science, media studies, economics, sociology, etc. As McConnell and Becker (2002) rightly point out, as a rule, this occurs by chance and on the margins of the main considerations. There is a lack of comprehensive studies that would integrate knowledge from different disciplines and theoretical reflection that would allow for a better understanding and explanation of the mechanisms of transformations, as well as the role of mass media in the democratization process. There is practically no research into political parallelism, the level of which is actually determined by the changes taking place in the phase of transition to democracy and the consolidation of it. One of the important publications that

partly fills this gap is the work *Media Reform* edited by Price, Rozumilowicz and Verhulst (2002). Comparative studies carried out by these authors allowed the researchers to put forward the thesis that there are close and comprehensive links between the reforms of the mass media and the democratization of the political system. Rozumilowicz divides the process of media reforms into four stages: 1. A Pre-transition stage, which takes part in the Pretransition of democratization, 2. A Primary transition stage in the Transition to democracy, 3. A Secondary transition stage in the period of consolidation of democracy, and 4. A Late or mature transition stage, which corresponds to the level of Mature democracy (Rozumilowicz, 2002:17–24) (see table 2.1.).

Tab. 2.1: *Democratization process and media reform according to Rozumilowicz*

	Media reform Pre-transition stage	Primary transition stage	Secondary transition stage	Late or mature transition stage
Democratization				
PRETRANSITION	X			
TRANSITION		X		
CONSOLIDATION			X	
MATURE DEMOCRACY				X?

Source: Rozumilowicz, 2002: 17–24.

I leave the pre-transition and the primary transition stages out of my considerations, as it covers the period until 1989. It is debatable and open to discussion whether the Polish media, and the media in other countries in CEE, have reached the secondary stage and the late or mature transition stage, which is characteristic for media systems of democratic countries in Western Europe.

The transformation of broadcasting media has been much faster and more dynamic in Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of communism in 1989 than in Spain, Portugal or Greece after the overthrow of dictatorships in the 1970s. Fundamental decisions for the transformation of Polish media were included in the 'Round Table Agreements' concluded between the Polish Communist Party (PZPR) and the opposition in April 1989. On the one hand, they opened the way to the de-monopolization of the press market, and on the other, they blocked the reforms of radio and television. One of the first strategic decisions was to abolish censorship and free the press from state control. Thanks to that, the process of diversification of political content was triggered, which led to the pluralism of the media. The entry of *Gazeta Wyborcza* onto the market in May 1989 was a

breakthrough. The closing of the monopolist Workers Publishing Cooperative – Książka-Prasa-Ruchin 1990, speeded up the process. At the time, just like in Spain, dozens of new dailies and thousands of newspapers were founded. Some of them never appeared, others fought to survive and to find a readership. The press market normalized and stabilized in 1993. At that time, it was already possible to speak of the emergence of a market structure, based on the principles of the free market economy and external pluralism of the contents of the press. The reforms of broadcasting media were implemented much more slowly and more carefully. This caution has occurred both in southern European countries and in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The radio and television were very attractive channels of political communication for the new ruling elites, and for this reason, they deliberately inhibited changes in this field, fearing the loss of influence on the content of the reformed public media. The Polish Parliament passed the Act on Radio and Television Broadcasting in December 1992, but the market had to wait until 1994 for its first effects. It should be noted that the legislative changes were introduced three and a half years after the fall of communism. The Czechs, Slovaks (1991) and Romanians (1992) had done it earlier. Whereas in Hungary (1996) and in Bulgaria (1996, 1997) the transitions were blocked by the ruling parties, which was reflected, for example in the ‘war over television’ in Hungary (Ociepka, 2003:126–139; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2002:22; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2006:27). Although the transformation of broadcasting media has been delayed by several years compared to the press across Central and Eastern Europe, it has still been faster than in the Mediterranean after the collapse of the dictatorships. The 1992 Act on Radio and Television Broadcasting allowing the transformation of state broadcast media into public media, has closed the period of rogue stations’ broadcasts and opened the market for legal private broadcasters. The actions of the Polish authorities led to evasion of the so-called ‘wild deregulation’ phenomenon (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2006:27), characteristic for Italy and Greece. The slow process of building a dual electronic media model, based on the solutions existing in mature European democracies, has begun (Ociepka, 2003:101–103).

Structural and institutional transformations on the media market have been fundamental to the emergence and consolidation of political pluralism in the media and the phenomenon of bias associated with it. Political parties and organizations quickly assessed the importance of the media as potential allies in the effort to reach the public, especially in a situation where confidence in the media was growing faster than in the new establishment, which had to put a lot of effort into winning the support of its voters. This is why political actors were increasingly interested in building contacts and bonds with the media to ensure

influence over the content. As Bennett (1998:38) notices, in a society which has no previous experience with pluralism of opinions and views, a problem with the selection of topics and sources might appear. The public, unprepared to make choices, easily adopt simple and transparent nationalist and populist slogans. At this stage of the political transition process, reliable media should explain democratic changes, support democratic values, and explain new procedures. The Polish media were not fully aware of the function they were supposed to perform. Since the beginning of the transformation, they have been strongly involved in the political process, opting clearly for certain candidates and groups in electoral campaigns or against them, a good example of which is the largest Polish daily, *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Such attitudes of owners, publishers, and journalists had a detrimental effect on the development of internal pluralism and deepened the political bias.

The secondary transition stage coincides with the consolidation of democracy. Many researchers assume that the border between the phase of reaching democracy and its consolidation is crossed along with the complete removal of the old regime and the acceptance of political pluralism. On the institutional level, such a moment could be pointed to the free parliamentary elections and the establishment of a government according to democratic procedures, or the adoption of a democratic constitution. In the case of Poland, the transition from one phase to the next took place between the 1991 and 1993 elections. The adoption of the constitution in 1997 finally closed the period of uncertainty and political transformations on the institutional level. The entry into the phase of consolidation of democracy had a great influence on the processes occurring on the Polish media market. Private owners and publishers, as well as Polish and foreign investors used the stabilizing political and economic situation to strengthen their position on the market. The market mechanisms and internal competition in the printed media sector, and later in the sector of broadcasting media, developed in this period. Due to diversification and concentration of ownership, first media and multimedia groups, holdings, companies with foreign capital and foreign concerns began to emerge. The process of internationalization of the media, which began in the previous phase, started to gain momentum and definition. Foreign investors like Bauer, Axel Springer, and Passauer's group entered the Polish market, and, at present, their information market share is considerable.

Yet the political and social changes did not keep pace with the economic changes. A common problem of Central and Eastern Europe was the shortfall in democratic values, the underdevelopment of civil society, deficiencies in the public sphere, and the low quality of democracy. All these problems affected the relationship of political actors with the mass media and were reflected in the

media content. An analysis of individual cases shows how complex and difficult the process of gaining autonomy has been and still is. However, and this should be emphasized, the paths of the public and commercial broadcasters have clearly divided. The aspirations of individual political parties and politicians find an outlet in the bias of public television and radio, which are often seen as communist residue (Lánczi and O'Neil, 1997:83). In fact, the issue is more complex and cannot be described simply as the legacy of the old regime. The politicization of public media should be treated as an element of a larger process, which Herbut (2002:110) combines with the strategic orientation of the political parties toward state institutions, and calls it 'a colonization of public administration' carried out by the ruling parties. This phenomenon can be explained by the specific position of the political parties as primary subjects of electoral competition, which makes it different from the situation in Western Europe. Due to the low level of identification of the electorate with parties and their weak membership base, as well as the process of 'parliamentarization' of the parties in post-communist Central and Eastern European countries, the model of the electoral party was developed. According to Herbut (2002:110), parties in these countries resemble in some respects a type of party-cartel. One way of influencing a labile and hesitant electorate and securing a strong position is to seize control over public authorities, local government, local public institutions, etc. by filling posts and offices. With one's 'own people' in such organizations, it is easier to use state resources to promote one's own party, its leaders and its program, which in the decision-making and election process gives a serious advantage over competitors. Public media are one of these institutions which political parties wish to control and which undergo the process of colonization by the ruling formations. Public radio and television have been the battlefield of constant clashes since the Radio and Television Broadcasting Act was passed in 1993, through the 2015 election and until now.

In the case of private media, the influence of political actors on the editorial line and media content is much limited. They are controlled by the owners, who, guided by the logic of the market, try to avoid unequivocal political connections. Openly speaking in favor of, or against, a particular party or a political circle could result in an outflow of recipients and, in consequence, a reduction in advertising revenue. Nevertheless, we should remember that the fate of a private broadcaster, especially when the broadcasting license needs to be extended, depends on the public authorities and its subordinate bodies. Thus, private owners strike a delicate balance between political elites and the public. When comparing the situation of private broadcasters in Poland and in Southern European countries, it should be noted that the licensing processes

in Poland were public and transparent. Although they aroused numerous political controversies, e.g., President Lech Walesa's indignation over the granting of the broadcasting license to TV Polsat in 1993, they were, nevertheless, correctly conducted in legal terms. They were devoid of corrupt and clientelist practices, which cannot be said about Greece and Spain, where licenses were granted to those entities which were linked by strong ties of friendship (called *cacicismo del PESE* or *amigismo del PESO*) and business with the ruling elites. The same goes for Bulgaria and Romania.

The result of the transformations of mass media in Poland after 1989 is a deep politicization of public media and a high involvement of private media (mainly the press) in the political process (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012:43–45). In 1997, Goban-Klas (1997:40) established that the direction of development of the media system brings it closer to the Italian model. Mancini (2000:28) perceives Italy as one of the least-developed countries in the Western world, in terms of the development of the public sphere. The author points to a high degree of political parallelism, the lack of journalistic professionalism, historical distortions in the relationship between the party system and the media and, in consequence, the dependence of the media on the governing parties as the reasons for this state of affairs.

An analysis of the relationship between the political parties and the media in Poland in the last thirty years, allows us to advance a thesis, that the patterns of interactions between the political actors and public broadcasters are closer to the polarized pluralism model (e.g., Italy, Spain), but the relationship with commercial media have features typical for the Liberal Model (USA, UK). In the case of Southern European countries, restrictions of journalistic autonomy can occur in both types of ownership — public and private, and also in the print media. In Central and Eastern Europe, mainly public radio and television are endangered. Private media, both owned by domestic and foreign capital, along with the stabilization and strengthening of their position on the economic market, show much greater resistance to pressure from the ruling parties and their leaders. The activity of media belonging to the Polish holdings and media groups, such as Agora, Polsat, ITI, Eurozet, and foreign Bauer (since 2006), Axel Springer, Polskapresse (Verlagsgruppe Passau), indicates that they determine the content of the media belonging to them independently, according to the outlined program line, and cannot be easily manipulated. Nevertheless, this is not synonymous with objectivity and lack of bias. Some owners of leading private media in Poland have clearly defined ideological views and political preferences, which they do not conceal from the public. This translates into a certain editorial line and nature of messages (e.g., Agora), although the market logic might suggest a

different approach. In the section of main private media, an integration of political elites and media staff, so characteristic for Southern Europe, has not been observed or limited to a few smaller media. This is undoubtedly a positive element, which may help to break the politicization process in the future, reduce bias and lead to the consolidation of professional ethics. However, a serious concern is that private news media will not oppose the ongoing tabloidization process and will refuse to participate in the public sphere.

The transition to democracy and the next consolidation of democracy, are complex and difficult processes. As described previously they occur on two levels – institutional and social. The first one was mastered relatively quickly and effectively by the post-communist, Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland, which have adopted democratic constitutions and entered the NATO and EU structures. The state of the consolidation of democracy level is more complicated. In the case of eleven countries - members of the European Union - it is a finished process, but quality of democracy, political and media standards do not claim it to be a closed phase. The process is still unconcluded. It is easier to establish institutions, pass laws and sign documents, than to change social and political attitudes, to build a civil society in which the media play a key role in strengthening the democratic sphere of public life, as well as free from deep bias and resist both political and economic pressure. Thirty years after the transformation, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Baltic States, are the most advanced and can be classified as belonging to the Hybrid Liberal Model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c:37). However, the future of the quality of democracy in the Czech Republic after the elections in 2017, and the appointment of the media magnate Andrei Babiš as Prime Minister is in question. The remaining countries of the region belonging to the European Union should be classified as belonging to the Politicized Media Model. Hungary, after Orbán's 2010 renewed takeover of the government, and Poland after the 2015 election, have entered a difficult period of democracy. Among the countries classified as flawed democracies, such as Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Serbia (the only one outside of the European Union) are falling behind. The remaining Balkan countries are still in the Media in Transition Model. Russia and Belarus have not succeeded in renouncing authoritarian governments (Authoritarian Model) (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c: 37).

However, all countries classified as flawed democracies are pained with difficulties and problems (Agh, 2001:89). The quality of democracy is low, the parties are weak, and the development of civil society is still underway. Research shows that thirty years after the fall of communism, public media are still entangled in political dependencies, whereas private ones navigate social responsibilities and

the interests of their owners. This state is explained well in the public sphere and market models, described by Croteau and Hoynes (2006: 39). In this context, one should disagree with Sparks (2006:26), who believes that the media in Poland and in other countries of the region are, on the one hand highly marketized and pluralized, and on the other hand subordinate to elites (political and economic) and small interest groups rather than to the development of the idea of public service.

### **2.3.2 The party system and its impact on the media**

It should be noted that there are differences in the party systems of Central and Eastern and Southern European countries, which have a significant impact on the level of political parallelism. For instance, in Spain, main opposition parties like PSOE or the Communist Party, were founded long before the fall of the fascist regime. They existed throughout the dictatorship underground and in exile. After Franco's death, the leaders and leading activists returned to the country and continued to operate. We can therefore speak of a continuity of the party system, and of anchoring the party in Spanish society. In Central and Eastern Europe, the process of building political parties and of the party system began only after the fall of communism in 1989, and it was very complex. Next to formations, which originate from the old system and have undergone a more or less visible lifting, numerous weak organisms also appeared. They had no member base (the so-called couch parties) and social support, neither financial means nor any parliamentary experience. Nevertheless, party institutions were necessary in the new political system. They allowed ambitious individuals to advance in the world of politics, through acquiring electoral legitimacy and entering parliament, or through careers in the institutions of state administration. The adoption of democratic standards led to the aforementioned 'parliamentarization' of political parties (Herbut, 2004:110), and has forced politicians to found formal organizations and apply for places in the Sejm and Senate. The process of consolidation of small and ineffective parties in Poland took about fifteen years. In the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, a configuration of the two strongest and most relevant parties rooted in the Solidarity camp formed — the liberal Civic Platform and the conservative Law and Justice. Next to them, two smaller parties, heirs to the formations active in the communist period — the left wing Democratic Left Alliance and the agrarian Polish People's Party, were able to reach the election threshold and enter the Sejm. The Democratic Left Alliance was unable to enter parliament for the first time in the 2015 elections. Over the past thirty years, all four parties had their own prime ministers and

governments, which usually left the political stage disgraced, making room for their opponents.

What distinguishes Poland from Southern European countries, which entered the path of democracy in the 1970s, is the frequent political alternation of power, which occurs after each subsequent parliamentary elections. Only once did the same party (Civic Platform) win a second term in office in succession, in 2007 and in 2011, and governed for eight years (2007–2015). In Spain or Greece, the strongest players have been present on the political stage since the fall of the dictatorships until today. Two opposing parties exist there, the social-democrats and the conservatives, and both are capable of forming governments independently and becoming leading actors in governing coalitions. Political alternation of power is a normal phenomenon. In Spain, PSOE remained in power for fourteen years (1982–1996), Partido Popular for eight (2006–2004), and it was again replaced by PSOE (2004–2011). In 2011, PP started another term. The situation was similar in Greece. The conservative center-right New Democracy, although founded after the collapse of the junta of black colonels, through its leaders, was strongly associated with an autocratic regime. The party was in office for seven years (1974–1981). Then, for the next nine years, the center-left, post-opposition party PASOK (1981–1990) took over the government, and after a short period of New Democracy rule (1990–1993), it returned to power again for eleven years (1993–2004), to be yet again replaced for a short period by New Democracy (2004–2011). In 2009, the elections were won by PASOK, which ruled until 2012, after which a problem with the stability of the governments arose.

The leaders also decided on the position of the parties in Southern Europe. Spanish groups had unquestionable leaders with strong positions in party structures: PSOE - Felipe Gonzalez, and then the uncharismatic, Rodriguez Zapatero; PP - Jose Maria Aznara and currently Mariano Rajoy or Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón since 2018. In Greece, family clans head the parties: in PASOK – first Andreas Papandreou, then his grandson Georgios Andreas Papandreou; in New Democracy - its founder Konstandinos Karamanlis, and later his nephew Kostas Karamanlis. Strong leadership and years of power are factors that foster the development of cronyism, nepotism, corruption, and clientelism. The longer the same group holds power, the more it feels unchallengeable. Italy under Berlusconi was another example. It is in these countries that power has developed pathological traits, to an extent unprecedented in other regions of Europe.

Meanwhile in Poland in the period from 1989 to 2018 sixteen Prime Ministers held the office in seventeen governments. The average duration of the Prime Minister's term of office from 1989 to the end of 2017 was 21 months (see Table 2.2.). There were only two exceptions in these thirty years. Jerzy Buzek's

Tab. 2.2: *Alternation of political power in Poland (1989–2017)*

no	Prime Minister	Political affiliation	Since	to	Length of time in office days/months	President
1	Tadeusz Mazowiecki	Post-oppositional KOS	1989	1991	498/16.6/1.38	
2	Jan Bielecki	Post-oppositional KLD	1991	1991	336/11,2/0.9	Lech Wałęsa 1990–1995
3	Jan Olszewski	Post-oppositional PC	1991	1992	182/6 /0.5	
4	Waldemar Pawlak	PSL	1992	1992	35/1.1	
5	Hanna Suchocka	Post-oppositional UD	1992	1993	472/15.7	
6	Waldemar Pawlak	PSL	1993	1995	496/16.5	
7	Józef Oleksy	Post-communist SLD/SdRP	1995	1996	337/11.2	Aleksander Kwaśniewski 1995–2000 2000–2005
8	Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz	Post-communist SLD	1996	1997	632/21	
9	Jerzy Buzek	AWS	1997	2001	1449/48	
10	Leszek Miller	Post-communist SLD	2001	2004	926 /30.8	
11	Marek Belka	Post-communist SLD	2004	2005	547/18.2	
12	Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz	PiS	2005	2006	256 /8.5	Lech Kaczyński 2005–2010
13	Jarosław Kaczyński	PiS	2006	2007	490/16.3	
14	Donald Tusk	PO	2007	2014	2502 /83.4	Bronisław Komorowski 2010–2015
15	Ewa Kopacz	PO	2014	2015	420/14	
16	Beata Szydło	PiS	2015	2017	756/25.2	Andrzej Duda 2015–2020
17	Mateusz Morawiecki	PiS	2017			
Mean:					646 days / 21 months	

Source: Author, based on the data of the PKW.

government (the post-oppositional Electoral Action of Solidarity), lasted for a full four-year term in the first decade of transformations. The Civic Platform was in power for two terms (2007–2014), and in the last year, its leader, Donald Tusk (2007–2014), after being elected President of the European Council, handed over

the post of Prime Minister to Ewa Kopacz (2014–2015). Since 2005, the left-wing has been marginalized in Parliament, despite the fact that there is a large group of left-wing voters in Poland. In 2015, for the first time since the collapse of the old system, The Democratic Left Alliance did not enter the Sejm.

Over thirty years, all presidents, prime ministers, and victorious parties have tried to gain control over the media. This was relatively simple with public media, but not so straightforward with private media. Short terms of office of singular political formations were one of the factors restricting the scope and depth of the pathological relationships between politicians from the ruling parties and the media on a central level. The longer you hold power, the stronger your personal ties will be, the deeper the cronyism and the stronger the personal ties, as was the case in Spain or Greece.

In Poland, this process was inhibited by the frequent alternations of power on the regional and state levels. This principle does not apply to local authorities, especially on the commune or county levels, where, by the very nature of a small community, family, friendships, and mutual interests play a greater role. Let us examine the relationships of Polish political parties with the media and consider the place they take in their political strategy. It must, however, be noted that the task is not easy due to the high dynamics of changes on the political stage, which is expressed in the short duration of existence of singular party structures, the high fragmentation and fractionalization indicator (Antoszewski, 2007:54), the changes of leading groups and frequent transfers of politicians between parties. For this reason, among others, Markowski (2007:150) considered whether it is at all possible to speak about a party system in Poland, and proposed instead the term 'conglomeration of political parties', as, in his opinion, systemic features did not evolve. The researcher argues that from 1991 to 2007 only one party survived under the same name, with the same structure and party elite. Moreover, it has not occurred in the twenty-year-period that the same formation or coalition formed a government twice. This negative phenomenon was accompanied by a high indicator of electoral instability, which between 2001 and 2005 stabilized on the net level of 31.75 (Antoszewski, 2007:53), which placed Poland on an equal footing with Latin American countries during the first years of democratic transformations in the region. The indicators applied by political scientists, such as the index of the effective number of parties, the index of over-representation of the strongest parties, the concentration of support, the level of rivalry in the party system, the support for winning parties and for small parties, the level of lost votes (Antoszewski, 2007:57–67; Markowski, 2007:152); confirm the non-linear development of the party system in Poland, which is characteristic for Central and Eastern Europe. It happened for the first time at the beginning of the

third decade of democratization that the Civic Platform won the elections twice in 2007, 2011, and held power for eight years.

The destabilizing character of the Polish elites by no means closes the list of the negative features of the party system. The building of a politician's image is a long process, and the constant scandals cause the rotation of politicians between parties, their dishonesty and lack of ethics, has caused a crisis of confidence in the profession. In 2004 this confidence was at the lowest level in Europe, and stood at a similar level compared to Germany at 6 percent (compared, for example, with 32 percent in the Netherlands, 30 percent in Turkey, 28 percent in Spain and 17 percent in the USA) (Sora, 2007:190–191). The survey conducted in autumn 2005 by GfK Polonia with the use of Brand Potential Indicators (BPI) has confirmed the low level of potential of Polish politicians. Donald Tusk has achieved the highest score (44.07), and Andrzej Lepper the lowest (22.10), while in the marketing analyzes the best brands achieve indicators above 80 (GfK, 2005).

The level of competitiveness of political system seems very important in the aspect of political parallelism. Antoszewski (2007:58) notices that this level was relatively high, with the exception of the years 2001 and 2007, when the victors gained a much higher number of votes than their opponents. Competitiveness in 2005 and 2007 showed some features of mono-polarity with reference to a right wing-left wing axis. In both cases, the elections were dominated by the neo-liberal and social-conservative formations (Civic Platform and Law and Justice parties (Antoszewski, 2007:59), whose leaders came from Solidarity, with a minimal input from the representatives of other ideological options. The parliamentary elections in 2007 introduced new elements to cross-party competitiveness and deepened the institutionalization of the party system, which was confirmed in the subsequent elections in 2011 and 2015.

The present considerations on the relationships between political parties and the media focus on the phases of consolidation of democracy, its maturity and the corresponding stages of secondary media reforms (Price and Verhulst, 2002:12–13; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2001:58–59; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2006:14–15). In the case of Poland, they fell in the second and third decade after the fall of communism, when a system of four political parties (Law and Justice, Civic Platform, the Democratic Left Alliance, and the Polish People's Party) established on the political scene. These parties were present in the parliament throughout the last two decades, with the exception of the Democratic Left Alliance, which did not reach the electoral threshold in 2015 (Fig. 2.1). I leave on the margin small parties – Self-Defence (until 2001) and the League of Polish Families (until 2005) – which have become politically insignificant, as well as small-sized parties, which formed in 2015: – the right-wing-populist committee Kukiz'15

(8.8 percent support of the voters) and the center-liberal group. Nowoczesna (7.6 percent of the votes). It is worth mentioning, however, that none of these groups has the noun 'party' in its name (Fras, 2005:233). The formations, which were founded after the fall of communism in the 1990s, as well as those which re-entered the political scene in the 2000s under new names, avoided this term due to its pejorative connotations stemming from the communist period.

The choice of four formations for the analysis of political parallelism is justified also by the degree of media coverage and exposition of these particular parties in political campaigns, which were clearly evolving toward the horse race model based on ink/sound bites and the publication of public opinion poll results. These issues will be analyzed in detail in the next chapter. A higher position of the subject of electoral competition in pre-election polls and a better election result translate into the media's interest. Polish media generally break the principle of proportional participation of political actors in their news coverage and usually focus on the two biggest formations or candidates, which will be proven in the following part of our considerations.

### **2.3.3 The consequences of intervention by political actors in the media system**

The regulation of the media, as discussed in the first chapter, takes place on the level of the state and its borders simultaneously enfold the media system. It is the setting for the interactions of participants of political communication, where political actors, the mass media, and the public articulate and pursue their interests. In Poland, the regulation of the media is conducted through legislative actions taken by electoral state institutions – the Sejm and the Parliament. It is on this particular level, that the interests of political parties, which form the parliamentary majority, able to pass bills and the opposition, clash. They have their own president, who can sign a bill or veto it, which Lech Kaczyński did quite keenly after the 2007 parliamentary elections when the opposition took power. The legislation is one of the basic mechanisms of political influence and control over the media system (Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995). This influence must be seen as the result of the conflicts and compromises reached by the parties present in parliament. The legislation, nominations for media employees (public radio and television), financial control over media companies and content regulation are fundamental criteria used by Hallin and Mancini for the analysis of state intervention – one of the four dimensions of the media system.

Under liberal legal conditions, a free media market model emerges. In this model, access to the market is open to any entity wishing to operate on it; the

law guarantees the freedom of action, as well as the freedom and independence of broadcasters. This model is typical for the print media in all democratic countries. In the case of broadcast media, the situation is much more complicated. A low level of state control is typical for the United States and Luxembourg. In order to start operating in those countries, it is necessary to have a broadcasting frequency allocation, which is awarded by state institutions, however, this fact does not significantly restrict the freedom of the media. The entry on the market is blocked by economic mechanisms, in consequence, political control gives way to economic control.

On the other hand, we have a dual model, typical of Western European countries, in which the functioning of broadcast media is regulated by the state. The model takes into account the presence of two types of broadcasters - public and private. Their differing legal, structural, and ownership anchoring, have caused the relationships of political actors with public and private media to develop differently. The private radio and television broadcasting market in the dual model is highly regulated, and nobody without a concession or a broadcasting license can start to operate. The concession registers the permitted and forbidden activities. If the conditions of the concession are not followed, the state can revoke it. Despite these limitations, broadcasters under license are usually at liberty to shape the program content freely. However, the need to apply for a license or to extend it, places a private broadcaster in the position of a client of political actors. The owner of a commercial medium must ensure that public institutions - which are appointed by the state to regulate the market - grant the license to him and not to the competitors. He also needs to make sure that the laws are constructed and passed according to his requests. The dual model is intended to balance public and private interests, ensure the political independence of the media and equal access to them for all social groups, as well as guarantee pluralism, objectivity, and reliability. In practice, it is not designed to protect the media from the pressure and control exercised by political or economic institutions. The commercialization of mass media is also causing the media market to become increasingly dependent on the business world, media owners, and advertisers. For this reason, the media are controlled doubly - politically and economically.

In Poland, the current shape of the media order formed at the beginning of the 1990s, when the economic and political transformations started, and the parties and ruling elites were disorganized, lacked social anchoring and were characterized by a high fluctuation of members. The press market was freed by the decisions of The Round Table and it quickly adjusted to the conditions of the liberal economy. After several attempts to take over some press titles that emerged after the biggest press concern in the Soviet bloc Working Cooperative

of Publishers (RSW Książka- Prasa-Ruch1973–1990) was closed, the politicians came to the conclusion that due to their low readership, opinion dailies and weeklies were not influential enough, and lost interest. For over sixteen years even the daily *Rzeczpospolita*<sup>3</sup>, of which 49 percent was owned by State Treasury was autonomous and known for independent journalism. It was not until the government of Jarosław Kaczyński in 2006, which, taking advantage of the withdrawal of the Scandinavian media holding Orkla from the Polish market, politically instrumentalized the newspaper, by filling the position of editor-in-chief with a journalist supporting the Law and Justice party and the Kaczyński brothers. Bronisław Wildstein rejoined the editorial office, and numerous conservative journalists with explicit, nationalist views, hostile to the Democratic Left Alliance, who previously worked for *Wprost* or *Gazeta Polska* (such as Piotr Zaremba, Piotr Gabryel, and Piotr Skwieciński), were hired. This does not mean that other press titles are politically neutral. If they are biased and support, permanently or temporarily, a political entity, it is rather the result of the views of the owners or the editorial team, and not of the pressure exercised by certain politicians or parties. However, we should agree with Jakubowicz (2004:18) that even in liberal economic conditions, political and economic powers are intertwined, and the assumption that a free media market ensures social control over politics is not fully realized because political and economic actors are linked by an integrated system.

The transformation of the radio and television market was more complex, took longer and resulted in much greater emotions on the part of politicians, who have seen and still see the media as a base for influencing public opinion. The beginning of the formation of the new media order was marked by the Radio and Television Broadcasting Act passed by the Sejm on 29th of December 1992. A success for the young political elites was the evading of the so-called ‘wild deregulation’ typical of Italy (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:126–127). The first step was to establish the National Broadcasting Council in March 1994 and to appoint its members. The scope of the activities and competencies of this regulatory body was modelled on the British, French and German solutions. However, the implementation of each bill, its compliance with the law and whether or not it will

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3 In 2011, Gremi Media, a company owned by the Polish entrepreneur Grzegorz Hajdarowicz, purchased shares from Mecom Poland and shares owned by PW *Rzeczpospolita* (State Treasury), becoming a 100 percent shareholder in the Presspublica publishing house. This publishing house changed its name to Gremi Media and in 2017 it became a joint-stock company called Gremi Media SA.

be followed, depend on the professionalism and ethics of the people who perform the task. Already at the level of election of the first National Broadcasting Council (members, the mechanism of filling positions by persons affiliated or sympathizing with political parties described by Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) and then developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004)), began to operate as one of the determinants of state control over the media system. The appointing of the nine members of the Council (1993–2005) by the Sejm (4), Senate (2) and the President (3), since its establishment, has been the result of, on the one hand, severe conflicts and, on the other hand, compromises reached through negotiations and inter-party agreements. Some of The National Broadcasting Council members were experts in the media field, but it can hardly be said that they were also impartial members of the regulatory body, taking the most important decisions concerning the functioning of public media. Like other public institutions, The National Broadcasting Council has undergone a more or less visible colonization by political actors, as illustrated by the analysis of the Council's composition from 1993 to 2018 (see Fig. 2.2.). During the presidency of Lech Wałęsa, the organ was the most diversified in terms of political affiliations. During the ten-year-long presidency of Aleksander Kwaśniewski a considerable over-representation of the left wing was visible (seven out of nine members in 2005). One of the first decisions taken by Law and Justice after the 2005 victorious parliamentary and presidential elections, was to change the Broadcasting Law. As a result, the composition of The National Broadcasting Council was limited to five members. This meant that all previously-appointed members were removed from their posts, even though their terms of office had not run their course. Their posts were taken over by three Law and Justice supporters, a League of Polish Families and a Self-Defence affiliate. This was the most difficult period of the Council's activity since 1993, marked by conflicts and characterized by the total submission of the majority of its members to the Kaczyński brothers. After the lost parliamentary elections by Law and Justice in 2007, the Council was kept on life support only thanks to President Lech Kaczyński, who vetoed the laws of the Sejm rejecting the annual reports of the National Broadcasting Council, which was the only legal way to maintain the composition of the Council and block the appointment of new members. The situation changed after the 2010 presidential election following which, Jan Dworak (former Civic Platform member, since 2004 independent) was appointed, Krzysztof Luft (former spokesman of Jerzy Buzek's government) was nominated by the president, Witold Graboś (former the Democratic Left Alliance senator) and Sławomir Rogowski (recommended by the left-wing MPs of the Democratic Left Alliance and the Labor Union) by the Sejm and Stefan Pastuszko (former the Polish People's Party senator) by the Senate. Except for one

member of the Council, who was formally unattached to any party, it was difficult for the remaining members to avoid such associations. The Council included members of three out of four formations present in the Sejm at the time, which for several years effectively deprived Law and Justice of influence over the media. The new Council did not respond to the demand to build apolitical organs, which would control the media market and the public media. In this configuration, no party had enough advantage to appoint members of the supervisory boards of Polish Television and Radio. This required negotiations and interparty agreements, which gave no guarantees of neutrality, yet created a chance for pluralism of content in these media. The filling of posts according to party doctrine does not necessarily need to result in negative consequences. The condition is that, the regulating bodies include members of all political formations and the media represent diversified political views. The quality of Polish institutions is determined, first of all, by the low political culture of the ruling groups, who perceive public media as their election spoils (Pokorna-Ignatowicz, 2010:42–43), which was the case after the 2015 election.

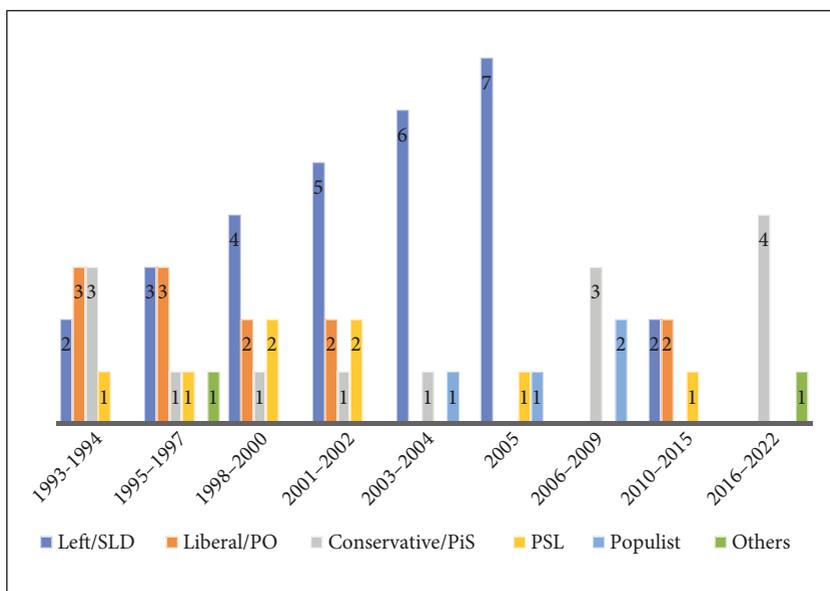


Fig. 2.2: Political preferences of the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiTV) members in the years 1993–2022 (in numbers)

Source: Authors on the basis of data from the PKW.

In 2016, all members of the National Broadcasting Council were exchanged and the new council was appointed for a six-year term. All five members were linked to one side of the political scene. Witold Kołodziejcki, a member of Law and Justice during the periods of inactivity, became the chairman of the council. He first held the office (2005–2010) during the previous rule of Law and Justice, and after the early election in 2007, as mentioned previously; he had the support of president Kaczyński. Likewise, Elżbieta Więclawska-Sauk and Teresa Bochwic are connected to the Law and Justice party. The president appointed Janusz Kawecki, who for many years was a member of the program board and the Radio Maryja Support Team, as well as the journalist Andrzej Sabatowski, who is the single member of the council who has no visible, formal ties to Law and Justice.

The mechanism of appointing and filling posts with people loyal to political parties, besides the National Broadcasting Council, is also, to the fullest extent, applicable to public radio and television owned by the State Treasury. In most Western European countries, the legislation provides public authorities with a voice in the process of filling positions in supervisory boards of radio and television companies, which is a powerful instrument of pressure given to the state. Great Britain is a good example of relatively low state control, where the Prime Minister appoints the director of the BBC, and it can never be a person with unambiguous political affiliation. It must, however, be stressed that the competences of Ofcom differ from the scope of activities of the National Broadcasting Council. A similar model has been introduced in Sweden. In other countries of continental Europe, considerable state intervention in public media is also observable. Governments have a wide range of possibilities to fill many positions with their political allies - directors, management boards, members of supervisory boards, etc. Through them, political actors can control the media content. The ethics of the political elites defines the level of respect toward public media autonomy, and either allow for the formation of symmetrical relations within the exchange model, or, as a result of colonization of public administration, transforms them into spoils of victory, one case being Italy or Central and Eastern European countries, members of the European Union, including Poland. State control can be impeded when media managers and their staff are strong enough to resist political pressure from those in power. This may result in conflicts of interest and competitiveness between public media managers, media employees, and those in power. Such relations are best reflected in the adversary model. Well-known examples include the BBC's directors' tense relationship with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, or that of the director of French television with President François Mitterrand, as well as the conflict between German

broadcasters and Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Undoubtedly, an important factor is the practice, which has been formed over decades as illustrated by Ociepka (2003:86–87) with the example of British public television, but also professionalism and ethics of media managers.

In Poland, the politicization of public media, which are treated by politicians as electoral spoils, has not been avoided (Pokorna-Ignatowicz, 2010:47). They politicized the National Broadcasting Council by introducing persons with distinct political affiliations into the supervisory and management boards, whom in turn, ensured a proper representation of party interests on the level of television stations and editorial offices of information programs. Eight appointed chairmen of TVP S.A. and the five who had this function only temporarily from 1994 to 2018 were connected and available - in a more or less explicit way - to their political principals. The year 2006 marked the beginning of a distinct process of administrative and economic disintegration of public television, caused by the political ambitions of the Law and Justice's leaders and their former coalition partners aimed at maintaining control over the medium. As a consequence, over a period of five years, the chairmen of TVP changed three times, temporary chairmen - five times, with two periods of vacancies. The collapse of these media has been caused by excessive ties to the party and loyalty being valued higher than independence, as well as the low ethical stance and professionalism of managers employed at TVP and Polish Radio. The problem returned with a vengeance in 2016. A new body was then called into existence - the National Council of Media (RMN). This collegiate authority appointed and dismissed management and supervisory boards of Polish Television, Polish Radio and of the Polish Press Agency, thereby letting the ruling party gain absolute control over public media. It included five members, three of whom were linked with Law and Justice - Krzysztof Czabański, Elżbieta Kruk, and Joanna Lichočka - appointed by the Sejm, and two by the president - Juliusz Braun (proposed by Civic Platform) and Grzegorz Pożorny (proposed by Kukiz' 15 - a newly-created parliamentary club in 2015, formed by a right-wing populist group). The political opposition negatively received the creation of this body, and the National Broadcasting Council. One of the first decisions of the National Council of Media was to appoint Jacek Kurski, the controversial Law and Justice politician, as the chairman of TVP. Kurski has deepened strongly the politicization process of public television and has subordinated it to Law and Justice propaganda, as Oseka confirms:

'Wiadomości' [The main news program of TVP1] has stopped being a relator of events which have happened during the day - even if it is twisted and manipulated. Current politics has become a pretext for a recitation of PiS's catechism every day. (Oseka, 2018)

The filling of posts in the private media is, in principle, beyond the reach of political parties. In the case of this segment of the market, the main instrument of pressure is financial control and economic mechanisms. The position of commercial companies is determined by the income generated from their activity on the media market, such as sales of their products (e.g., the press), Radio and TV subscriptions, advertising, etc. The state can intervene in the development of companies by introducing regulations related to the level of various charges, ownership concentration, taxes on advertising revenue, etc. The media policy of the state can stimulate the dynamics and the direction in which the market develops; it can lead to its expansion. It can also restrict private owners by closing the possibilities of implementing development strategies, and by rewarding the obedient and punishing hostile or critically inclined entities. A good example is a penalty for coverage of the parliamentary crisis in December 2016 and the social protests accompanying it imposed on TVN in December 2017 and repealed in January 2018 by the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiTV). According to the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, imposing such a high financial penalty without providing a detailed public justification for the decision constituted a serious breach of freedom of speech.

As the examples of the countries belonging to the Democratic Corporatism and Polarized Pluralism Models show, high interventionism of the state in the media market, depending on the journalistic professionalism and the political culture of the ruling elites, can produce varying results. In Poland, commercial media have developed a certain political autonomy, but they are strongly instrumentalized in economic terms. This means that, in the political sphere, they behave in the interests of their owners, who distance themselves from political actors rather than strengthen their alliances, a good example of which is the 'Rywingate' corruption scandal in 2002.

A state instrument of pressure on the mass media are also the legal provisions concerning the control of media content. Some media researchers claim that it is a crucial tool, which has a direct influence on the media activities and the behavior of mass communicators, starting with journalists and publishers, through program creators to managers and owners. On the one hand, this instrument permits avoidance of certain issues, and on the other to punish those media representatives who defy censorship on illegal subjects, people, views, etc. The systems of political communication can be placed on an axis, depending on the scale, from a low to high degree of media content control. A high degree of control is characteristic for closed, authoritarian political regimes, in which the whole scope of the content is under the censorship's control. In open systems, for example in Western Europe, only those problems or topics are regulated which,

according to the legislators, endanger social welfare, national security, or offend religious feelings. These sometimes narrow regulations can expand. The scale of this instrument's use is also reflected in the ways in which media content is interfered with: are the institutions of political power themselves directly involved in the process, or do they appoint intermediate bodies for this purpose, such as courts or press, radio and television councils, etc.?

Polish legislation in the field of state control over media content, after accession to the European Union, was supposed to be adjusted to its standards. The issues of international regulations, as well as European standards in the field of 'soft law', although extremely important for the Polish media system, I leave out of the mainstream of my deliberations, all the more so because they have been thoroughly analyzed by competent authors such as Jakubowicz (2007c, 2008a, 2009, 2010) or Jaskiernia (2006, 2007, 2008, 2010). At the regulatory level, the Polish electronic media market does not differ substantially from other EU Member States, although it lags behind in the process of digitization and implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) (Głowacki, 2011a, b; Głowacki and Jaskiernia, 2017), which allows for the sad conclusion that the situation is worse than in Bulgaria, where, in 2008 the legislation was to 99.77 percent adjusted to EU laws (Ognyanova, 2009), and yet, for Poland, it is still problematic.

## **2.4 Logic of Polish parties in their relationship with the media**

In 2010, according to a TNS survey, 76 percent of Poles considered democracy to be the best form of governance. Despite changes, fluctuations, and instability on the political scene since 1996 (78 percent), this opinion has not changed. While the system itself is not questioned, Poles have developed different opinions about parties and politicians. The majority of Poles - 85 percent of the respondents - consider politicians to be hypocritical and concerned only about their own political careers (*O demracji...*, 2011). In addition, trust in the political class was, at the time, one of the lowest in Europe. How does this negative assessment translate into the perception of politicians by the third participant of the political communication — the media — what kind of relations have developed between these two strong links of the process?

Poland is a typical example of a majoritarian democracy. More than a hundred political parties have been created in the first period of transformation into democracy after 1989. The multi-party system in its present form consolidated at the turn of the century. In 2001, six parties entered the Sejm, and then re-entered it in the 2005 elections, in 2007 four of them crossed the election threshold. None of the formations after 1989 was able to rule independently. The negotiations

and the process of forming a government coalition were long and difficult. In the 2000s, the party system consolidated with four parties capable of exceeding the electoral threshold - two parties originating from the post-Solidarity opposition - Law and Justice party and Civic Platform - and two rooted in the previous regime - the Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish People's Party, out of which the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) became politically marginalized after losing the parliamentary elections in 2015. These four formations form the basis of the conducted analysis.

After the 2007 election, two parties emerged as the main actors in the political life of Poland — the conservative Law and Justice and the liberal Civic Platform, which due to their sharp conflict shaped the tone of the political discourse. The first one had its president in 2005–2010, and for two years a government, the second one - after 2007 - had a majority in the Sejm and a coalition government with the Polish People's Party, and after 2010, a president. After 2005, left-wing parties have become fragmented and do not enjoy public confidence, although a significant part of the electorate admits to left-wing sympathies. The misunderstandings between leaders and top-level politicians have prevented an integration of the left. As a result, in 2015, for the first time since the fall of communism, neither the Democratic Left Alliance nor any other left-wing party was able to enter the Sejm. The Polish People's Party - the fourth party in the Sejm after the 2007 elections - is small but willing to compromise, thanks to which it formed coalitions with numerous other parties, both on the right and on the left. The position of this party in the political system resembles that of the German FDP, which has a great coalition potential and is able to form coalitions with the most important formations on both sides of the political scene. The Polish People's Party succeeded in entering Parliament in the subsequent elections in 2011 and 2015, but it remains an open question as to whether it will be able to cross the election threshold in 2019.

In this context, the following questions need to be answered:

1. What was the place of the media in the logic of these four main political parties?
2. How did the leaders of these parties manage relations with the media?
3. What tools did they try to use to subordinate the media, and to what effect?

#### **2.4.1 Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość - PiS)**

The right side of the political scene is reserved for Law and Justice, a party established in 2001 by Jarosław and Lech Kaczyński, who were its undisputed leaders in the first ten years of its activity. After the death of President Lech Kaczyński

in a plane crash near Smolensk in 2010, Jarosław Kaczyński became the party's chairman. To this day, he remains the unchallenged, charismatic leader of Law and Justice, with no competition in his environment, surrounded by loyal co-workers. Such a situation is present in only one Polish party. They significantly influence the political communication process in the country and, consequently, also the nature of the media system.

Law and Justice is quite inconsistent in its program and ideological character. On the one hand, the party very strongly emphasizes the neo-conservative and Christian system of values. On the other hand, the principles of social security, social solidarity, and interventionism in the conditions of a market economy, which it proclaims, bring it closer to the political left. The party was founded before the parliamentary elections in 2001 by activists from post-opposition, Solidarity-based circles, concentrated around Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS), and earlier in the Center Agreement (PC), and other small organizations (SKL, ZChN, and the ROP). Until 2005, the group was in opposition to the ruling left. After two years of governance (2005–2007), it once again moved to the parliamentary opposition, becoming the most serious rival of Civic Platform, which governed for eight years (2007–2015).

From 2005 to 2007, Law and Justice ruled in coalition with the League of Polish Families and the Self-Defence parties. Although president Lech Kaczyński (elected in 2005) supported the cabinets of, first Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, and then Jarosław Kaczyński, the formation was unable to create a parliamentary majority and to ensure itself a smooth governance. Such a majority was gained after eight years in opposition when the party won the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2015.

The relationship of Law and Justice with the media were affected by the uncompromising personality of party leader Jarosław Kaczyński, who very crudely divided the media into either friendly or hostile to him and the party. No other political formation after 1989, neither the ruling party nor the opposition, has had such a marked relationship with the media. After the lost election in 2007, Jarosław Kaczyński expressed the view that Law and Justice suffered an electoral defeat because it was unable to break 'the old media pact', which together with special forces, severely attacked his party. In the chairman's opinion, this pact was created by most private electronic media and a considerable number of press titles. It is the only political formation which has entered into such a sharp and destructive conflict with the media, and which is responsible for the destruction of public radio and television.

The friendly media which strongly support Law and Justice include those connected to Father Tadeusz Rydzyk – Radio Maryja, TV Trwam, and *Nasz*

*Dziennik*, as well as the weekly *Gazeta Polska* (see Picture 2.5) and to a lesser extent *Do Rzeczy*. The national daily newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* also used to be in this group after Paweł Lisiecki, a supporter of the formation, took over the post of editor-in-chief in 2006; this lasted until 2012, when the structure of ownership of *Rzeczpospolita* changed. Public media also supported Law and Justice in the period between January 2006 and August 2010. After a six-year break, in 2016, Law and Justice regained control over TVP S.A. and Polish Radio after a complete replacement of the National Broadcasting Council members, and the establishment of the National Media Council (RMN), as referred to above.

Law and Justice considers radio stations belonging to the TVN Group, Radio Zet, and Radio RMF FM, as well as daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* and left-wing weekly magazines such as *Polityka* (see Picture 2.6) to be hostile, unfavorable or often critical. Let us take a closer look at these relationships.

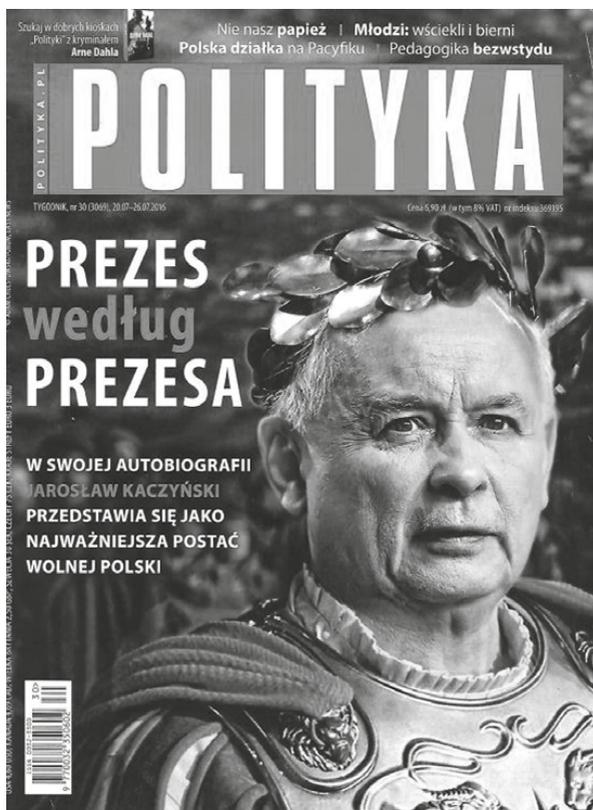
After gaining power in autumn 2005, Law and Justice behaved exactly like all previous groups, i.e., it started the colonization of public institutions, including public television and radio. It was no coincidence that the media law was the first passed in the newly elected Sejm and signed by the new president by an urgent resolution. Thus, the Law and Justice party secured control over the institution regulating the broadcasting media market - the National Broadcasting Council - and, by filling positions, over the public media. The chairmen of the National Broadcasting Council, TVP (Bronisław Wildstein and later Andrzej Urbański) and Polish Radio guaranteed this state. The instrumentalization of public media was concluded while observing legal means. The daily *Rzeczpospolita* found itself in a similar situation to TVP and PR. In September 2006, Jarosław Kaczyński's government used the changes in ownership in the Presspublica joint venture, in which the State Treasury has 49 percent of shares, to appoint Paweł Lisiecki, a journalist favoring Law and Justice, as the editor-in-chief and the chairman of the supervisory board. The journalist expressed his political affinity by leaving the newspaper in 2005 after Bronisław Wildstein had been removed for publishing a so-called of 'Wildstein's list' (a list of collaborators with the secret service in the communist period). The content analysis shows that after the change in the post of editor-in-chief, the program line has been somewhat modified, and the newspaper began to show more favor toward Law and Justice than other political formations (Świdorska, 2009:77–87). Thus, the political instrumentalization of TVP, PR, and *Rzeczpospolita* became a fact, and unlike in the case of the media of Father Rydzyk, Law and Justice did not have to seek the approval of these media actively. As the governing group, which therefore exercises supervision over state-owned companies, it secured this approval by using the available legal

means, thus, in this case, we can speak of the development of asymmetrical relations of the type: strong authorities equal a weak media.



Picture 2.5: *Pro-PiS weekly magazine Gazeta Polska – ‘Three cadencies to change Poland’*  
 Source: Weekly magazine *Gazeta Polska*, 3/01/2018.

The relationships with the media controlled by Father Rydzyk are more complex. On the one hand, there is a convergence between the values represented by Law and Justice and the program line of Radio Maryja, TV Trwam, and daily newspaper *Nasz Dziennik*. They agree on national, Catholic, and moral ideas as well as on the issues of abortion, the death penalty, sexual minorities, approach toward Germany, Russia, and the United States. They are united in the critique of the liberal model of a democratic state (a liberal state versus a Solidarity state). On the other hand, unlike public media, which are structurally subordinate, the Toruń environment, held by Father Rydzyk's firm hand, is autonomous in



Picture 2.6: Anti-PiS weekly magazine *Polityka* - 'The leader according to the leader. In his autobiography Kaczyński presents himself as the most important personality in a free Poland'

Source: Weekly magazine *Polityka*, no 30/2016.

relation to the party of Jarosław Kaczyński. In fact, it is the party leaders and politicians who are more concerned about good relations and who seek Father Rydzyk's approval, than the other way round. This is mainly caused by the fact that a conservative, loyal and disciplined electorate is attached to Radio Maryja. Father Rydzyk's support is therefore very valuable for Law and Justice and it should be seen as an element of political strategy and treated as a communication symbiosis. A spectacular expression of the concern to satisfy mutual interests was the exclusive broadcasting rights awarded to Radio Maryja and TV Trwam to report on the course of talks between the Law and Justice party, the

League of Polish Families, and the Self-Defense Party regarding the signing of the Stability Pact and the press conference which took place immediately after this event on February 2, 2006. The journalists representing the remaining media were denied access to the conference room. They were invited to the conference that took place afterward and attended it with the exception of public TVP; which boycotted it as a protest. This event had a significant influence on the analysis of media and political relations in Poland, as it was the first time since 1989 that the ruling parties have openly divided the media into the trustworthy and the remaining, better and worse, and blocked equal access to information, thus violating one of the fundamental principles of democracy. An analysis of the interrelations between Law and Justice and Father Rydzyk's consortium allows us to advance a thesis of asymmetrical relations of the type: strong media (because, although niche, they are politically autonomous) — weak authorities (a party seeking support, acting as a petitioner rather than a supervisor). This type of friendly relationship was visibly reinforced after Law and Justice won the 2015 elections. In spite of a much lower market share, the media managed by Father Rydzyk became one of the leading channels of distribution of the most important information that the party and its leader wanted to share with their supporters and, thus, with potential voters.

Since 1989, Law and Justice has been the first and, to date, the only political formation to enter a fierce dispute with the media unfavorable to it. Many politicians and many political parties have operated in hostile media environments, but none of them chose to enter into such an open and spectacular conflict. Lech Kaczyński was not a media personality. His brother Jarosław, on the contrary, is a good rally speaker, but performs worse when confronted with an interlocutor — a political opponent or a journalist — live, in front of the cameras. Both brothers performed rather badly in their contacts with the media and journalists who asked awkward and penetrating questions, especially when they touched upon difficult or controversial matters. In their relations with interlocutors representing different positions, they often lost patience, became nervous, used emotional vocabulary and sometimes verbal aggression. The violent reaction of Jarosław Kaczyński to the speech in the Sejm from an opposition member of Civic Platform- Borys Budka, on the night of July 19, 2017, was significant in this respect:

As long as the late Lech Kaczyński was alive, you did not dare to raise your hand to justice. (*Nie wycierajcie...*, 2017)

The chairman of Law and Justice, Jarosław Kaczyński, reacted to his words by saying:

I do apologize Mr Speaker, but I will speak off-procedure. I know you are afraid of the truth, but do not wipe out your treacherous mugs with the name of my late brother, you destroyed him, you murdered him, you are scumbags. (*Nie wycierajcie...*, 2017)

The logic of commercial media, as has already been mentioned, is guided primarily by the desire for profit, i.e., attracting the widest possible audience. This can be achieved by offering an attractive media product, also in the information field. Such media are characterized by negativity of political actors; they display conflict, quarrels, sensations, spectacular events, and curiosities. This mechanism worked also in the media coverage of Law and Justice, as will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Because the relationships with private television and radio stations are in their nature more independent and more difficult to tame, Jarosław and Lech Kaczyński never succeeded in arranging them, and after the lost 2007 parliamentary election, they acquired features of an acute conflict, especially with the TVN station. In the middle of 2008, the Political Committee of the party decided that Law and Justice politicians would not participate in TVN and TVN24 news programs. Jarosław Kaczyński justified this decision with a lack of objectivity of the journalists employed by these media and accused them of acting against Law and Justice and its politicians:

We are not going to the headquarters of TVN, the reason is clear: all the rules of journalistic decency are being violated there. At the same time, Polish public life is being spoiled by allowing for an escalation of rudeness on the part of the Civic Platform, but also of the Democratic Left Alliance, and less frequently of the Polish People's Party (...). Recently on the TVN station, we could find out that we are 'gutter louses'. It was the voice of one of the viewers of the famous 'Szkło kontaktowe'. The reaction of the hosts was limited, to the highest degree. We cannot indulge such things, because it does not so much threaten PiS, but harms Poland (...). It is a completely conscious pestering of the people – I speak of the journalists and owners of TVN, who know that there would be no place for them in a different Poland. They could not be powerful billionaires (*Kaczyński: TVN i TVN24 sprowadzają...*, 2008)

After a temporary quietening down of the conflict in the middle of 2009 and suspending prohibition of contacts with TVN and TVN24 journalists, a new wave of hostility arose. This time, the reason for the conflict was the broadcasting of materials recorded with a hidden camera from the closed session of the Congress of the Party in the TVN program - 'Teraz My!' The matter was taken up by the spokesman of the party to the Media Ethics Councils. The issue of the ethics of TVN journalists is still topical, as is the reason why the party's Congress was closed to the media. One might wonder whether such a situation could occur in the Liberal or Democratic Corporatism Models, whether the British BBC or the German ARD would go to such lengths or whether the

Conservative Party or CDU/CSU would close the doors of the congress hall to journalists. Moreover, Lech Kaczyński had trouble with the media, very often resulting from slips. When the President addressed a co-worker at a press conference in Brussels referring to the TVN24 journalist Inga Rosińska, it quickly reached Poland:

One more question, but not from the ape in red! (Niklewicz and Pawlicki, 2006)

It became a news item, present in the media agenda for several subsequent weeks, analyzed and made fun of by commentators in the media and by the online community. Politicians in a democratic world are used to the media chasing their lapses, slips, outbursts of emotion, or slips of the tongue, which, although look innocent, can prove to be very politically costly (Thompson, 2001:141–149). Above all, they harm the visibility of the politicians on the domestic and international scale. This applies to both Law and Justice leaders, for instance in the context of their response to the US television network announcing that the prime minister of Poland has no bank account, and a provocative article published in the Berlin daily newspaper *Die Tageszeitung* (TAZ) in June 2006, which described the governments of the Kaczyński brothers in a satirical way<sup>4</sup>. Party consultants and public relations specialists tried to improve this image of Jarosław Kaczyński, perceived negatively mainly among the younger and better-educated part of Polish society. They sent signals to the media that the Chairman of the party has opened a bank account, uses the internet when buying CDs and books, and plans to buy a mobile phone. These incidents and the nervous reactions of Law and Justice leaders to media reports often showed a lack of understanding of the mechanisms governing political communication and the role of the media in a democracy.

In relations between Law and Justice and the media, two opposite models emerged, as described by Blumler and Gurevitch. On the one hand, it is the adversary model which develops in contact with private, more independent, and critical media, but which often replaces the control function of the media, and reliable information with sensations and slips of those in power. On the other hand, it is the model of exchange with all the shortcomings pointed out by the researchers - with the politically instrumentalized public media, as well as the media community gathered around Father Rydzyk, with which the relationships

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4 The reaction of right-wing Polish politicians led to tensions in Polish-German relations. The case was referred to the prosecutor's office in Warsaw and an investigation was initiated, which was discontinued after several months due to lack of sufficient evidence of the journalists' guilt.

are based on a transactional arrangement, and with opinion-friendly Law and Justice weekly magazines, such as *Gazeta Polska* or *W Sieci/Sieci*.

#### **2.4.2 Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska – PO)**

Civic Platform was established before the parliamentary elections in 2001, at the same time as Law and Justice. Both parties have radically changed the character of the Polish party system overshadowing the formations rooted in the previous regime. The liberal Civic Platform locates itself in the center of the political scene. Its members include representatives of the liberal wing of the Solidarity Electoral Action and members of the Union of Liberty (UW), thus, we can speak of post-Solidarity roots of the party. Referring to the typology of Sobolewska-Myslik (2004:51), this formation, like Law and Justice, belongs to the second group, i.e., ‘the new parties’, created by former anti-communist opposition activists and people involved in the democratic transformations. Three ambitious politicians – Andrzej Olechowski, Maciej Płażyński, and Donald Tusk, founded the party. It seemed that the last founder had the weakest position. However, it did not take him long to beat his competitors, and in 2003 became the leader of Civic Platform. Donald Tusk had a major impact on the position of the party in the Polish political system, the direction of state policy and Poland’s place in the international context. Tusk was a member of the Polish Parliament as an MP and as a senator since the first fully free parliamentary election in 1991 until taking the office of the President of the European Council in 2014. He was Deputy Marshal of the Senate (1997–2001) and Sejm (2001–2005). He held the office of Prime Minister for the longest time in the history of democratic Poland (2007–2014). Similarly to Law and Justice, the Kaczyński brothers and later only Jarosław Kaczyński, Tusk’s personality has defined the character and the position of PO in the party system. His departure from domestic to European politics has triggered the process of decline in support for the party, which, in consequence, led to limiting its role to an opposition party after the 2015 elections.

Party leaders of the ruling formations are naturally more exposed and highlighted in the media agenda. However, the contacts of the leaders and top-shelf politicians of Civic Platform with journalists during the party’s term of office (2007–2015), and after the lost elections in 2015 were not and still are not as spectacular as in the case of Law and Justice. An analysis of Tusk’s and leading Civic Platform politicians’ relations with the media does not leave the impression that the party had a precise and thought-through media strategy. These relations seem rather the result of daily practices and coincidental behaviors. The fundamental difference in comparison to Law and Justice lies

in the differences in personalities and tempers of the politicians. They are not afraid of journalists, they will meet with them and give interviews, and they do not accuse the media of malpractice and conspiracies, and even play football matches with them. The media logic responds to this, and it translates into a more friendly tone of publicity for the party, especially in journalistic circles conflicted with Law and Justice. It needs to be remembered that during the 2005 election campaign a new system emerged, which was strengthened later in the 2007, 2011, and 2015 campaigns. It divided the media according to their political affinities and dislikes. The media criticized by Law and Justice, and seen as hostile, such as TVN, national private radio stations, daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, some opinion weeklies, such as the leftist *Polityka*, but also the Catholic but liberal *Tygodnik Powszechny* have drawn closer to Civic Platform. Perhaps they did not give Civic Platform clear and open support, but in confrontation with the negative and often aggressive tone of the reports concerning Law and Justice, the reader could interpret the publicity given to other parties as an expression of sympathy for Civic Platform. In addition, many media, due to the weakness and disintegration of the left wing, saw no alternative. Hence, the negativity toward Law and Justice worked in favor of its main opponent - Civic Platform. This party could not count on such a response from Radio Maryja, TV Trwam, the Catholic and conservative press, and the public media during the period when they were under the control of Law and Justice. The relationship between the Platform, TVP, and Polish Radio is particularly interesting. It was the first and the only ruling formation since 1989, which, in the period between 2007 and 2010, was unable to colonize these public institutions. The Radio and Television Broadcasting Act passed upon the initiative of Law and Justice in December 2005, has deprived Civic Platform of some legal instruments allowing an active staffing policy in media companies, and the attempts to introduce legislative changes undertaken by the Civic Platform after 2007 were unsuccessful. It was not until Bronisław Komorowski was elected president that this party was given a chance to change the state of affairs, which it took advantage of.

After the 2011 election, the leftist weekly *Polityka* wrote:

This has never happened before: we can have a government practically without opposition. The opposition is in a state of disarray and is not yet a real force (Janicki and Władyka, 2011)

The departure of Donald Tusk to Brussels and the takeover of leader by Grzegorz Schetyna soon caused a drop in the polls. Moreover, the lack of strong leadership has been negatively reflected in the media perception of the party. After the

change of leadership and the 2015 election, the party's position on the political scene is systematically weakened, which is confirmed by the public polls.

### **2.4.3 The Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej–SLD)**

The Democratic Left Alliance, registered in 1999, represents the left of the political scene. It was established on the foundation of the post-communist Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (SdRP) and a coalition of left-wing parties. This type of party had a much stronger organizational members and election base compared to the post-opposition formations (Sobolewska-Mysłik, 2004:51). In consequence, the Democratic Left Alliance was characterized by a much higher level of institutionalization, understood as the ability to build and maintain more steady and established structures (Antoszewski, 2004:199) than Civic Platform or Law and Justice. In the 1990s, the left could not count on the sympathy of most media. As the heir of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), it was attacked by a considerable part of the media, as well as countrywide public and private radio and television stations. A few press titles stood on the party's side, such as a daily newspaper *Trybuna*, and *Przegląd*, conditionally, more ideological than political support was provided by the left-wing *Polityka*. What is interesting, in this overwhelmingly negative media coverage and aversion of the media toward the left wing, Aleksander Kwaśniewski won the election. His presidency, which enjoyed great public support, as well as his communication skills, significantly changed the attitude of some media toward the President and the Democratic Left Alliance. In this respect, it is interesting to note the evolution of the post-Solidarity daily *Gazeta Wyborcza's* program line, which from a definitely hostile medium has changed into a medium supporting the left and Kwaśniewski.

Some personnel changes in the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiTV) and public media took place during President Kwaśniewski's first term of office, which gradually allowed the left to take control over the state-owned TVP and Polish Radio. The presidential election in 2000 and the parliamentary election in 2001 took place in a more the Democratic Left Alliance -friendly environment. As the ruling party in the years 2001–2005, with the support of the president (1995–2005), this party oversaw the media market, filled the positions in the National Broadcasting Council, and controlled public radio and television using a consistent staffing policy in media companies. This way it upheld the tradition of politicization and instrumentalization of public media, characteristic for each ruling formation after 1989. However, it acted more subtly compared to Law and Justice, which took over in 2005, and thereafter in 2016. Under left-wing

rule, public media faced a new challenge - the competition from commercial media. In the case of the radio market, the battle for the listener was quickly lost, and in the case of the television market, TVP faced TV Polsat and TVN. Kwiatkowski, supported by the Democratic Left Alliance, managed public television for six years. Such a long appointment in this post was unprecedented, moreover, Kwiatkowski turned out to be an efficient manager. He maintained the highest ratings and advertising revenue, making TVP one of the strongest public TV stations in Europe. However, he did so at the expense of the public service broadcaster's mission and was responsible for the commercialization and tabloidization of the medium, as well as for low standards and quality of content. Under left-wing rule, political instrumentalization coincided with the economic.

The shape of the new line of division of political sympathies of the media in the mid-2000s was largely influenced by the dramatic disintegration of the left and a decline in support for this formation. After the 2005 election, this formation lost its leading position on the political scene and thus, as a second-rate player it lost its media appeal. An analysis of the content of leading media in Poland shows that the news connected with this party had a lower status in the media agenda. They were awarded less space and were less exposed, and the coverage was always negative in tone. The media decidedly hostile toward Democratic Left Alliance, which focus on the negative attributes, such as scandals, corruption, interparty conflicts, etc. include: the daily newspaper *Dziennik Polska Europa Świat* (2006–2009) (throughout the whole period of its publication) (Zarzycki, 2009), the weekly magazine *Wprost* (Dutkiewicz, 2007), and ideological media such as Radio Maryja, TV Trwam, the conservative Catholic and national press. One of the intransigent critics of the Democratic Left Alliance government was the main radio station RMF FM (2001–2005). Radio Zet, and the main commercial television stations - TVN, and TV Polsat- treated the left less roughly. An analysis of content performed by Świdarska (2009:77–80) during the parliamentary campaign in 2007 has shown that, in contrast to the anti-left *Rzeczpospolita*, *Gazeta Wyborcza* has refrained from an open critique of the Democratic Left Alliance and its leaders.

In the decade when the left had its president (1995–2005) and government (2001–2005), it was the main actor on the political scene and the main object of media coverage. In the media agenda, it was moved to a secondary position after the 2005 election, when post-opposition parties (Law and Justice and Civic Platform) seized power. Despite a large percentage of citizens with left-wing convictions, the Democratic Left Alliance suffered a devastating defeat in 2015. It did not enter the Sejm for the first time since 1989. On the Polish political scene it remains in the background, there is no interest in it on the part of the

Polish media, and a return to real politics in the next elections seems difficult, although not impossible.

#### 2.4.4 The Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe -PSL)

The Polish People's Party, founded in 1990, is a historical formation with roots dating back to the 19th century (Sobolewska-Mysłik, 2004:51), which was able to survive the period of the communist time. On the one hand, like the Democratic Left Alliance, this party is characterized by a high level of institutionalization, and on the other hand, a distinctive feature is the problem of the electoral threshold. Despite dramatically decreasing support, it managed to stay on the political scene for thirty years. The Polish People's Party has shown great coalition potential, and thanks to that it is able to tip the scales in politics. It formed a government with the left-wing twice (1993–1997, 2001–2003), and from 2007 to 2015 it was Civic Platform's coalition partner. Its politicians were appointed as Marshalls and Vice-Marshalls of the Sejm and Senate. After leaving the coalition with the Democratic Left Alliance in 2003, the party evolved toward the right, emphasizing its conservative values, commitment to religion, agrarianism, disapproval of abortion, euthanasia, and the death penalty. In terms of its manifesto, this brings it closer to Law and Justice. During the communist period, the party had its own newspapers, which it lost in the 1990s. The secondary position of the group in the party system means that the media are not particularly interested in broadcasting issues related to it. In 2005, only 6.7 percent of all news items on parties in the election campaign in the three TV news bulletins: TVN 'Fakty', TVP1 'Wiadomości' and TV Polsat 'Wydarzenia' concerned this party (Łódzki, 2008:149).

During the parliamentary campaign in 2007, daily newspapers *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* published practically no information about the formation (Świdzka, 2009:70–80). Low media interest in the Polish People's Party was also visible in the election campaigns in 2011 and 2015. The media covered the party in the least emotional way compared to the Law and Justice party, the Civic Platform or the Democratic Left Alliance. This does not mean that a positive tone of information prevailed. The members of the this party appeared in media reports in the context of corruption, nepotism, cronyism, clientelism, business deals of party leaders, and, following 2007, as a participant of coalition negotiations and a member of the government coalition. In this context, the circle of Father Rydzyk's media deserves particular attention. During the political campaign in 2007, TV Trwam distributed relatively little news about the PSL, yet, the positive or neutral tone of the broadcast was surprising. In comparison

with the negative image of Civic Platform and the Democratic Left Alliance, this seemed unexpected. This attitude of TV Trwam toward the Polish People's Party can be interpreted as the result of the party strategy of avoiding conflict with other parties, and, primarily, with Law and Justice.

The position on the margins of the main line of conflict and the low results in public opinion polls, as well as the lack of vivid media personalities, contributed to the lack of media interest. Waldemar Pawlak was not the best of speakers and did not perform well in front of cameras. He often let the journalists sense his less than favorable attitude toward them, for instance, the famous 'shoo' directed to pushy journalists (*Przyjacielskie "sio" b. premiera*, 2005).

Out of four relevant political parties able to cross the election threshold, only in a case of the relations between the Polish People's Party and the media, there are not clearly friendly or hostile media. At most, in the case of Radio Maryja and TV Trwam, can one talk about tolerating but not agitating the media. When these media report on this party neither intense hostility nor familiarity is present, we can at best speak of neutrality, which is not synonymous with lack of criticism. The new leader, Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, chosen in 2015, despite his young age, has experience in the Sejm and as a minister; however, like his predecessor, he is not a politician with media talent, he similarly is not able to construct the image of an efficient party leader. The Polish People's Party's result under his leadership, in the next elections in 2019 is difficult to foresee. However, it is highly probable that the party might go the same the way of the Democratic Left Alliance and leave the main political scene.

### **Summary: Does media logic dominate over political parallelism?**

The aim of this chapter was to answer the question whether political parallelism has developed in Poland and whether in the relations between political parties and the mass media we can observe similar mechanisms as those described by Hallin and Mancini in the context of Polarized Pluralism Model. Thirty years is still too short a period to conclude that certain regularities have developed or to speak of permanent systemic features. Party systems in mature democracies needed centuries to evolve. The same goes for permanent consecutive features of media systems, like those in Great Britain or other Western European countries, splits of which were already developing in the 19th century. Political parallelism is the result of the interactions between these two systems — politics and the media. Each of them evolves and changes but does not happen suddenly, over months or even years. However, three decades is a period long enough to

gather sufficient empirical material allowing us to capture some tendencies and directions of transformations.

After the first dynamic period, following the fall of the communist system, which included the primary stage and the transition to democracy at the beginning of the 2000s, Poland entered the consolidation of democracy. In this phase, a steady party system with two main post-Solidarity parties with strong leaders, i.e., Civic Platform and Law and Justice emerged. However, the departure of Donald Tusk to Brussels in 2014 weakened the Civic Platform. The Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish People's Party, two parties rooted in the old regime, have survived, but their position has considerably changed. After twenty-five years, the Democratic Left Alliance fell out of the mainstream and was unable to enter the Sejm. The Polish People's Party barely surpassed the election threshold. Two new formations appeared on the scene just before the 2015 election, the right-wing, populist committee Kukiz'15, which reached 8.81 percent of votes and the liberal *Nowoczesna* with 7.6 percent of votes joined took its place in the Sejm. Both formations are poorly organized and have a labile electorate, they can, therefore, prove to be actors for one political season. The next elections will show whether they will be able to maintain their position on the political scene.

Political parallelism is a mirror in which the party system is reflected. It has several dimensions which allow the researcher to determine whether it is present in a particular media system or not, and if so, then at what level. These dimensions include political bias, the degree of media politicization, the level of integration of media employees and political elites, as well as the dominating model of relationship between political actors and the mass media. In order to diagnose the presence of parallelism, it is necessary to confirm the presence of all its determinants. This analysis showed that all political groups ruling after 1989 followed party logic and sought to colonize the media. However, the development of commercial media with their strongly articulate media logic has proven to be an obstacle. Political instrumentalization limited itself to the media owned or co-owned by the state, i.e., public radio and television, and also affected the journal *Rzeczpospolita* (2006–2011).

Political parallelism has its roots in a steady party system, where parties are strong and can count on a loyal electorate and faithful media to not change their preferences from election to election. Polish political parties have a short history, during which no close relations and interdependencies based on intimacy and friendship of politicians and media owners have emerged, as in the case of some British, Spanish, or Greek newspapers, not to mention Italy and Berlusconi's Mediaset. In the countries included by Hallin and Mancini into the Polarized Pluralism Model, the consolidation of the party system, and the anchoring of

the party in society is higher, but also the private media do not change their preferences from election to election, and public media support the formation which is in power and which controls them.

The Polish media vary greatly in their relations with political actors. Some of them are unstable in their sympathies and economically and politically instrumentalized. In the past, they awarded conditional and cyclical support to parties whose existence was sometimes shorter than the presence of the media themselves on the market. The national commercial media have developed political autonomy, but have not managed to escape the economic pressure of owners and advertisers. The market model has pushed the model of the public sphere out, and media logic dominates this section. Public media have shown weakness and lost their fight for independence, which is also the result of low professional ethics of the journalists employed there, who quite often, on their own initiative, have involved themselves in post-election purges, eliminating their colleagues, who favored formations which were unsuccessful in the elections. This process has gained particular dimension after 2016. Bias is obvious in Polish journalistic culture, and it does not raise objections among the representatives of the profession, who very often turn their political engagement into an advantage. We observe a similar attitude among the political elites, for whom controlling the media, above all public broadcasting, is nothing reprehensible, but rather an obvious privilege of the winner. After the fall of communism in 1989, political parallelism with all its features and properties present in Southern Europe, e.g., Italy, Spain, or Greece, did not develop in Poland. The media are biased, but there are no other indicators of political parallelism, or they are very poorly developed. In this context, it is probably much better to talk, on the one hand, about the instrumentalization of public media by political actors, which results in their politicization; on the other hand, about the relative political parallelism of private media, limited by media logic, which leads to commercialization and tabloidization. These issues will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Perhaps we should agree with Mancini, who claims that politically neutral media are outdated. Technology fosters fragmentation, which stimulates the development of engaged journalism, which is closer to political parties (*Polska śródziemnomorska*, 2011:21). In this context, changes and developmental tendencies of the Polish media system are not extraordinary and should not surprise us. What should be added is the role of social media, which are developing dynamically. They play an increasingly important part in political communication, limiting the scope and importance of classic media.

### 3 Mediatization and politics coverage in media

Our considerations should be opened by an explanation of the two key categories shaping the importance of the media in the political process – mediatization of politics and media coverage. They form the broad context for the issue of political bias defined and analyzed in the previous chapter. The process of mediatization of politics leads to media coverage which is constructed in a certain way, and it reflects the degree of political bias of the medium – high, medium, low, or a lack thereof. Therefore, it can be said that the coverage of politics is a practical expression of the political entrenchment of the media. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of media content allows for the empirical verification of the presence of bias, as well as the determination of its scale (see: Fig. 3.1).

Thus, these three concepts: the mediatization of politics, the coverage of politics, and the bias of the media or its lack thereof, are inextricably linked in the context of the participation of the media in politics.

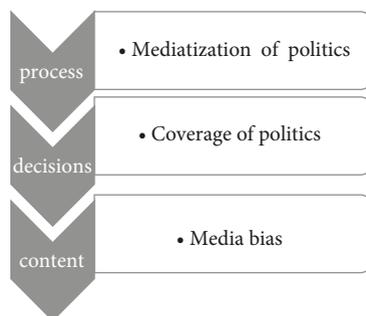


Fig. 3.1: *Consequences of mediatization of politics*  
Source: Author.

#### 3.1 Mediatization and its consequences for news media coverage

##### 3.1.1 The concept and dimensions of mediatization of politics

Mediation and mediatization have become useful concepts in media research in the last fifty years. However, as Strömbäck (2008:228) points out, they are more often used than defined. Michalczyk (2009:19–23) is one of the first Polish authors, to devote more attention to this issue. The author attempted to solve

a terminological disagreement. From the notion of mediation, he derives the category of medialization, assuming the arguments of theorists from the critical current of mass communication science, the critical, socio-cultural and semiological traditions (Dobek-Ostrowska: 2007:50–58). Michalczyk considers it more appropriate for the media mediation process (Schulz, 2004:90–94). In the same research stream, mediatization is interpreted as a social metaprocess and treated as a development of medialization. On the ground of the critical paradigm in the mass communication theory, medialization and mediatization are synonyms describing the process of mediation of reality which has social consequences (Michalczyk: 2009:32; Piontek, 2009a:167).

However, the notion of mediatization of politics has emerged also in political communication studies (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999). It is the result of the development of the media (Piontek, 2011:47), and has gained a deeper significance (Couldry, 2008:376–380). It needs to be precisely distinguished from the mediatization of society understood as medialization because mediatization of politics constitutes only a fraction of this broad process (Lilleker, 2006:119).

Politicians, regardless of the degree of the maturity of democracy, are interested in the way the media write and speak about them and their political opponents. Depending on the legal norms, tradition, political culture, and journalistic professionalism, with the help of available instruments, political actors attempt to influence media content, in order to manage their own image and disparage their adversaries. Here, two aspects of political influence need to be clearly identified and separated. Firstly, it is about the subject of influence, i.e., who influences and how they influence the media and its content. Secondly, it is about the object of media influence and their content, i.e., who is affected and how (Asp, 1986). One of the crucial concepts explaining the influence of the media on politics is mediatization, introduced by Asp (1986) and defined by Mazzoleni (2008) as the expansion of the media influences all spheres of social life. In contrast to the mediation of politics, mediatization of politics can be understood twofold. Firstly, through the creation and control of news concerning politics, which is reflected in journalistic visibility. Secondly, through the influence, this content has an influence on the opinions and attitudes of the audience, which, in consequence, can lead to certain electoral behaviors, compatible with political sympathies or dislikes of these media (Strömbäck and Esser, 2009).

According to Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999:249), the mediatization of politics occurs where politics loses its autonomy; it becomes the central function of the media and is the result of constant interactions with it. It is expressed in the high selectivity of events and a certain setting of the issues agenda, as well as in a particular construction of the public sphere, in which opinions and

information selected and imposed by the media circulate. The political discourse is governed by the logic of commercial media based on the spectacularization of political communication. It adapts the language of the commercial media, which describes the views of political actors and communication techniques used by them. Mediatization of politics utilizes public opinion polls, marketing strategies, proactive information management, spin doctoring, etc. Within it, journalists do not restrict themselves to traditional watchdog functions, but by forwarding their biased opinions and views to the audience, they actively create and stimulate the political process.

Strömbäck (2008b) distinguishes four stages in the development of mediatization of politics in Western democratic countries after the Second World War. In the first phase, the media become a channel of communication between political institutions, such as parties, state apparatus, and interest groups. This period clearly corresponds to mediation or - as others prefer - medialization, i.e., mediation of politics through the media. Politicians are not yet aware of the possibilities offered by the media in political communication, and they are only now discovering them. In the second stage, the media become semi-independent from political actors and government institutions. More and more often, they construct news in different formats, apply various practices and are guided by their own norms and values. They begin to be governed by their own logic, and not the logic of the party. In the third phase, the media become the main channel of political communication and their independence is growing significantly. Media logic moves to the foreground and political and social actors begin to adopt it in their actions. The politicians learn media mechanisms and adapt their appearance and behavior to fit them. In the fourth phase, political actors already understand how important media logic is for them; they not only adopt it but also internalize its values, which results in the colonization of politics by the media. In this concept, introduced and developed by Meyer (2002:56–58), the colonization by the media system clearly strengthens the agenda of political institutions responsible for public relations activities and stimulates the development of political consulting and media relations personnel.

Strömbäck's concept was created a decade ago, and it should be complemented by another, fifth phase of the development of mediatization of politics, which is connected with the arrival of social media in the field, particularly Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube. They have revolutionized political communication and have lead it into a new era. This process first took place during Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2008 and continued in the subsequent American election campaigns in 2012 and 2016. This makes one consider the extent of the traditional forms of communication between political actors, journalists, voters,

and their significance. It also makes one wonder whether Twitter has not made journalists following the candidates in buses throughout the country obsolete (*'Twitter Kills the Boys in the Bus'*) (Hamby, 2017:24). As the first analyses based on empirical research show (Davis, Holtz-Bacha and Just, 2017), the process by which social media gain significance in the mediatization of politics is very dynamic. The same phenomenon is visible also in Poland.

Going back to our reflections on terminology, in the context of Asp's (1986) conception the levels of influence, we can assume that mediatization will refer to the first level, i.e., the subject of influence on the media and their content, which means who performs the action and how. Thus, the concept of mediatization refers to the enormous and ever-growing influence of the media on the shaping of information on politics (Asp, 1986; Hjarvard, 2004; Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999; Strömbäck et al., 2011; Strömbäck and Esser, 2009). In this case, it is not only about the perception of the media as a technology, organizations, or formats, but, first of all, as institutions actively participating in the process of political communication (Cook, 2005).

Mediatization of politics is a multifaceted concept, which Strömbäck (2008b:235) illustrates with four vectors showing the directions in which the process develops:

- the most important source of information: experience and interpersonal communication vs. the media;
- the degree of media autonomy from political institutions: dependence of the media vs. autonomy;
- the creation of media content mainly through: political (party) logic vs. media logic;
- political actors are mainly guided by political (party) logic vs. media logic.

The first dimension are the sources of information and the ways of acquiring them. An analysis of journalistic sources allows us to determine where they come from, which are more important for the medium and who is behind them, as well as who is interested in making them available to the public. The analysis of the number and origin of the sources allows us to take a closer look at the relationships between politicians and journalists. The research by Nord and Strömbäck (2006:160) shows that for some press titles, politicians constituted the main sources of 65 to 77 percent of all published journalistic materials on politics.

The second factor of mediatization is the autonomy of the medium from political institutions (e.g., political parties) or social ones (e.g., the Church). This relationship can take on various forms, as discussed in the second chapter: e.g.,

formal (open), when the political or social actor owns the medium; informal, when the medium is not institutionally or structurally tied to any social or political formation, but supports it (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995; Cook, 2005).

The third factor refers to the media content: how it manifests itself, how it divides media logic and logic of political actors, whether the media subordinate to political parties and express their interests (domination of party logic), is the medium guided by its own needs and whether it follows its own editorial line (domination of media logic) (Mazzoleni, 1987). Media logic is expressed in the promotion of interpretation style and media comment. More than 40 percent of news in the Swedish media is classified in this category, with an increase of around 10 percent between 1998 and 2002 (Nord and Strömbäck, 2006:160).

The fourth dimension shifts its focus to political institutions and politicians, and to the way they put media logic into practice, as well as to the way party logic gets subdued in the process. This dimension also focuses on the degree to which party strategies and behaviors are a reflection of media logic and whether they are the result of an attempt to become an attractive object of media coverage.

### **3.1.2 The indicators of mediatization of politics**

Is it possible to determine the level of mediatization of politics? Empirical researchers, among them Strömbäck et al. (2011:163–164), propose four quantitative indicators to measure it.

The first is the number and the length of the published ink-bites and the broadcast sound-bites (Esser, 2008; Hallin, 1992). A particular role is played by television, which is still the fundamental and crucial channel of political communication, although its importance, faced with social media and a decreasing interest of the younger generation in traditional media, is bound to change. Publishers and journalists decide which statement of which politicians should be broadcast and how much time is dedicated to them. The research of Hallin (1992:6) shows that in the more advanced stages of mediatization, as the initiative is taken over by the media, the number, and length of a politician's sound-bites decreases. In 1968, in the USA the average length of a sound-bite was 43 seconds, thirty years later, only 8.9 seconds. However, the number of sound-bites from experts has risen. In 1968, only one case was noted, in 1988 – thirty-seven statements were broadcast, with a considerable increase in the 1980s (Hallin, 1992:10). This trend is also confirmed by comparative research of mediatization during the 2009 political campaign to the European Parliament. Besides Portugal (271), Spain (100), and Romania (90), which are characterized by a high degree of control exercised over the media by political actors, and where party logic

dominates, in other countries the number of sound-bites oscillates between 11 (Great Britain, Germany) and 68 (Sweden). Poland, with its 70 sound-bites locates itself precisely in the middle (Strömbäck et al., 2011:167). The authors of the research notice a decrease in the number of statements made by politicians, which is accompanied by a reduction in broadcasting time. The overall broadcasting time of the statements uttered by politicians from twelve EU countries was 15.9 seconds, whereby the longest time was noted in Romania (25.8s.) and Spain (21.1s.), and the shortest in the Czech Republic (8.5s.) and Poland (8.4s.), and what needs to be emphasized, besides these two cases, is that it did not fall below ten seconds (Strömbäck et al., 2011:167). The position of Poland in this ranking is extreme, and it confirms the high visibility of journalists in the news creation process. It can be interpreted in various ways, for example, as a negative assessment of the value of politicians' statements (the media prefer a short, clear, and an attractive message to a longer one, which could tire the audience out), or of disregarding of politicians as a journalistic source.

The second indicator refers to the interference of the media into the message and to journalistic visibility. The notion of journalistic visibility (Patterson, 1993) allows us to determine the input of the journalist into the creation of a single news item in a television news program, a press or an internet article. To determine that the number of stand-ups in news must be established. These are monologues of the reporter (journalist), the aim of which is to meet the expectations of the public in an attractive form, rather than to convey an important message. When journalistic visibility is high, sound-bites of politicians are more and more often replaced by journalists' live stand-ups. The degree of journalistic visibility is supplemented by the number of interviews conducted by reporters live in the field, with politicians, witnesses, or participants of events. Politicians are less and less often invited to TV studios. This practice is still common in Scandinavian countries and Romania, a case in point is that in both these countries these type of materials were recorded the highest number of times in the 2009 European Parliament election campaign (see more Maier, Strömbäck and Kaid, 2011).

It may seem surprising that Poland achieved the highest index of journalistic visibility in these comparative studies (mean journalistic visibility: 1.0), comparable to that achieved by Great Britain (1.00). The result was so high due to the highest number of stand-up materials (88.6 percent) and an elevated number of journalists interviewed live (12.7 percent) (Strömbäck et al., 2011:168). Based on this data, we can conclude that Poland has rapidly reached the fourth - highest level of journalistic visibility. The same cannot be said about Romania, which situates itself closer to Spain or Portugal (see Tab. 3.1).

Tab. 3.1: *Journalistic visibility in TV news stories in the 2009 European Parliament Elections news (in percent)*

Country	Journalistic stand-up material	Journalist interviewed live	Journalist interviewed in studio	Index: Mean journalistic visibility	Number of news-bites
Austria	7.7	1.2	0.0	0.1	91
The Czech Republic	50.9	9.4	0.0	0.6	53
Denmark	14.3	2.0	4.1	0.2	49
Finland	8.2	0.0	4.1	0.1	49
Germany	8.7	4.3	0.0	0.1	23
<b>Poland</b>	<b>88.6</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>79</b>
Portugal	49.2	9.0	1.0	0.6	299
Romania	18.0	13.5	29.3	0.6	133
Spain	34.6	28.4	0.0	0.6	162
Sweden	27.4	0.0	10.5	0.4	95
Great Britain	76.5	23.5	0.0	1.0	17
Overall	36.5	10.8	5.3	0.5	1050

Source: Strömbäck et. al., 2011:168.

The third indicator is the number of news-bites in which journalists, both reporters and studio hosts, wrap up the material, and express their own comment on ink-bites and sound-bites. Thus, the proverbial last word belongs to journalists, and not to political actors. Media logic prompts that the material should be attractive for the audience, and precisely that is the aim of the wrap-up format. It is supposed to end the news in a notable way, be a strong accent, and leave a memorable impression. This practice is visible in the Polish commercial media, particularly in the main evening news programs such as 'Fakty' of TVN, and 'Wydarzenia' of TV Polsat. It was especially noticeable in the 2005 campaigns (Łódzki, 2011a:240), and confirmed in research on the election campaign to the European Parliament in 2009 (Dobek-Ostrowska and Łódzki, 2011). In the comparative study lead by Strömbäck, with 93.7 percent, Poland was in second place and beaten only by German television news programs (Strömbäck et al., 2011:168). This practice was also visible in the next presidential (2010, 2015) and parliamentary (2011, 2015) campaigns in Poland.

The fourth indicator is intended to help determine the dominant journalistic style, which in recent decades, along with the advent of mediation into its fourth phase, has evolved toward interpretation. The neutral, descriptive style (Patterson, 1993), typical of the Liberal Model, which is an indicator of high

journalistic professionalism, gradually replaces the commentary and assessment of journalists. According to Mancini, contemporary media visibly gravitate toward entrenched journalism, the process is enhanced by fragmentation and specialization. The media are consciously shifting toward a biased audience with certain interests and views, of which the success of the American Fox TV is the best example (*Polska śródziemnomorska*, 2011:21). Interpretative journalism confirms high journalistic visibility and indicates that the media control their broadcasts according to media logic and have a strong, politically independent position in the process of content creation.

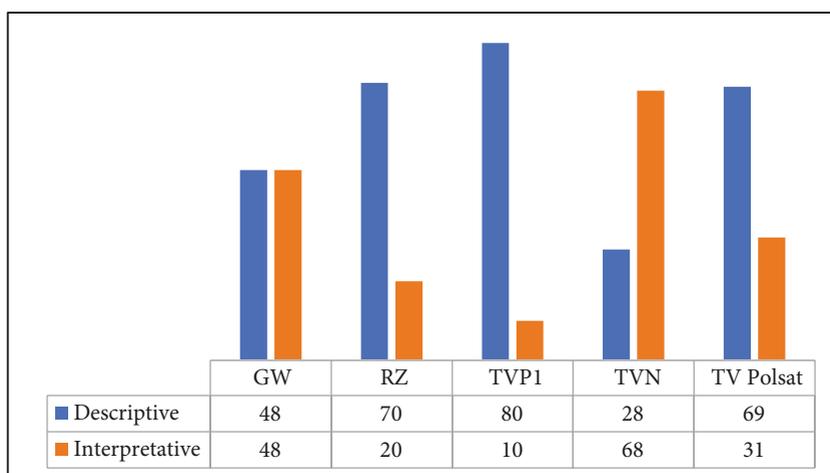


Fig. 3.2: Dominant journalistic style in coverage of the 2009 European Election in Poland (in percent)

Source: Dobek-Ostrowska and Łódzki, 2011:154.

Numerous studies confirm that the number of journalistic materials dominated by an interpretation style is steadily increasing. For example, Strömbäck and Nord (2006:160) included about 40 percent of Swedish media news between 1998 and 2002 into this category, additionally, a 10 percent increase of this type of material has been observed in that period. This trend has also reached Poland, although a lack of empirical data in the long perspective does not allow for an accurate evaluation of the intensity of this process. According to a 2009 study, an interpretative style dominated only in the news program 'Fakty' of TVN, and in the daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the number of interpretative materials was equal to the number of descriptive ones (see Fig. 3.2).

The number of news-bites, which constitute the framing of politics as a strategic game and a horse-race (Cappella and Hall Jamieson, 1997), is the fifth indicator of mediatization. The concept of horse-race type of coverage was introduced by Patterson (1993) and has been interpreted numerous times. It will be discussed in detail in the following part of our reflections. Today, it is one of the leading models of political coverage, especially visible in the commercial media during election campaigns, although it also appears in public media. This category includes news that focuses on winners and losers of the power race, often enriched by the publication of election survey result. The comparative studies conducted under the direction of Kaid and Strömbäck (Strömbäck et al., 2011) show that the focus on winning and losing situates Poland (35.7) above the European average (26.9). This phenomenon is much more visible in Great Britain (73.5), Sweden (46), and Germany (41.5) and to the lowest extent in Portugal (7.7) (see Tab. 3.2).

Tab. 3.2: *Framing of politics as a strategic game in the 2009 EP Election news (in percent)*

	Focus on winning and losing (sub-frame 1)	Focus on public opinion polls (sub-frame 2)	Overall number of news items
Austria	20.6	13.2	257
The Czech Republic	19.1	9.9	162
Denmark	31.9	23.0	113
Finland	39.2	15.7	153
Germany	41.5	no data	65
Hungary	36.8	no data	19
Italy	28.1	no data	146
<b>Poland</b>	<b>35.7</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>157</b>
Portugal	7.7	5.1	495
Romania	34.6	14.4	208
Spain	-	5.7	473
Sweden	46.0	21.1	213
Great Britain	73.5	35.3	34
Average	26.9	11.5	

Source: Strömbäck et al., 2011:170.

The five described quantitative indicators are a particularly useful instrument in the analysis of mediatization of politics. They allow us to research the relationship between journalists and politicians in a creation process of journalistic material (radio/television news, press articles), and it helps determine

which side has a stronger position in this process, and who controls the content on the lowest stage of media creation. The indicators are also useful in the analysis of coverage of campaigns in the information media. The data collected from election to election helps determine the phase of mediatization, the degree of mediatization and the tendencies occurring in a given country. In Poland, we have at our disposal surveys from the 2005 and 2007 campaigns, the 2010 presidential campaign, and the 2011 parliamentary campaign. The only full comparative analysis is from 2009, and its results indicate a high level of mediatization of politics. This is confirmed by the least amount of time dedicated to sound-bites, the highest indicator of journalistic visibility, a high percentage of materials that end in wrap-ups, using interpretative style, and the framing of politics as a strategic game and a horse-race, especially by commercial media. There is no research on the 2015 election campaigns.

### 3.1.3 Types of news media coverage

Mediatization of politics is reflected in news media coverage, which can be analyzed thanks to a special coding book. The research traditions on media coverage go back to the 1940s. They are of particular use in the study of election campaigns, which are a closed and specific phase of political communication, in which trends and features, that are dormant or of a lower intensity in the inter-electoral period, are manifested to the greatest extent.

Researchers of media coverage – Gulati, Just, and Cringler (2004:237) – claim that all news is a construction of reality. Media coverage of a campaign should be seen as a negotiation process invisible to the audience between key actors of the campaign and information sources (candidates/politicians/party staff/members of election staff/party activists) and the media (journalists/owners/publishers), which directly or indirectly construct media content. The audience, interest groups, authorities, and experts play a secondary role in these specific ‘negotiations’. Their results depend on the strength of sources and position of the medium in social, political, economic, etc. systems. Not only Gulati, Just, and Cringler but also the vast majority of researchers (Bennett, 2001; Graber, 2002; Tuchman, 1978) emphasize that all of the mentioned actors of the campaign process take various action to gain control over the way information on actors of electoral rivalry is created.

In the case of electoral campaigns, these unwritten and invisible ‘negotiations’ result in the production of political news, which describes strategies and tactics of candidates, present the results of pre-electoral polls and ensuing considerations: who wins, who loses, who has a chance for electoral success.

These 'negotiations' have a significant impact on stressing the important issues and electoral agendas. In this process of content creation, partners can form different relationships: equal when the medium is autonomous and shapes the content independently despite some political sympathies, or asymmetrical when a political actor is stronger and tries to impose his or her will on the other side, he/she influences the decisions of the media and, thus, controls the content. The first type is visible in the relationships between political actors with commercial media, such as TVN, TV Polsat, Radio Zet, RMF FM, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and opinion weeklies. The second can be observed in the relationship with public broadcasting.

Several main fields emerge in the research of media coverage. A leading object of studies is political bias of from the media, which interests many scholars in Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia, Israel, etc. Americans eagerly analyze the structure of coverage from the point of view of politics as a game and a horse-race; they look for differences in coverage of politics performed by the press and television. The focal point here is the aforementioned group of journalists and reporters, the so-called 'boys on the bus.' They follow the election campaign, and candidates, describe their election activities day by day and, thus, construct the coverage of the campaign. Crouse (1972) introduced the category of 'pack journalism' created by journalists who work for various media, spend a lot of time together, participate in the same events, analyze the same speeches and behaviors of candidates, and who, over time, begin to think alike and relate campaigns in the same way. This makes coverage of campaigns increasingly similar (Smith, 2010:119). The new forms of constructing campaign news, such as the interpretative report based on pre-election polls, often sponsored by the media, and the reliance on experts and references to their opinions are gaining more and more attention. Piontek (2011a; 2011b:173), first took this subject up. She stresses the issue of deepening tabloidization of political discourse in television news programs.

Media content analysts have attempted to show the ways journalists reported on election campaigns, as well as the process of media coverage of politics. The literature on the subject contains seven models of coverage of election campaigns (López-Escobar, Sabada and Zugasti, 2008:184; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011b:26–27). Let us consider which of these the Polish media most frequently use. Today, the horse-race model is one of the most noticeable and dynamically spreading in journalistic practice. Patterson (1980) distinguished it after many years of research, which allowed him to analyze this phenomenon successfully. Other researchers, among them Valentino, Buhr, and Beckman (2001) then developed

this problematic. In this model, the media present the campaign as a game, a race for office, which is seen as a power struggle. The most important subject of coverage is the candidate or candidates leading this race. Their place is determined by the position they occupy in rankings and opinion polls. Each new survey becomes a campaign event. Only the leaders count, the remaining candidates go unnoticed or are marginalized by the media. It was observed that the media focus on various aspects of the campaign, such as electoral strategies and tactics, the results of the pre-election polls, or the candidates. Research conducted in the USA or in Western European countries leaves no doubt that in the last forty years it has become the most rapidly expanding model. With the growth of commercial media in the media systems of Central Europe, this type of coverage is being adopted with increasing intensity, including by private television companies. It fits perfectly media logic, which causes a metacoverage of the shrinking of ink-bites and sound-bites, negativity, coverage of issues secondary but attractive for the recipients, raising the importance of the publication of election polls for the campaign event, and personalization.

The horse-race model (Patterson, 1980) is inextricably linked to the personalization coverage model, characterized by a focus on politicians, leaders, candidates, and their images. Personalization is one of the main features of a modernization campaign, and in this case, institutionalization seems to be its most important dimension, which causes media personalization and then a personalization of politicians' behaviors. In this process, political institutions took on the face of their leaders, people occupying the highest positions in the land, politicians often invited to the media or press spokesmen. At a time when differences in party agendas become blurred, their leaders become magnets for the electorate, they are the ones who gain or lose votes. This perception of individual political actors translates into a personalization of the media content, expressed in an interest not only in institutions but in the individuals who lead them. They are the main objects of media reports, their personal strategies are analyzed, as well as the recruitment process of candidates; they are invited to studios and interviewed. Personalization of politicians' behavior, expressed in their communication skills and media attractiveness is also significant. The results of analyses of studio programs broadcast in 2010 in Poland confirm that the group of fifteen people most frequently invited by journalists included the most expressive politicians and those who performed well in the media (Media Guest 2010, 2011:14). Some of them are still active in politics and are frequent studio guests.

The pattern of campaign strategies coverage combines with the horse-race and customized coverage. It occurs when the media focus on marketing tricks, ploys, and the complete electoral machinery. It describes and comments on

election techniques of parties and candidates. This model is to a large extent a derivative of the watchdog function of the media.

The pattern of coverage of issues and problems which occur in the campaigns is tied to the agenda-setting theory introduced by McCombs and Shaw (1972), which was systematically developed over the next decades (McCombs, 2004; McCombs et al., 2011; Graham et al., 2015). The researchers saw media coverage as a set of issues that emerge from events. In traditional agenda, the issues fight for their positions, eliminating those less important and attractive. In the process of distributing media content, the importance of the issues is transferred to the public agenda. The pattern of issues coverage focuses on the popularization and analysis of political and electoral programs of the parties, which is an extremely important task from the point of view of the quality of democracy, in the shaping of which the media and journalists play a significant role. Such coverage results from social responsibility of the media and is typical of a high level of journalistic professionalism. With the tabloidization and de-professionalization processes, fewer and fewer media maintain high ethical and substantive standards of political issues coverage.

The pattern of quoting coverage is linked with the statements of politicians and can be treated as a development of the pattern of issues coverage. In this case, they publish numerous ink-bites and sound-bites, they quote extensive fragments of statements uttered by political actors. This type of coverage is present in quality media, which refer to a large number of sources. It is, however, less and less present in practice, due to the systematically decreasing number of ink-bites and sound-bites, which is confirmed by numerous empirical research.

The pattern of civic journalism coverage is a relatively young phenomenon. It has emerged and developed along with the new communication technologies. One of the first examples was a film shot with a private camera by one of the witnesses to the assassination of U.S. President John F. Kennedy in Dallas in 1963. The new recording techniques such as cameras, mobile phones, etc. and the possibility of uploading recorded material on websites or social media, blogs, etc. provides new opportunities for the public, but also for the media, which willingly use such sources. The media are not able to reach all of the places where something important is happening. Civic and participatory journalism were described, among others, by Allan (2006), who in detail analyzed internet journalism, crisis coverage and the role of civic journalists as eyewitnesses of the attacks in London and of Hurricane Katrina. In this pattern of election coverage, the role of the public, who are also the electorate and who actively participate in this process of content creation, is very important, but in reality, traditional media seldom use these kind of sources.

It is no coincidence that the entrenched coverage pattern was introduced into literature by Spanish researchers. López-Escobar, Sabada, and Zugasti (2008) proposed a model which has proven to be extremely useful in the analyses of coverage of electoral campaigns and politics, Polish media included. This pattern of coverage occurs primarily in countries belonging to the Polarized Pluralism Model (Hallin and Mancini, 2004) and Politicized Media Model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c:28), in which the media are controlled by political actors, and are guided by party logic, which visibly dominates over media logic. This is the case with a clearly defined editorial line related to a single ideological option and a political formation present in the party system. In this system, the media are not the intermediary, or a neutral rapporteur, but a biased and active actor of the political dispute. In such a case, the owner of the medium and journalists employed there share common values and views. They favor a specific formation and politicians, whom they openly support. Media coverage, which is deeply politically anchored, occurs on the first and second level of media politicization (see paragraph 2.2.2), when the media are owned by a political actor (e.g., Silvio Berlusconi's Mediaset or Andrej Babiš' MAFRA), or when they award him unconditional support (e.g., the Spanish *El País* - PSOE or *Gazeta Polska* - Law and Justice). Such media engage themselves into election campaigns, and their coverage carries signs of canvassing and political propaganda, which is best illustrated by the ironic opinion expressed by many journalists of Mediaset's television channels that they are employees of Berlusconi's electoral staff (Amoretti, 2003:179).

The patterns described above are an excellent theoretical tool for campaign coverage research. They make it possible to show certain mechanisms that are present in the system of political communication and to determine the real intentions of the media, their political involvement, as well as their journalistic professionalism. The tone and direction of the research are set mainly by American scientists. This research attempts to determine the direction and political structure of media bias, mainly in the press and television, although the Internet and social media content are more and more frequently subjects of analysis (Davis et al., 2017; Giansante, 2014). The authors also analyze the rules and forms of political journalism used to construct campaign news in a changing environment. In recent decades, twenty-four-hour news channels have frequently been established and journalists and scientists have become 'professional commentators.' They are regularly invited to TV or radio programs and speak in newspapers, expressing their political sympathies and ideological convictions clearly. They most often appear in pairs representing differing views, chosen in this way to maintain balance. However, it must be stressed that such a form of

campaign coverage is typical for the Liberal Model of the media system; it also occurs in some countries included in the Democratic Corporatism Model, less often in the Polarized Pluralism Model (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). In Central and Eastern Europe, it appears in countries belonging to the Hybrid Liberal Model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c). Researchers also draw attention to interpretative and commentary journalism, which occurs with increasing regularity in the U.S. (for example, Fox TV News), to the growing importance of opinion polls, which gained the position of the most important media events of the day, as well as to the watchdog function, attacks of political opponents, and lastly to models of the relations between the media and political actors.

In market conditions where the media are guided by their own logic, they must satisfy the public's expectations, which are mainly looking for attractive information. This caused media coverage of politics to evolve in the direction of presenting less and less valuable but catchy information, descriptions of sensational events, conflicts, infotainment, and politicotainment (Riegert, 2007) which is the dramatization of politics. These techniques turn coverage of politics into a soap opera, in which the visibility of politicians is boosted and sometimes even a 'cult' is created, in which politicians become celebrities, who shock with their behavior or at least draw the attention of the media for several months (Riegert, 2007:12–17). In Poland, such politicians were Janusz Palikot, Antoni Macierewicz, and many others who quickly became heroes of media coverage due to scandals or affairs. More and more often in the Liberal and Democratic Corporatism Models, the horse-race and personalization coverage (López-Escobar, Sabada, and Zugasti, 2008: 184), which use sensational and attractive information (Kepplinger, 1998; Strömbäck and Nord, 2006; Patterson, 1980, 1993; de Vreese, 2008; Tiffen, 2008; Dobek-Ostrowska and Łódzki, 2008), replace reliable coverage. The entrenched coverage (Demertzis and Pleios, 2008) is characteristic for the systems of the Polarized Pluralist Model (Hallin and Mancini, 2004) and Politicized Media Model in Central and Eastern Europe (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c:28).

Hallin and Mancini's view, mentioned in the previous chapter, that fragmentation fosters development of politically entrenched, i.e., biased media, is relevant also in this context. This trend is evident in the Liberal Model, which until fifteen years ago Hallin and Mancini (2004:299) attributed to high journalistic professionalism and low political parallelism. Meanwhile, this model is clearly evolving toward entrenched coverage, with Rupert Murdoch and his Fox TV News as pioneers of this new and foreign to American journalism practice. Today, the concept of 'Foxification' of political information has become a familiar term in scientific literature (Wanta, 2008:112). The political bias of the owner,

reflected in the content of this medium, has opened up a process of polarization in consumer behavior in the USA, as confirmed by Wanta's research. Hallin and Mancini (2017:160) point to changes that are taking place not only in the Liberal Model, and stress that media systems are not static and that their nature is evolving (Hallin and Mancini, 2017:167).

To sum up, politically entrenched coverage, which is rooted in the tradition of journalism in the Polarized Pluralism Model, is becoming more and more common in the other two models distinguished by Hallin and Mancini. Such coverage is typical for Central and Eastern European countries, which have joined the European Union (Bajomi-Lázár, 2017; Bajomi-Lázár, 2015a). Independent media are gradually becoming a thing of the past. It becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a distance from political disputes and to comment impartially. Entrenched coverage originates primarily from the structural relationship in which the medium is strongly subordinated to the owner. In the case of public media, e.g., Polish Television or Polish Radio, they are, in fact, controlled by the parties and politicians in power at the time. In the private media, this part is played by the previously mentioned Murdoch and Babiš, and in Poland by Father Tadeusz Rydzyk in Radio Maryja, TV Trwam, and the daily newspaper *Nasz Dziennik*, although, they formally belong to the Redemptorist Order (The Warsaw Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer). These stockholders interfere with the functioning of the media or put pressure on media staff in the process of content creation. It must, however, be mentioned that this type of coverage can also be present in the media, which have relative freedom, and are not instrumentalized by the owner. The coverage, in such a case, is the responsibility of the editorial team, which sides with a certain entity on the political scene. In this context, the research conducted by Hungarian scholars is significant, as it shows that self-censorship has developed among journalists working for the private media during the period of Orbán's power (since 2010) (Urbán, Polyák and Szász, 2017:146).

### 3.1.4 Forms and practices of media bias

Politically entrenched coverage can take on various forms – open or camouflaged. The former is open support for a certain political formation and sharp criticism of its opponents. In Poland, an example of such an extreme attitude are the media focused around Father Rydzyk, but also the weeklies *Gazeta Polska* and *W Sieci/Sieci*, which consequently support conservative and national parties, such as Law and Justice. Biased coverage practices were and still are used by public media which support these formations, exercise control over them, be it

openly or in a concealed way. Camouflaged entrenchment is such coverage, in which journalists do not speak openly about who to vote for or which formation is better, but hide their real preferences under slogans of truth and freedom. The technique of framing of political actors is used for this purpose.

The concept of framing describes the psychological process of encoding and decoding the message. In media studies, it was developed by Entman (1993:52), who defined it as a process taking part on the side of the communicator – the creator of journalistic material. It involves the selection of certain aspects of the perception of reality and makes them more important in the text. This can be achieved by emphasizing certain notions and issues, free interpretation, moral judgments, and recommending those to the reader.

Framing is a multifaceted concept, which is constructed out of such elements as: the author of the text himself, his background and political affiliation, as well as the position of the journalistic material in the complete structure of the broadcast, e.g., which position does the particular piece of information occupy in the agenda of a television news program, or on which page is an article printed, what amount of space in a daily newspaper does it occupy. In other words, framing is reflected in the very construction of media content. Tankard et al., (1991), treat framing as a central concept organizing the news. Tankard (2001), based on a later study, identified eleven mechanisms of this process. The most visible include (1) headlines of news and main titles and (2) subtitles. The notions and words used there, direct the attention of the recipient toward a certain issue, its merit and attributes, which is crucial in analysis of the second level agenda setting (McCombs, 2004:71), which concentrates on the process of transferring the significance of issue attributes of merit. Further mechanisms are hidden (3) in the selection of photographic material in the press and visual material on television, and (4) in specific shots of characters and situations presented. Among the many photographs from the same event that a photographer or a camera operator provides to an editor, there are those which show a person in a better or worse light, improve or ridicule his/her image. This representation is completed by a caption under the photograph, which may expose a certain positive or negative attribute of a political actor. Framing employs (5) leads, which brings to the attention of the reader or viewer certain noteworthy aspects at the beginning of a news item or article. The next group of framing mechanisms is connected with (6) the use and selection of journalistic sources and (7) the selection of quotations - ink-bites and sound-bites, (8) the selection of spectacular statements, containing strong arguments or causing an immediate reaction. The institution's logo (9) and all the graphic elements of visual identification, as well as (10) statistics and charts, e.g., visually showing how the support is shaped with

the help of opinion polls, and other illustrations highlighting certain attributes and setting the tone for the journalistic statement. The last of the mechanisms mentioned by Tankard is (11) conclusions and final statements, which summarize the news or article. They are to reassure the recipient about the validity of the implicit beliefs presented in the journalistic material. Framing is, therefore, a form of manipulation – it is a process in which the attitudes of the viewer or reader are influenced, and which is aimed at convincing them that the author of the message is right, although the message is not a direct statement, but a sophisticated and often camouflaged broadcast.

Politically entrenched media, especially those which want to maintain the appearance of objectivity and independence, conceal the true intentions of fostering of a specific political formation; they eagerly employ these content-creation mechanisms. It should be remembered, however, that framing may be used for reasons other than political support and the presence of party logic. In the case of commercial media, especially television and the tabloid press, where profit is important, this behavior is supposed to arouse interest and attract the attention of the widest possible audience. In these cases, the framing of conflict, game, and race is used, and the broadcaster seeks ‘good’ pessimistic information, sensations, scandal, and thrills (Keplinger, 2007:108).

Let us take a look at how the mediatization of politics, reflected in the coverage, bias, and framing, is reflected in the content of mainstream media in Poland.

### **3.2 News media coverage in the Polish mainstream media**

After 2005 in Poland, a new dividing line of media appeared. It does not run along the scheme – post-communist parties vs. post-opposition parties, but between two most important parties on the political scene: the center-liberal Civic Platform and right-wing-conservative Law and Justice, whose leaders’ roots go back to Solidarity (Lipiński, 2016). This division is still up to date. In the last decade, both parties and their leaders were the focus of intensive media attention, and the themes connected with them were exposed to the highest extent (Łódzki, 2009, 2010, 2011a; Pilarska, 2011; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011a, Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015a). The other formations were and still are marginalized in media reports. Let us look at the distribution of support and sympathy for the main political actors and at how politics was covered in the period from the 2005 elections until 2018. Analysis will focus on the nationwide news media, which have the widest reach and are, therefore, the most important in the coverage of politics; placed on the highest positions in the sales/viewing

ratings in their respective market segments: 1) daily newspapers; 2) weekly opinion magazines; 3) public television channel TVP S.A.; and 4) commercial channels TVN and TV Polsat, as well as radio stations RMF FM and Radio ZET. Social media is not included in this analysis, which requires separate research.

In this part of the considerations, the objective is to verify the common opinions and assessments of coverage of politics. We will attempt to answer the following questions: At what stage of mediatization of politics is the media system in Poland? What types of coverage dominate? Is the model coverage as deeply politically entrenched as in Southern European countries? Is it horse-race coverage characteristic of the Liberal Model? On the other hand, perhaps there is no single dominant design? What type of bias accompanies them?

### **3.2.1 Polish daily newspapers: deep entrenched coverage vs. the tabloid vision of politics**

It was not surprising that the media were active in politics since the beginning of the political transformation in Poland. Such an attitude was born from a long tradition of political involvement of journalists in Solidarity and the political opposition, or supporting the PRL's communist system in the official state media. After 1989, journalists themselves considered it their duty to mobilize public opinion, encourage participation in elections, but also to indicate who to vote for and who not. The press was especially intensely involved in politics and did not see anything reprehensible in that. In the thirty years following the fall of the undemocratic system, the market has developed a model characterized, on the one hand, by external pluralism, with biased and politically entrenched journalism, and, on the other, by commercial tabloids seeking sensationalist news. Besides those, specialist, economic and sporting titles can be distinguished, which avoid political issues and are therefore outside the discussion.

Our analysis will focus on the two biggest daily quality newspapers - *Gazeta Wyborcza* (more than 114,000 sold daily in 2017) and *Rzeczpospolita* (more than 47,000 copies sold daily in 2017), which for almost thirty years played a key role in coverage of politics. We will exclude two tabloids, *Fakt* (which sold more than 240,000 copies daily in 2017) and *Super Express* (which sold more than 120,000 copies daily in 2017), which lean on sensation and scandals, to keep its readership regardless of their political preferences. We will also eliminate from our analysis two titles with a clear political and propaganda message – the right-wing, nationalist *Gazeta Polska Codziennie* (more than 17,000 copies sold daily in 2017) and the Catholic-nationalist *Nasz Dziennik* tied to Father Rydzyk. They occupy a relatively weak market share, as well as the lowest circulation and sales,

or lack of knowledge on the subject (the case of *Nasz Dziennik*, which remains outside our analysis). These titles reach a narrow, specific group of readers and cannot compete with the biggest dailies (Kordubski, 2018).

*Gazeta Wyborcza* was the first daily officially published after the fall of communism in 1989 associated with the Solidarity movement. The editor-in-chief Adam Michnik and journalists associated with the title were active in the opposition and worked for the underground press. The newspaper was politically active from the very beginning. It actively participated in the political process, was evidently anti-communist and favored the post-opposition left side of the political scene. The famous article by Michnik (1989) “Your President, our Prime Minister” was crucial for the political process. It perplexed the political environment of both the opposition and the communists and accelerated the course of events.

The statement of this journalist, the editor-in-chief, summarizing two decades of the journal's existence, confirms the newspaper's deep political commitment:

Over 20 years we have had better and worse moments, moments of joy and of anxiety, but we have always felt that we were more than just a daily; we wanted to be a component of a civil society, a permanent institution of Polish democracy. Various routes led us to *Gazeta*, although we all shared the tradition of October 56 and March 68 in common, the tradition of the Workers Defense Committee, and of the democratic opposition, August 1980 and “Solidarity.” We wanted a Poland that was democratic and independent, market-oriented and connected with the European Union, diverse and tolerant, favorable toward creative people and Poland concerned for the wronged and the excluded. This vision of Poland inspired our editorial decisions. We stubbornly repeated that it matters to us. (Michnik, 2009)

The slogan ‘It matters to us’ is printed until today on the front page of each issue directly below the title.

There is a provision in *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s charter, which states that the journal should take a clear stand on the most important issues (Karta GW). The analysis of the content carried out at various intervals confirms that the editorial team consistently carries out this task. Journalists speak out and express their position clearly at every important moment in the political process, especially during election campaigns (Stępińska et al., 2017). Since its beginnings, the journal has shown bias at all four levels - open, propagandistic, unintended, and ideological - with varying degrees of intensity.

The journalists did not hide their political engagement, although it needs to be noted that in the last thirty years the daily has undergone significant changes in the intensity of its involvement in political campaigns (Pokorna-Ignatowicz, 2008:128–129a) and current politics. Support for political actors was volatile and sometimes unpredictable, although it needs to be emphasized that it was always

awarded to candidates from an anti-communist opposition background with left-wing or centro-leftist views. *Gazeta Wyborcza* visibly found it difficult to warm to politicians associated with the communist state. In the 1990 presidential election, *Gazeta Wyborcza* expressly encouraged to vote for Tadeusz Mazowiecki and was against Lech Wałęsa. In 1995, it favored Jacek Kuroń and sharply criticized Aleksander Kwaśniewski. The analysis confirms that hostility dominated in its coverage on this politician, negative attributes such as communist roots, lack of political views, hypocrisy, falseness, self-confidence, intransigence, and lack of sophistication were highlighted (Drobnik, 2009:48). The research material came mainly from the editorial office itself, and twenty percent of the analyzed articles referred to the candidate's own ink-bites (Drobnik, 2009:59). During five years of Kwaśniewski's presidency, the daily considerably changed its perception of the politician from hostile to friendly neutral. The number of critical materials decreased from one hundred and nine in 1995 to fifty-four in 2000 (Drobnik, 2009:47). During this period, *Gazeta Wyborcza* emphasized the leadership skills and effectiveness of the president. However, practically no materials of canvassing character were noted, as was the case in previous campaigns for the benefit of others, preferred by editorial staff and candidates. Moreover, these were specific elections in which the main candidate had virtually no opponents and in which his victory was certain. In subsequent elections in 2005, the left-wing candidate Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz gained moderate support. The daily sharply protested the methods that led to his withdrawal from the campaign, suggesting that his main opponents were behind it. *Gazeta Wyborcza* observed the race for office from a distance, and awarded support neither to Lech Kaczyński nor Donald Tusk.

The hostile attitude toward Law and Justice, which deepened during the party's first rule (2005–2007), and then again after 2015, became an element of the editorial line of the newspaper. In the 2007 parliamentary elections, Law and Justice was negatively assessed and perceived as a threat to democracy. Negative materials were published sixteen times more often when compared to *Rzeczpospolita* (Pilarska, 2011:159). The party was criticized in one hundred and forty-six articles (in relation to seventy-seven in *Rzeczpospolita* in the same period) for bad governance, a tendency for conflict, and political scandals. Journalists expressed their dislike for party leader Jarosław Kaczyński, in ninety-six articles in relation to twenty-four in *Rzeczpospolita* (Pilarska, 2011:160). Czech wrote disapprovingly:

Jarosław Kaczyński holds indivisible power in PiS. The weakness of others is his strength. He plays on complexes, ideological fixation and a desire for power (...) He

remains strong because no one opposes him and calls out that the king is naked. In his world of consuming desire for power, there are no positive values (Czech, 2007:34)

President Lech Kaczyński and his surroundings were also severely criticized:

There is also no doubt that the Chancellery of the President is the political base of PiS. Michał Kamiński claims that during his working hours, he is 'cross-party', yet in his private time he makes election spots for Law and Justice and runs election conventions. (Wrób, 2007)

President Kaczyński was negatively assessed in forty articles in comparison with five in *Rzeczpospolita*, and the government of Jarosław Kaczyński in thirty-one in comparison with two in *Rzeczpospolita* (Świdorska, 2009:83–84). The reports on state institutions managed by Law and Justice members or supporters were also negative in tone. This concerned mainly the National Broadcasting Council and TVP itself, which was accused of organizing the Law and Justice election show together with the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau (Kublik, 2007a, 2007b). Radio Maryja was also criticized for the open support it gave to the party. *Gazeta Wyborcza* openly discouraged its readers from voting Law and Justice in 2007, 2010, and 2015, which confirms the presence of propagandistic bias. Besides Law and Justice, hostility toward other coalition members was also present, although they drew much less attention. The League of Polish Families and its leader, Roman Giertych, were described as a 'cheek for several hundred thousand teachers and millions of students' (Pacewicz, 2007). Self-defense was portrayed as 'sick and laying moaning in bed' (Katka, 2007). These examples illustrate the mechanisms of framing in journalistic practice, such as titles, subtitles, and leads, aimed at highlighting the negative attributes of Law and Justice and its coalition partners.

In relation to Civic Platform, the daily did not develop an unambiguous attitude. In the 2007 campaign, criticism aimed at the party was more moderate and its image more favorable than that of Law and Justice. The title did not, however, support the party. The Platform was criticized in thirty-seven materials (compared to forty-four in *Rzeczpospolita*), while Tusk was criticized in twenty-two articles (compared to seventeen in *Rzeczpospolita*) (Pilarska, 2011:159–160). Moderate sympathy of the editorial team was awarded to the Democratic Left Alliance and its leaders. Although it was clear that this party would not win the elections, the editorial office believed that its governance would be better for Poland. The attitude toward this political formation confirmed the left-wing leanings of the newspaper and was an expression of a serious change in attitude, which took place after almost twenty years; it meant support for social democratic ideology, and a withdrawal of habitual hostility toward groups that were rooted in the communist People's Republic of Poland.

The tone of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, compared to *Rzeczpospolita*, was considerably more provocative and aggressive. More attention was devoted to scandals and affairs, primarily to the so-called Land affair, which was mentioned in ninety-six articles (Pilarska, 2011:164). It was shown from a completely different angle than in *Rzeczpospolita*. *Gazeta Wyborcza* made the actions of the special services, controlled by and acting in the interests of Law and Justice, highly visible and interpreted them in a negative light.

In the relations with Law and Justice, the adversary model dominated also media coverage of the 2009 campaign to the European Parliament (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011b). *Gazeta Wyborcza* negatively covered the actions of Law and Justice, and its attitude toward the party did not change until it took power in 2005. Because the stakes were lower than in the national elections, the broadcasts were more toned-down and less aggressive than in 2007. *Gazeta Wyborcza* expressed its anti-clerical views, criticized Libertas, a Polish segment of the European organization (2009–2014), as well as Polish and foreign right-wing politicians. It supported Civic Platform by using framing mechanisms, for example ‘Law and Justice still far behind Civic Platform’, ‘Jerzy Buzek is going to break the record again’, ‘Three times Civic Platform’, ‘The capital for the Platform’, ‘Pomerania: Platform crushes Law and Justice’, (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011b:203).

The negative coverage of Law and Justice and its leader Jarosław Kaczyński was also visible in subsequent parliamentary elections in 2011 and 2015. After Law and Justice took power, *Gazeta Wyborcza* attacked and discredited the governing formation. Journalists sharply criticized Beata Szydło’s government (Gadowski, 2017) and her ministers. The tone did not change after Morawiecki replaced Szydło, either. The daily presented only one point of view and displayed only those arguments which fitted its assessment of Law and Justice:

Beata Szydło’s problem is that in the present power structure she actually is not performing her function (...) she does not settle arguments, nor set directions. The majority of the decisions, even those of a low priority are taken in Law and Justice’ party headquarters (...). (Wajrak, 2017)

Maciarenicz was assessed particularly negatively, due to destructive changes in the Ministry of Defense and his political activity (*Maciarenicz: Ja wam jeszcze pokażę...*, 2018); Ziobro, for the reform of the judicial system, and Szyszko for the logging of the Białowieża Forest. The actions of Deputy Prime Minister Gowin were also carefully scrutinized:

Gowin gives money to his people. Grants of several hundred thousand zlotys from the Program of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, ‘Dialog’, are given to people

associated with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, run by the Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the Ministry, Jarosław Gowin. Half a million zlotys was also given to the Institute, of which the head of the DialogCouncil is the vice-president. (Czuchnowski, 2018).

In this context, the content analysis makes the provision in *Gazeta's* charter, calling for reliable information separated from commentary and for objective presentation of various points of view, debatable (Jurga et al., 2017).

A characteristic feature of *Gazeta Wyborcza's* journalistic style is its limited number of sources, considerably lower than *Rzeczpospolita*, which was recorded in research material from the 2005 and 2007 campaigns (Pilarska, 2011:162) and the 2009 campaign (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011b). This has not changed in the 2010, 2011, and 2015 campaigns. An examination of the ink-bites function and the process of creating journalistic materials confirms the thesis of high journalistic autonomy without external control (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011b:205–206).

The horse-race model dominated in the newspaper's coverage of politics, which is a framing mechanism typical for commercial media:

The ruling Law and Justice party lose support, since February PiS' ratings have fallen by as much as 12 percentage points. (...) The Kaczyński brothers' portal – wPolityce.pl, sympathizing with Law and Justice, repeats the arguments of the ruling camp that the survey by Kantar Millward Brown is unreliable. (Kublik, 2018:3).

The election campaigns of 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2015 were covered like sporting events. Rankings were published regularly, the results of which were commented on. Journalists did not shy away from the metaphors typical for sports commentators. This race-like atmosphere was enhanced by the publication of opinion polls and of texts based on them (*Wielkie eurosondaże Gazety*, 2009; Kublik, 2018). Politically entrenched journalism clearly dominated. It needs to be emphasized, however, that it was not the result of control and interference exercised by the political actors, but as a consequence of conscious decisions of the journalists and of the editorial line adopted by the newspaper.

*Rzeczpospolita* is the second leading title. Because of the political transformation in 1989, it ceased to be a government newspaper and became independent. A respected journalist associated with the Solidarity Opposition, Dariusz Fikus, who for a quarter of a century was associated with *Polityka*, was appointed editor-in-chief (1989–1997). The journalistic culture and standards that were introduced under Fikus and then continued by successive editors-in-chief Aleksandrowicz (1996–2000), Łukasiewicz (2000–2004) and Gauden (2004–2006), allowed the daily to maintain its political neutrality and high professionalism as the only daily on the market. Until 2006, none of the successive

governments took advantage of the fact that forty-nine percent of the shares in the company publishing the newspaper belonged to the State Treasury, leaving the editorial team autonomous. In autumn 2006, the newly-formed government of Jarosław Kaczyński removed Gauden from the position of editor-in-chief and appointed Piotr Lisicki (2005-2012), a declared supporter of the Law and Justice government and the Kaczyński brothers. The political engagement of the new editor-in-chief on this very specific side of the political scene resulted in the departure of many journalists who worked for *Rzeczpospolita* for many years. The new editorial line did not appeal also to the heirs of Fikus, who in 2009 withdrew their consent to use his name as the patron of *Rzeczpospolita* award for the media personalities in Poland.

Research on the parliamentary campaign coverage in 2007 has shown that almost half of the gathered material contained negative opinions concerning the political actors (Pietrykowska, 2008:28). The criticism was to the highest degree directed at Civic Platform (29 percent), and to a much lower degree at Law and Justice (5 percent). The most positive assessments, i.e., more than 16 percent were articulated about Law and Justice, and in relation to Civic Platform - 7 percent. No positive opinions were noted about the remaining parties. During this period, the newspaper did not maintain neutrality and impartiality toward the political actors. This title's sympathies definitely lay with Law and Justice. The research on Jarosław Kaczyński's image during the period of Law and Justice government (2005-2007) showed that the material was dominated by texts favoring the right, or it contained statements favorable to it. More than 75 percent of the analyzed materials contained Jarosław Kaczyński's statements in the form of interviews, comments, or opinions expressed on various occasions (Reczek, 2009:77). The authors of the texts pointed out the assets of the Chairman (intelligence, creativity, diligence, conflict avoidance, empathy), but also his weaknesses (sophistication, uncompromising character, demanding attitude, lack of humility). Research confirms that in the 2007 campaign, Jarosław Kaczyński and his party had the highest visibility of all the political actors, both in verbal, as well as in visual material (Świdarska, 2009:71-73,174). *Rzeczpospolita's* journalists presented the structure of the party in a positive light and described it as democratic and coherent. They also spoke well about the party's leadership and electoral strategy, as well as emphasizing how much the country and the nation gained during the party's rule and of President Kaczyński. The journal also published critical positions and opinions. Apart from the texts by such expressive journalists as Wildstein, the critique of Law and Justice and its leaders was substantive in character. Although the number of critical materials increased fourfold in the period of Jarosław Kaczyński's government compared to the period of Marcinkiewicz's

government, it should be noted that the number of materials positive in tone increased fivefold (Reczek, 2009: 81).

In the 2007 parliamentary campaign, the newspaper kept a certain distance from Civic Platform. It was not a hostile position, but rather resentful, and devoid of the amity visible in reports on Law and Justice. Civic Platform was presented as a professional party, the advantages of its manifesto were emphasized, but in comparison to Law and Justice, it was always presented as less effective. On the other hand, coverage of the Democratic Left Alliance and other left-wing formations was definitely negative. This daily described discreditable situations and behavior, chiefly involving Aleksander Kwasniewski and Leszek Miller. The Democratic Left Alliance was presented as a post-communist party, unable to rule the country.

In contrast to *Gazeta Wyborcza*, in *Rzeczpospolita's* coverage of the 2009 campaign, the ideological bias was less visible, although in 2006 the editorial line of the daily clearly went in the direction of conservative values. On the one hand, in the campaign for the European Parliament, it supported Law and Justice, and during the entire Kaczyński presidency, it positively covered his activities; on the other hand, it showed hostility toward Civic Platform and Tusk, especially after the 2007 elections, which the party won. The analyzed material provided ample evidence for political bias. *Rzeczpospolita* supported Law and Justice in a camouflaged and sophisticated way and discredited Civic Platform and its leaders. It should be stressed that this bias was expressed mainly in criticism of Civic Platform and, to a lesser extent, in praise of Law and Justice. To this end, a whole range of framing mechanisms was used - a play on words, different distribution of accents in the argumentation, references to external sources expressing critical positions, employing headings and sub-headings, putting paragraphs that undermined the achievements of Civic Platform in bold or highlighting them, also irony and sarcasm were applied. An example of this type of rhetoric was the article entitled 'Tusk on Solidarity, Kaczyński on cuts' (Matusz and Wybranowski, 2009), in which, thanks to the carefully selected quotations and appropriately distributed accents, a negative image of Civic Platform was drawn, presenting it as deceitful, corrupt, and linked to representatives of the communist regime. A party, which is run by 'this' politician:

M. Kamiński: Congratulations to Mr. Tusk (...) Today Civic Platform has gained the support of someone who perfectly fits the triangle of Janusz Palikot, Donald Tusk, and Jerzy Urban. They are the political and cultural symbols of Platform today.

J. Kaczyński: I would like to warn Poles not to be surprised if, after these elections, Civic Platform has achieved a good result and this Prime Minister, Tusk, will introduce huge social cuts. (Matusz and Wybranowski, 2009).

Unlike *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which openly presented its political preferences, *Rzeczpospolita* often did so in a veiled way, between the lines. The presented analysis allows us to state that in the coverage of politics in *Rzeczpospolita*, the model of entrenched, camouflaged, and politically-rooted bias dominated over visible bias, which appeared less often.

In the 2010 campaign, the Smolensk catastrophe overshadowed *Rzeczpospolita*'s daily agenda, as was also the case with other titles (*Nasz Dziennik*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*). It was the leading context of the presidential election. The newspaper's journalists and commentators clearly took Jarosław Kaczyński's side. The positive coverage of the Law and Justice candidate was present throughout the election campaign. Many journalists employed by the newspaper joined the promotion of Kaczyński and emphasized the advantages of the candidate, such as his leadership skills, his decisiveness, intelligence, moral fiber, and courage. They also emphasized the expertise of his co-workers. The second candidate, Bronisław Komorowski, appeared much less frequently and, generally, in the context of his office as set out for him by the Constitution after the death of President Lech Kaczyński. The negative attitude toward the candidate of Civic Platform was expressed not only in the journalistic texts devoted to Komorowski but also to Tusk. Both politicians were presented in a negative light, and their weaknesses were confronted with the strengths of Jarosław Kaczyński. Tusk was portrayed as an overly ambitious, envious, determined person without any relevant political achievements, traumatized after the lost 2005 election (Subotić, 2010). Komorowski, on the other hand, was depicted as a bland, awkward person, who constantly slips, makes mistakes, is devoid of any leadership skills, competencies, and definitely unfit for presidential office. This trend is visible in such articles as 'Komorowski in Kaczyński's trap' (Warzecha, 2010), 'Komorowski with a double-barreled shotgun' (Stróżyk and Matusz, 2010) or 'All of Komorowski's mishaps' (Borowska and Niewińska, 2010). The bias of the daily was also expressed on the choice of the visual material, which, on the one hand, was supposed to strengthen the position of Jarosław Kaczyński, and on the other to ridicule Platform's candidate – Bronisław Komorowski and disavow Donald Tusk – the party's leader.

The other candidates were marginalized. If they appeared at all in *Rzeczpospolita*'s agenda, it was because of the critique they directed toward Civil Platform and Komorowski (Olczyk and Stróżyk, 2010). Left-wing politicians have usually been covered in the context of their past and their ties to the People's Republic of Poland, while the Democratic Left Alliance's candidate — Grzegorz Napieralski, who, due to his age could not be associated with the communist regime, was portrayed as an irresponsible politician and a person not mature enough to hold the highest office in the country (Janke, 2010).

With Lisicki's appointment to the position of editor-in-chief in September 2006, the editorial line of the daily changed dramatically from neutral to entrenched, favoring and supportive of a single formation in the political debate. During Lisicki's time as editor, political actors had a much a higher degree of control over the title than in *Gazeta Wyborcza* and their influence on the process of the creation of journalistic materials, where the main function of ink-bites was to defend Law and Justice' attacks on the opposition (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011b:201–202). In comparison to 2007 and 2009, the reporting on the 2010 election campaign changed. The issue and camouflaged political entrenchment coverage models were gradually replaced by personalization and horse-race models (López-Escobar, Sabada and Zugasati, 2008:184. We can also speak of open and hidden political bias, and in the campaign periods of 2007 and 2010 of propaganda bias. In the coverage of the 2007, 2009, and 2010 election campaigns, in the process of content creation in *Rzeczpospolita*, the presence of all framework mechanisms was observed.

In 2011, the ownership structure of the daily changed. Hajdarowicz Gremi Media purchased the shares of both co-owners - Orkla Media and the State Treasury, becoming the sole owner of the title. This change was reflected in the coverage of politics. Since 2013, Bogusław Chrabota has been editor-in-chief. Under his direction, journalists try to maintain perspective, avoid emotions and biased coverage of Law and Justice and governing politicians. The daily promotes itself as the 'most opinion-forming medium of the decade.' Nevertheless, the horse-race coverage model, completely unknown in the previous decade, begins to become visible:

The Law and Justice government is making itself a plug and the opposition is crucifying Beata Szydło's cabinet. Journalists from *Rzeczpospolita* verify these opinions. In connection with the decision of the Political Committee of Law and Justice, which appointed Mateusz Morawiecki as the candidate for Prime Minister, we would like to remind you of *Rzeczpospolita's* assessment of the government of Beata Szydło, who is now, after two years of overseeing the government, leaving the post. The Head of Government has deserved a C-. This assessment would also be average for the entire government. (Dąbrowska, 2017)

Thirty years after the fall of communism, the mainstream quality newspaper market in Poland is restricted to two titles. The attempts of Agora and Springer to introduce other newspapers of this type failed, which is largely caused by the low interest in the daily press of the readers themselves and the crisis of the printed media. Over several years (2006–2011) the market functioned in a dual system – two leading newspapers identifying themselves with opposite sides of the political scene were present on the market: the left-wing and anti-clerical

*Gazeta Wyborcza*, which openly expressed its preferences, and was characterized by high journalistic visibility, and the conservative and anti-left-wing *Rzeczpospolita*, with visible party logic, often camouflaging its true intentions, and after 2011 distancing itself from political actors. The most politically and ideologically entrenched titles: *Gazeta Polska Codziennie* and *Nasz Dziennik*, with low circulation and sales, reach a small group of readers. Despite the visible support for both dailies from Law and Justice, they stand no chance to go beyond the circle of their existing readers. The tabloids - *Fakt* and *Super Express*, which build on horse-race coverage and sensation, criticize all political actors regardless of their political and ideological preferences. Thus, Polish daily newspapers are intensely divided. On the one side, we have the deeply politically entrenched and widely circulated *Gazeta Wyborcza*, as well as the small *Gazeta Polska Codziennie* and *Nasz Dziennik*. *Rzeczpospolita* is in the middle but since 2011, it has avoided political ties. On the other side, we find *Fakt* and *Super Express*, which present a tabloid vision of politics, but, as in the case of *Fakt*, they openly display their political colors. Apart from the above titles, there are also legal and economic journals.

### **3.2.2 External pluralism of opinion weeklies**

This segment of the Polish press market is unique in comparison with other European countries. The Polish market of opinion-weekly magazines is rich and pluralized compared to the Czech, Slovak, Romanian, Baltic, Spanish, and Italian markets. Despite the serious crisis of the press, a large number of such magazines still operate in Poland, and some of them keep reading - and sales figures at a steady level, new titles are being created, although their future is not always certain. The Polish press tradition based on historical experience is particularly noteworthy. In 1918, after 123 years of partition under Russia, Austro-Hungry, and Germany, Poland gained her independence. Opinion-weekly magazines were at that time a strong media segment aiding the construction of a national identity. In the communist period, some opinion-weeklies, despite the existing censorship were a window to the world. They informed openly or smuggled ideas and views in the subtext. Readers stood in long queues, got them from under the counter, or even pulled strings to buy them. Some titles have survived to this day and their reading numbers are still at very high. Let us examine the current structure of the opinion-weekly magazines market in the third decade of democracy in the country and the relationships between those weeklies and political actors.

In 2009, a group of magazines controlled by the Polish Press Distribution Control Association (ZDKP) encompassed over four hundred titles, among

them, opinion journals that represented all possible political options, from extreme right-wing, nationalist, conservative to anticlerical and left-wing. The external pluralism of this segment of the magazine market has been and still is significant despite falling sales and a high competition in the market. This is particularly important during election campaigns when opinion journals are a crucial channel of political communication. For this reason, in our analysis, we focus on the years when Poles elected the Parliament and the President (2005, 2007, 2011, and 2015) and compare them with the situation in 2017 (see Fig. 3.3). The sales and readership figures of the magazines can be seen as a reflection of the social mood and political sympathies. In the last decade, there have been ten titles on the market, which belong to the segment of opinion weeklies, and which can be divided into three groups in terms of sales.

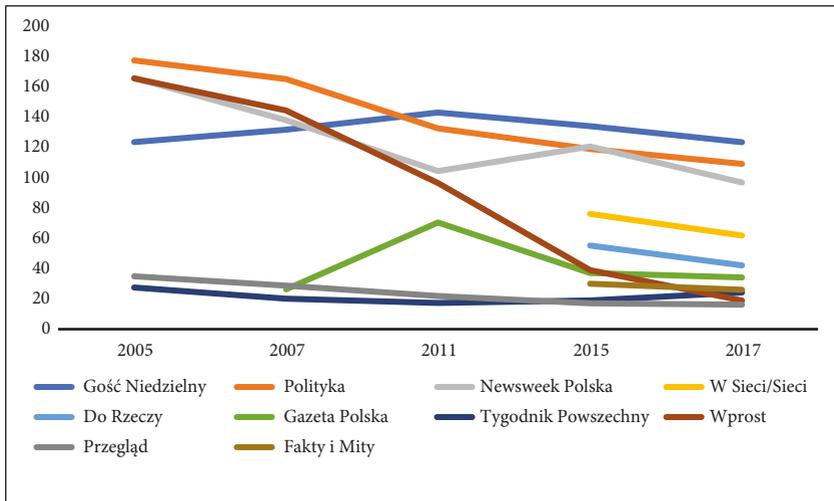


Fig. 3.3: Sales of opinion weeklies during parliamentary election campaigns (2005, 2007, 2011, 2015) and following two years of Law and Justice government in 2017 (in thousands)

Source: Author, based on data from [www.wirtualnemedi.pl/artykul/sprzedaz-tygodnikow-opinii](http://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/artykul/sprzedaz-tygodnikow-opinii), 2005, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2017.

The 2017 leaders' group (Kurdupski, 2018) included three titles: *Gość Niedzielny*, *Polityka*, and *Newsweek Polska*. *Gość Niedzielny*, established in 1923 as the weekly magazine of the Apostolic Administration of Silesia, and the oldest one existing on the market opens the sales rankings. The magazine was reactivated after the war and survived the whole period of the People's Republic of Poland.

At present, it has nationwide reach and defines itself as a Catholic newspaper. Politics is not the leading subject, but it is important, and it is a point of reference primarily for conservative and traditional, practicing Catholics who are attached to ecclesiastical structures. The sales are steady in comparison with other titles, and in 2017, it reached over one hundred and twenty-three thousand copies. The left-wing, liberal *Polityka*, present since 1957, occupies second place. It was number one in sales until 2011 when it yielded to *Gość Niedzielny*. From 2007 to 2017, its sales reached one hundred and nine thousand copies (Kordubski, 2018). From 2013 onward, *Polityka* has been market leader, outdistancing other titles considerably. The high stability of employment is noteworthy. In its sixty-year history, the weekly had only four editors-in-chief, two of whom held the post for twenty-four years each (Mieczysław Rakowski and the current editor Jerzy Baczyński). It targets mainly well-educated readers with left-wing sympathies. In 2001, Axel Springer introduced successfully *Newsweek Polska* onto the already crowded press market. After several years, in 2011, its sales dropped considerably. In 2015 the weekly improved its results and then sales started to decrease again. In 2017, sales exceeded more than ninety-six thousand copies. The title is directed at a better-educated, liberal audience, center-left in their political preferences, not attached to a particular political party or ideology.

The second group includes two young titles; *W Sieci* (2012–2017)/*Sieci* (since 2017) and *Do Rzeczy* (since 2013), as well as *Gazeta Polska* (since 1993). These are titles with clearly defined ideological values and right-wing, conservative political preferences. *W Sieci/Sieci* is a socio-political magazine, forming an alternative to the liberal and leftist media, such as *Polityka* or *Newsweek*. The editorial team includes journalists with clearly-defined political views, many of whom had previously worked for *Rzeczpospolita*. Some of them left its editorial office in protest after Tomasz Wróblewski, the editor-in-chief, and journalists Łukasz Warzęcha and Cezary Gmyz were released because of the publication of the article ‘TNT on board the Tupolev’. Until the 2015 elections, the sales of the title grew steadily, to start falling afterward and stop at about sixty-two thousand copies in 2017. The second title in this group is the conservative-liberal weekly *Do Rzeczy*, which is built on the Christian tradition and supports economic freedom. Its promotional slogan is ‘There is no consent to silence’. The editorial team is composed of well-known journalists with a long track record in the profession, such as Lisicki, Gabryel, Semka, and Wildstein, who express their political convictions without hesitation. After 2015, sales of the title began to fall; in 2017 it occupied fifth position with forty-two thousand copies (Kordubski, 2018). The next place in the sales rankings belongs to *Gazeta Polska*. Piotr Wierzbicki, who was the editor-in-chief until 2005, established it. Subsequently,

Sakiewicz took over this position and has held it until now. The editorial team emphasizes the right-wing conservative profile of the weekly, devoting particular attention to the Home Army (AK - Armia Krajowa), victims of the repressive apparatus after 1945, decommunization and lustration of public figures, as well as the Smolensk catastrophe, after which sales of the title increased by 145 percent (Traci 'Wprost', 2010), to reach a record seventy-thousand copies in 2015, to subsequently drop to thirty-four thousand in 2017 (Kordubski, 2018).

The third group, with the lowest level of sales in 2017, included *Fakty i Mity*, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, *Wprost*, and *Przegląd*. Two titles, *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Przegląd* are characterized by a steady level of sales. *Fakty i Mity* and *Wprost* are struggling. *Fakty i Mity* (twenty-six thousand copies) subtitled *Non-clerical weekly* unequivocally determines its political and ideological preferences. Although it was established in 2000, its sales were not included in the previous rankings<sup>5</sup>. At present, its situation is highly unstable, which is visible in the dramatic drop in sales by 16 percent compared to 2016.

The independent Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, published since 1945, is mainly addressed to Catholic intellectuals with centrist views. With twenty-four thousand copies sold, it was the only one out of ten titles analyzed to note an increase in sales by 14 percent compared to the previous year. *Wprost* weekly, which has been on the market since 1982, has noted sales on the level of about nineteen thousand copies, which was 21 percentage points lower than in 2016. The title has enjoyed a high level of readership for many years, but its sales have fallen dramatically over the last decade and its survival in the market is uncertain. This was caused by editorial changes and controversial decisions, such as the wiretapping scandal. The left-wing *Przegląd* with the sale of sixteen thousand copies completes the list of analyzed titles. Despite the lowest sales results in this group, it has loyal readers, which is confirmed by a drop in sales of only 2.45 percent (Kordubski, 2018).

We will focus our analysis primarily on titles that have had a broad social impact, the highest sales, and reading and citation rates: the so-called 'big three' of the previous decade - *Newsweek Polska*, *Polityka*, and *Wprost*. Our considerations will also include right-wing weekly magazines, which, after 2015, constitute a crucial channel of political communication for the ruling elites of Law and Justice - *Gazeta Polska*, *W Sieci/Sieci*, and *Do Rzeczy*. We will leave *Gość Niedzielny* on the margins of our considerations, although it occupies first

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5 The title was included in the [wirtualmedia.pl](http://wirtualmedia.pl) ranking in 2016, when Błaja News sp. z o.o., a publisher, joined the Press Distribution Control Association.

position in the rankings. This is caused by its focus on social issues and only incidental coverage of politics and political actors. We exclude from our analysis titles with the lowest sales, such as *Fakty i Mity*, *Przegląd*, and *Tygodnik Powszechny*, with the exception of *Wprost* which played a major role in the previous decade. *Polityka* is one of the oldest opinion-weeklies in Poland, which survived the communist period and is still at the forefront of reading rates. Maciej Wierzyński, a journalist associated with TVN24, who worked for American press and television in his professional life and who has first-hand experience of the local journalistic standards and culture, wrote:

I read *Polityka* regularly because it maintains standards. They have people there from whom one can learn something about the economy, about science. They have guarded the remnants of reportage (...) I do not even pick up the competition, i.e., the remaining, so-called opinion weeklies. And I do not feel I am missing out on something (Wierzyński, 2009).

The journalists employed there for years did not hide their center-left-wing views:

The hard, orthodox right-wing attitude of Jarosław Kaczyński, and Father Rydzyk, manifests itself in the simplest language, and supported by elaborate statements, essays and other works by professors Legutka, Krasnodębski, Fedyszak-Radziejowska, and Zybortowicz, as well as by many publicists and journalists it can be easily used to stigmatize specific addresses, names, and institutions. It gives the rest of the right, the luxury of not needing to define themselves in such a strong way (Janicki and Władysław, 2009).

This paragraph allows us to determine the political preferences of the authors. However, in comparison to other titles, the language used in this statement is controlled and devoid of aggression. *Polityka* critically evaluates the controversial and not always socially justified decisions and actions of political actors, regardless of their political origins, and position on the political scene. It is irrelevant, whether politicians are members of Law and Justice or Civic Platform, which Żakowski (2009b) explicitly accused of lacking ideals, and of which he claimed that Prime Minister Tusk was trying to turn it into the first Polish 'post-ideological party.'

*Polityka* has a clear editorial line, but it carefully avoids open political and propagandist bias. This does not happen at the level of ideological bias, which operates on values. Here, the weekly consistently advocates a united Europe, equal rights of national, ethnic, and sexual minorities, support for vulnerable and disabled groups, and against xenophobia, conservative values, etc. The weekly has more than once made it known, not only in articles but also in its accompanying visual material on its cover photographs, caricatures and cartoons, that it does not like Law and Justice and its leader Jarosław Kaczyński.

The analysis of the weekly's content, carried out during successive parliamentary and presidential election campaigns in 2005, 2007, 2010, 2011, and 2015, shows that bias was present in *Polityka* primarily in the ideological sphere, and to a much lesser extent in the political sphere, as the weekly did not and does not support any political actor. It did not campaign for specific candidates or parties and tried to keep a critical distance, which in Polish journalistic culture is neither obvious nor simple. The material on the 2007 parliamentary campaign was mainly neutral in character (about 50 percent), however, numerous critical articles on Law and Justice appeared (34 percent) and surprisingly few on Civic Platform (3 percent). Following this election campaign, during the eight years of Civic Platform rule, *Polityka* observed Tusk's, the party's, and its politician's activities from a distance. The left-wing values represented by the weekly did not mean that its journalists assessed the Polish left less thoroughly. They criticized leftist parties and their leaders for their disorder, lack of vision, blandness, and detachment. A good example is Żakowski's (2008) article, very significantly entitled 'Leftist or necrotic.' The weekly's journalists most often took up controversial subjects and formed critical theses concerning the Polish political scene.

Despite the clearly defined centro-leftist editorial line, the weekly is known for objective and merited criticism, also of left-wing formations. 'Radical temperance and substantive arguments', is, according to the editor-in-chief the right way for the title to find a place among the competition on the market of opinion-weeklies (*Jerzy Baczyński*, 2010). It is a medium which creates content according to values and ethics established in the editorial team. This does not mean that lapses do not happen, they do, but they occur much less often than in other titles. This state of affairs is undoubtedly created by the unusual ownership structure of the weekly, which belongs to a cooperative established by the journalists themselves, currently a limited liability company, where typical commercial media logic and party logic do not appear as easily. In this case, we can rather speak about logic of ideological and program values. Besides the descriptive style, interpretative style also appeared. Politically entrenched coverage is weaker and refers to a bigger extent to values than to political actors. Although, during the 2015 election campaign, the journalists clearly opted against Law and Justice and warned before possible consequences of the party's rule. They did so by asking a 'sole question to the voters' on the cover: "Do you want Jarosław Kaczyński to take full power in Poland?" (*Polityka*, no 43/2015). Personalization coverage and some elements of horse-race coverage models are present but do not dominate.

For years *Polityka* has been the leader in citation and references rankings of the Polish media (*'Polityka' najczęściej*, 2011). At the same time, the title has

secured the highest advertising revenue in the segment. However, some issues begin to be visible in the background. As a rule, readers of the weekly are well-educated and well-off. However, they are growing older and the younger generation reaches more willingly for other titles. Also, the average age of journalists employed by the weekly is drawing nearer to retirement age. This means that the position of the weekly on the press market can change considerably in the next decade.

*Newsweek Polska* is another popular opinion-weekly. In the previous decade, its content was characterized by steadiness, lack of radicalism, objectivity, avoidance of open propaganda, and ideological bias. These features are confirmed by an analysis of the coverage on the case of the undercover activity of Lech Wałęsa (Furman, 2010:55).

In 2005, the weekly for the first time reported on election campaigns. Just like other media, it focused on the biggest political formations and most important candidates, in both the parliamentary and presidential election. Its journalists willingly ridiculed the flaws of ruling politicians, Prime Ministers, President, ministers and members of parliament. They wrote about President Lech Kaczyński:

He took the election defeat of Law and Justice party very hard. He got offended, locked himself up in the palace and communicated with the outside world through intermediaries. He was sometimes rude, as in the case of the appointment of Donald Tusk as Prime Minister, which took place during the ceremony at the kitchen entrance of the Presidential Palace, which lasted thirty-six seconds. Apparently, he was not prepared for the electoral stress and change (Mazowiecki, 2007).

Both Civic Platform's and Law and Justice' politicians were criticized. After 2005, the issue of the left and the Democratic Left Alliance's politicians appeared incidentally.

The weekly's content changed noticeably after Tomasz Lis took over as editor-in-chief in 2012. After that, the title has become much more expressive and explicitly directed against Jarosław Kaczyński and Law and Justice. After the 2015 victorious election, much attention was paid to the subordination of the public broadcaster to Law and Justice, after which the main edition of the news program TVP1 *Wiadomości* began to be described as 'regime news':

Instructions come from above: the editor-in-chief receives texts with "day messages" and the author of the program receives instructions on what to ask his guests. It is obvious that the government should be praised and the opposition should be chased. The chairman personally oversees everything. Chairman Kurski (...) it has never been as bad as it is now. I have never seen such pushy propaganda, adds the producer from the same station (Kim and Gębura 2016).

The chairman of the party, Jarosław Kaczyński, is presented negatively as a person waking the ‘brown demons’:

Is Kaczyński really a xenophobic, racist, chauvinist? A futile question - what counts is that he supports xenophobia, racism, and chauvinism in his struggle for power (Michalski 2016).

The weekly is a license of the prestigious American opinion title and published by Axel Springer Poland. In other titles belonging to this group, both in Germany and Poland, media logic is clearly marked. In *Newsweek Polska*, this logic is visible to a much higher degree than in other Polish opinion-magazines. The dominant types are the horse-race coverage and personalization coverage models. Its content seems to be less controversial than that of other weekly magazines. However, after 2012, commercial media logic began to be intertwined with political logic, and the title did not succeed in avoiding the division of readers according to their political preferences and values they believe in.

*Wprost* for seventeen years under Król’s management (1989–2006) held a stable, high position in sales and reading. Apart from *Polityka*, it was one of the top Polish opinion-magazines. Under Król’s stewardship, the weekly evolved from a left-wing to a decisively right-wing position. An analysis of its content, during the period when it belonged to the Król family, shows the presence of ideological, propaganda, and political bias. At that time, *Wprost’s* distinctive feature was a critical attitude toward all political actors, which varied in intensity. President Kwaśniewski and politicians on the left, especially those who came from the Polish United Workers’ Party (PZPR) in power before 1989, were openly despised. During the elections in 2005 and 2007, the weekly named those not to be voted for and led an open campaign. It took a definitely hostile and uncompromising stance toward the left, but also toward Tusk and Civic Platform.

Seven editors were appointed in the decade following Król’s departure. In contrast to the steady *Polityka*, the title underwent radical transformations at the level of values, the editorial line, editors-in-chief and employed journalists. Wildstein, the leading publicist of *Wprost* at the time, engaged himself very strongly on the part of the Law and Justice government, President Lech Kaczyński, and Minister Ziobro:

When Ziobro took the side of the victims and not the criminals, the side of the primacy of the right to justice instead of the right to rehabilitate criminals, he became public enemy number one. The misunderstandings between the legal and intellectual elites of Warsaw and Cracow were forgotten and they formed a common front against Ziobro. This only proves how strong were the interests that he endangered (Wildstein and Pawelczyk, 2006).

After the 2007 parliamentary elections, which were lost by Law and Justice, the journalist Ziemkiewicz, who worked for *Wprost* at the time, criticized the opponents of the party, writing about ‘pitiful people with worthless reputations’:

Kaczyński found out that in order to win, it is necessary to be a boor, go out on the edge, not be afraid of demagoguery and lay it on with a shovel (Ziemkiewicz, 2008).

When the issue of Lech Wałęsa returned to the media agenda, the weekly expressed its hostility toward the former president, accusing him of an agency past, links with the Secret Service (SB) and by challenging the verdict of the lustration court. The research conducted by Furman on the political parallelism of the three opinion-weeklies confirmed a high level of bias of *Wprost*, which attacked Wałęsa most harshly and as the only title decided to publish highly politically entrenched journalistic texts (Furman, 2010:55).

Frequent changes of editors-in-chief, journalists and political preferences of the title in the last decade have been pointed out as one of the main reasons for the title’s failure on the market:

*Wprost* got a little lost. Despite everything, the reader expects from the newspaper a constant and clear line, and in the case of this weekly, changes have occurred all too often. This is probably not a good idea for an opinion-weekly. (*Wprost* na sprzedaż, 2009)

Until the change of ownership in May 2010, *Wprost* described its editorial line as liberal-conservative, based on Christian values. The weekly criticized the fiscal policy, state interventionism, bureaucracy, and the conditions of Poland’s presence in the EU. It was definitely anti-leftist. Ideological bias was also visible in the articles concerning the European Union. Journalists instigated anti-German mood, negatively referred to the issue of abortion and the rights of sexual minorities; they applied aggressive rhetoric, were offensive and broke the rules of best practice, they appealed to stereotypes, used emotional arguments, and very often published shocking covers. This can be explained by the will to stand out on the market in the conditions of sharp competition and falling readership. It can also be understood as an attempt to raise sales and readership, but it essentially has led to a low level of journalistic professionalism.

The partisanship of the readers is a crucial element influencing the reader’s loyalty to the title. After Tomasz Lis took over the position of editor-in-chief (2010–2012) and other significant changes in the staff of the editorial team followed, a qualitatively new product appeared. This resulted in another outflow of readers attached to the previous perspective on politics. *Wprost* changed the program line from conservative and radical to moderately centered. It tried to address difficult issues and to comment on them with a distance, avoiding

explicit political entrenchment. After Lis' departure, the weekly was managed by four other editors-in-chief, which did not improve the title's condition. A sharp critique of all political actors, and especially of the Law and Justice government after 2015, (*Rozliczcie i będziecie rozliczeni*, cover, May 16–22 2016), did not help, neither did the harsh rhetoric nor the coverage of the wiretapping scandal (2014–2015). These changes worsened the condition of the magazine, sales of which fell sharply. In 2017, it was in the second to last position on the list of analyzed weeklies and it is to be expected that it will be closed.

*Do Rzeczy* is managed by Piotr Lisicki, one of Poland's most recognizable journalists and publicists, whose name appears in the subtitle *Lisiecki's Weekly*. The title has been present on the market since 2013; it therefore, covered only the elections in 2015 - both presidential and parliamentary. The magazine openly presents its conservative-liberal ideological values, based on the Christian tradition. It is addressed to better-educated readers. Journalists who have never concealed their political preferences, previously working for other right-wing media, such as Ziemkiewicz, Semka, Warzecha, Gmyz, or Wybranowski, write for the magazine. The fascination with the Law and Justice government is visible since the party won the elections. *Do Rzeczy* supported Prime Minister Szydło and emphasized her background ('typical family', 'simple, respectable, open people') and her personal traits ('life of the crowd', able to have fun 'with a song on her lips', 'a good listener') (Pieczyński, 2017:16–20). After she was removed from power, the weekly referred to the promotion of Morawiecki very favorably:

In the new Prime Minister, the Polish right may find a combination between Tusk and Orbán. If he succeeds, Morawiecki's prophecy "We will rule until 2021" will be fulfilled. [...] Law and Justice has just begun a new accelerated term of office, in which it will learn for a year, and do something for the people. There will be no time for degeneration. (Gociek, 2018:22–24).

Personalization coverage is very clear. The weekly constructs the image of Jarosław Kaczyński as a strong strategist. It supports the changes that took place in public media, emphasizing that 'thanks to TVP we see more now' and that it is no longer a 'medium for the elites':

We give the floor to those who, until now, no one wanted to listen to, whose harm has not been sufficiently 'attractive' to the media. (*TVP już nie tylko dla elit. Wywiad z Danuta Holecq*, 2018:19).

The weekly does not shy away from sharp assessments of the other side of the political scene - Wałęsa, politicians of the opposition in Civic Platform and Nowoczesna. However, it should be noted that after three months of Morawiecki's government, journalists of the weekly also began to notice some

cracks. Warzecha (2018:13) noted that the government ‘got too much wheel spin and got stuck at the beginning.’ Wybranowski (2018:28) pointed out that the new prime minister has Kaczyński’s support but ‘all is not well in the party’s lower circles’, and in middle-sized and small towns. The same journalist notices cracks in the image of public television and its transparency. He criticizes the activity of many journalists employed there and points to the negative consequences of the connection between the editor-in-chief, environment of *Gazeta Polska*, and public media.

*Do Rzeczy* does not belong to any politician or party, it is, therefore, a structurally independent title. However, political logic and support for Law and Justice is visible. This is, first of all, due to the decisions of the editorial team, the beliefs and political preferences of the journalists employed there. These result in an explicit political bias and deep entrenchment coverage of the weekly on the right of the political scene, which is in accordance with the weekly’s principle — ‘no consent/agreement to silence.’ However, as proven in recent months, the weekly’s line is not deprived of a critical assessment of certain phenomena occurring on the right of the political scene.

*W Sieci* (2012–2017)/*Sieci* (since 2017) promotes itself as ‘The biggest conservative opinion-weekly magazine in Poland.’ Therefore, in terms of values and ideas, it is located close to *Do Rzeczy*. Both titles are addressed to a similar audience, perhaps a little more conservative in the case of *W Sieci/Sieci*. The title was established in 2012 after journalists Wróblewski, Warzecha, and Gmyz were fired from *Rzeczpospolita* after publication of the article ‘TNT on board the Tupolev.’ Not only do journalists working for the weekly openly show their right-wing and conservative system of values and ideological beliefs, but also engage themselves in biased coverage of politics. Since its establishment, the title sharply criticized the Civic Platform government. It accused president Komorowski of illegally taking over the presidential office after the Smolensk catastrophe and ‘walking through dead bodies to snatch power’ (Pyza, 2016:19). It sharply criticized Tusk and his successor:

Ewa Kopacz’s government will be even more the government of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Polityka* than Donald Tusk’s was. (Zaręba, 2014: 25).

The weekly’s political entrenchment is unambiguous, it clearly supports Jarosław Kaczyński and his formation, and the customized coverage of Law and Justice’ chairman is explicit. The weekly supported the candidacy of Andrzej Duda, and after his victory, it engaged itself into his promotion and building a positive image (*Możemy ruszyć do przodu!* 2015). It also upheld Prime Minister Szydło’s image (Pieczyński, 2017). The change of government in 2018 was described as

an 'escape from the opposition.' The weekly attempted to explain why Jarosław Kaczyński planned the reconstruction of the government and what he intends to do after it:

Kaczyński's plan is to separate party politics from the government in order not to expose it to disruptions and to enable it to govern effectively, and most importantly to enable economic leaps through investments. It means opening 'the good change' camp and strengthening its support, first of all through economic successes and new social programs. (Janecki, 2018:30).

The journalist praises Prime Minister Morawiecki and supports the new government:

The nomination of Mateusz Morawiecki for the office of Prime Minister (...), and his reconstruction of the government met with broad public approval, manifested in an increase in government ratings and Kaczyński's party, as well as in another stage of the opposition crisis. Meanwhile, a large group of right-wing journalists and the media are proclaiming a disaster. (Wildstein, 2018: 32).

*W Sieci/Sieci* is formally independent of institutions and political elites; however, it is deeply partisan. It unequivocally awards support to one, particular political actor - Jarosław Kaczyński and to Law and Justice. The sharp political bias remains a fact. Moreover, it is noteworthy that, although in terms of ownership the title is independent, and it does not belong to any political party or politician, the structure of its advertisers is puzzling, as the majority of them belong to the State Treasury. Thus, it can be assumed that the political authorities unofficially support the weekly.

*Gazeta Polska* promotes itself on the first page as the 'Weekly of the Independent Pole', published in the Sphere of the Free Word'. The Smolensk catastrophe was an important factor determining the level of political mediatization in opinion-magazines. The sharp polarization of the political scene which followed the event was reflected in the content of weeklies and in journalistic culture. The conflict was waged between editors and journalists themselves, who fought against other media and journalists with different positions on the causes of the disaster and its consequences. One such weekly was *Gazeta Polska*, which gained visibility thanks to its engagement in the events of April 2010; earlier it was a niche medium with low circulation. This title is located on the furthest of the right on the axis of political preferences; it reaches readers far more conservative than the recipients of *Do Rzeczy* and *Sieci*, with clear national, anti-communist, anti-Semitic, and anti-Russian views, opposing abortion and minority rights. The editor-in-chief is Sakiewicz, a journalist with an explicit, extreme vision of the world. The weekly employed and still employs journalists who are equally

expressive. Due to their convictions, they could not count on employment in the mainstream, nationwide media, which by their very nature avoid such extreme and controversial assessments of reality.

Since its establishment, the title has commented on many historical themes from an anti-communist perspective in an aggressive and partisan manner. It called for the removal of undercover, regime agents from the Polish state offices ('de-agenturize'); it sought irregularities in all areas of public life, however exposing phenomena and events from only one point of view, often missing the truth. After the Smolensk catastrophe, new readers joined the audience. They supported the thesis about the coup and had not read weeklies before, or abandoned *Wprost* or other moderate titles. The events of April 2010 have deepened the polarization of Polish society, and the press has meticulously used this. *Gazeta Polska* capitalized on it, by adhering to the coup theory and fueling anti-Russian and anti-government sentiments. This tragic event electrified many journalists and publicists and sharpened divisions, which earlier were dormant or latent. *Gazeta Polska* has turned the Smoleńsk issue into an instrument of political and ideological battle, pushing the subject until its limits. Journalists with explicit conservative, right-wing views provoked those with liberal, left-wing ones and drew them into the conflict. After Law and Justice won the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2015, the weekly became deeply involved in support of the party's leader, which was illustrated by an interview with Jarosław Kaczyński (see Picture 2.5) (*Trzy kadencje, aby zmienić Polskę*, 2018) and Prime Minister Morawiecki (see Picture 2.3) (*Ja antykomunista, ja bankowiec*, 2017). Political logic and strong ideological partisanship are characteristic of this title. They are accompanied by a high level of journalistic visibility. The journalistic style of the weekly is also characterized by a low professional culture of the editorial team. Fundamental ethical standards are being violated, and relativism is being applied in coverage of politics. Despite its far-reaching intervention in the political process and its deep political engagement, it is a structurally and party independent medium, with strong journalistic visibility and the presence of bias, which are the result of editorial decisions and not of the interference of the governing party. However, it needs to be mentioned that both sides share common interests. The weekly supports Law and Justice, by promoting a positive image of the party, and the governing party supports the financial standing of *Gazeta Polska*, by ensuring that advertising revenues from companies owned by the State Treasury flow its way.

To sum up this part of our considerations devoted to opinion-weekly magazines, we note that external pluralism on this market, characterized by a wide range of choice and an abundance of titles is a fact. The titles openly place

themselves on the right-left spectrum. They determine their political preferences and ideological values – from social democratic, through liberal, to conservative (see Fig. 3.4).

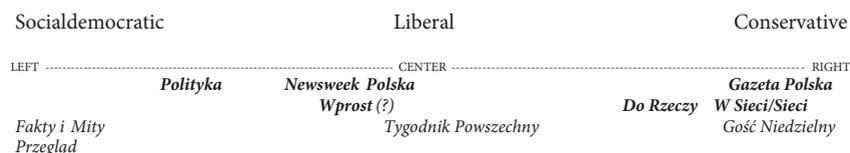


Fig. 3.4: *External pluralism of weekly magazines in Poland*

Source: Author.

Journalists have political views and preferences, but these are their private beliefs and no-one forces them to express these. Although their preferences are clear, journalists have professional autonomy. The owner and editorial team decide on the content of the medium. A particular party or a politician are important, but from the perspective of content creation – secondary, as journalists are not forced to support a particular political formation. They are politically partisan but do so on their own accord and not under pressure.

Mediatization of politics is visible in the segment of Polish opinion-weekly magazine. It needs to be emphasized that, although particular titles have their political favorites, they also need to maintain their position in the market. Besides media logic, also political (and party) logic is observable, although its intensity is varied. The titles on the left (*Przegląd*, *Fakty i Mity*), liberal-left (*Polityka*, *Newsweek*), liberal-Catholic (*Tygodnik Powszechny*), primarily support certain values and ideas and do not engage openly in the support of political actors. On the other side, we can find weeklies which support Law and Justice and its leaders, such as *Do Rzeczy*, *W Sieci/Sieci* or *Gazeta Polska*. Party logic is present, but it is not the result of pressure from political elites, but a free choice of the editorial and journalistic team. The magazines are formally independent of political institutions and are not owned by political parties, the government, or any political actors. Content creation is guided mainly by media logic, journalists and owners i.e., their own, in this case, strong and explicit views, which they present publicly. A high level of journalistic visibility is observable and commentary and journalistic assessment are the dominating journalistic style. The type of politically entrenched journalism is present, but its intensity varies from very strong on the right, to less intense in the center and left-wing press. This type of coverage interweaves with personalization coverage typical for commercial media, visible particularly in interviews with the leaders.

### 3.2.3 The systemic parallelism of public broadcasters

The problem of public broadcasters' politicization is present in many European media systems. Besides the British BBC and Swedish SVT, political parallelism is visible first of all in the Polarized Pluralism and Democratic Corporatist Models, in the content of public/government media, as well as in the regulations concerning this part of the broadcasting, (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:30–33). Because they belong to the state, public media are easily an object of political instrumentalization. Transitions of power caused by the election result in the victorious party willingly and quickly take control over the media. Thus, we can observe a systemic parallelism in this market sector, i.e., a varying subordination of public broadcasters to political actors, determined by the results of elections.

The problem of politicization of public TV and radio in Poland is visible on two fundamental levels of appointing - the National Broadcasting Council and the boards of public TVP and Polish Radio.

Since its establishment in 1993, the National Broadcasting Council, which is charged with regulation of the media market and with ensuring that the adopted rules and regulations are complied with, has not been free from political pressure. The Sejm, Senate, and subsequent presidents were guided primarily by political interests in selecting members of the Council, leaving aside content-related aspects and the professionalism of the candidates. No president or governing party has done much to curb this process, only the intensity and the extent of the control have differed. After the 2005 elections, Law and Justice took control of public media, and a year later, it introduced three members of its own party and two members of supporting parties into the Council (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012:46). In the cadency (2010–2016), three formations shared places on the Council - Civic Platform, the Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish People's Party, none of whom enjoyed a majority. After the next elections in 2015, the situation from 2006 repeated itself. For 2016 to 2022, Law and Justice again gained an advantage in the Council (three members), backed by two members strongly connected with the Catholic media, one of whom comes from the Toruń circle of Father Rydzyk, and one independent but linked with the Catholic circle (see Fig. 2.2).

Politically-connected members of the Council decided on appointments to the board of directors of TVP and Polish Radio. These, in turn, chose the boards and management of radio and television stations according to their own preferences. The fact that supporters and followers of the governing parties filled key positions created favorable conditions for the monitoring of media content, especially of news and current affairs programs. This allowed for a partisan

selection of news, promotion of political programs of the groups and leaders in power, or those who were in control of the stations at the time. The politicization of public radio and television was also supported by the attitude of the employed journalists, who were mostly unable to shake off political pressure. Those who did not support the new government or expressed opinions critical of it were forced to leave or decided to resign. Researchers drew attention to the lack of consistency in the relationships with politicians and an excessive submission, as well as the lack of respect for journalistic ethics and no efforts to defend professional autonomy (Pokorna-Ignatowicz, 2001:23–34; Jaskiernia and Pokorna-Ignatowicz, 2017:176–177). However, it needs to be mentioned that it is a feature of the Polarized Pluralism Model (Hallin and Mancini, 2004) and also characteristic of the model of Politicized Media in Central and Eastern Europe. Jakubowicz (2007c:109–110) pointed to the intense control over the media exercised by the state, the high level of integration of the political and journalistic worlds, the low professionalism of journalists, the various violations of professional ethics, cynicism, conformism, and the disregard of the requirement of impartiality, as common features of the entire region. This trend has continued up to now.

TVP and Polish Radio were treated instrumentally since the beginning of the political transformation. The introduction of the Radio and Television Broadcasting Act in 1992 neither changed the approach nor strategy of the ruling parties or opposition. We can talk about the colonization of public media by political actors and see the reasons for this process in the politicization of radio and television by successive governing teams. The politicization of these media was visible during the presidencies of Lech Wałęsa and Aleksander Kwaśniewski. It deepened dramatically during Lech Kaczyński's term of office (at the turn of 2009 and 2010), when, paradoxically, they were controlled by Law and Justice, which was in opposition at the time. This practice intensified after Law and Justice took over power in 2015 and the change of public media management in 2016.

Jakubowicz (2008b:52) claimed that political leaders and ruling parties have caused conflicts in each period, which have not contributed to the development, idea, and status of public broadcasters, but weakened them. All subsequent chairmen of TVP had stronger or weaker links to political parties (often being their members) and serving presidents. This allows us to speak of a deep integration of media personnel and political elites and of the short distance to power authorities or a complete lack thereof (Hanitzsch, 2007:373). TVP's chairmen and managers did not hide their political preferences. This was reflected in the staffing policy and in the promotion of biased content in news and current affairs programs. Meanwhile, lower-level employees and journalists

were forced to adapt to the ideological beliefs of their superiors in order to keep their jobs.

The politicization of public television was confirmed in the choice of members of each subsequent board of directors and chairmen, who between 1993 and 2016 changed sixteen times, additionally, from 2008 until 2011, six of them were only carrying out their function temporarily (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011c: 151–152). The changes that took place in television until 2006, were analyzed in detail by Mielczarek (2007:271–280), who illustrated the processes taking place with such metaphors as ‘personal carousel’ and a ‘political brawl’. The chairmen, formally or unofficially tied to the ruling formations, through their selection of loyal staff and control of the flow of information, ensured support for their political leaders. The bias of public television assumed all four types – partisan, propaganda, ideological and unwritten (McQuail, 1992; aStreet, 2001: 20–21). What differed from one chairman and his team to another was the scale of support and subtlety of the coverage. The bias under Walendziak and Miazga were relatively moderate. It intensified slightly during Kwiatkowski’s term. A selected team of journalists and publishers fostered the positive media image of President Kwaśniewski, thus strengthening support for his candidacy in the 2000 presidential elections. They also supported the Democratic Left Alliance - Labor Union (UP) coalition in parliamentary elections in 2001. This, among other things, contributed to a very good election result (47 percent of all votes). The period was characterized by the dominance of party logic and high political parallelism, the institutional and non-institutional link between TVP and Polish Radio and the Democratic Left Alliance, which manifested itself at all analytical levels - bias, integration of media staff and political elites, the highest degree of politicization, and the media staff’s relations with political actors.

At the beginning of 2006, after a period of relatively weaker partisanship of Dworak, a phase of appropriation of public media by Law and Justice began and then, under Wildstein and then Urbański, a deep political involvement of TVP managers and journalists followed. This was expressed in obtrusive coverage and boosting the visibility of issues favorable to Law and Justice. The bias of the broadcast took on a vivid form, and some researchers described this period as the ‘étatizing of democracy’ or ‘deconsolidation of democracy’. The subordination of public radio and television present in the period of Jarosław Kaczyński’s rule (2005–2007) did not disappear after the elections in 2007. Paradoxically, for the first time in history after 1989, public media were still subordinated to Law and Justice, but this time in the role of the opposition. On the one hand, TVP and Polish Radio supported the Kaczyński brothers and, on the other, took a hostile and critical stance toward the ruling Civic Platform.

The start of 2008 marked the beginning of organizational and personnel problems in both media companies, which turned into a state of crisis and chaos. The position of Law and Justice supporters was diminishing in favor of supporters of the former League of Polish Families, and Self-Defense coalition. This tendency was reflected in the appointment of Farfał, a member of the League of Polish Families, and a close associate of Roman Giertych, to the position of chairman in December 2008. This immediately translated into a change in the coverage of Law and Justice during the European Parliament election campaign in 2009, for instance in the main news program – TVP1 *Wiadomości* (Łódzki, 2011a). The visibility of members of the group and of anti-European and national ideas specific to the League of Polish Families program has increased significantly. *Libertas* Poland and Declan Ganley, which led to the failure of the Lisbon Treaty in the referendum in Ireland, were supported. Comparative research conducted by Łódzki (2011a:235) confirmed that journalistic visibility in the news broadcast during the campaign was the lowest, and the degree of control of journalists exercised by political actors was the highest of all three news programs analyzed (TVP 1 *Wiadomości*, TVN *Fakty*, TV Polsat *Wydarzenia*).

The crisis in public television deepened in the second half of 2009. This was caused, among others things, by sharp and extended conflicts around public broadcasters and the inability of the board of directors to appoint a new chairman. At the time, Law and Justice reached a compromise with the Democratic Left Alliance, and as a result, in autumn 2009, TVP1 was anew taken over by the Kaczyński brothers' formation, and TVP2 fell to the share of the left. A mechanism well known in Italy as *lottizzazione* (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:109; Mancini, 2000) acted according to which political parties shared channels and, as a result, particular news programs reflected the views and interests of different political formations. A similar phenomenon of dividing channels and antenna bands between different political parties is known in the Netherlands as 'pillarization', but access is guaranteed to all political actors.

The personnel changes and appointment of journalists favoring Law and Justice to key managerial positions immediately resulted in an increase in support for the party, and severe criticism of the ruling Civic Platform. The period between 2006 and 2010 has to be described as one of the most difficult times for the functioning of public broadcasters, in which frequent changes of chairmen and intensifying political instrumentalization contributed to the destabilization of public television and radio.

The personnel and economic crisis in the years 2007–2010 coincided with a drastic collapse in journalistic culture. The report of the Supreme Chamber

of Control from January 2010 showed irregularities in the execution of public television's mission in the years 2007–2010 and a low level of journalistic professionalism. News and current affairs programs, at the time managed by Karnowski, openly supported Law and Justice and the Kaczyński brothers. TVP1 openly involved itself in Jarosław Kaczyński's campaign, sharply criticizing his main opponent, Bronisław Komorowski. The prime-time news program TVP1 *Wiadomości*, and current affairs programs 'Wildstein presents', 'It's good to talk' and 'Special Mission', had features of open, propagandist and ideological bias. Research has shown that about 33 percent of the time on the TVP1 *Wiadomości* program, news items devoted to Bronisław Komorowski had negative overtones when in Jarosław Kaczyński's case such a tone was visible only in one percent of airtime. In May 2010 *Gazeta Wyborcza* published an article under the significant title 'TVP's journalists do not want to be the mouthpiece of the right nor of the left' (Knysz, 2010). This trend did not cease after the presidential elections in 2010. The National Broadcasting Council's report from November 2010 indicated that the Broadcasting Act had been broken by TVP1. The broadcaster was accused of a lack of objectivity and balance in presenting conflict, and selection of extreme opinions without commentary, in its coverage of the events of August 2010 on the Krakowskie Przedmieście, emphasizing the gaps in journalists' education and their professionalism.

A personnel change in the television and radio boards in 2016, was result of the victory of Law and Justice one year earlier. Jacek Kurski became the CEO of TVP and he started to introduce changes in the management and among the employed journalists. One hundred and fourteen journalists were released from their duties in a very short time, many others left of their own accord (Wybranowski, 2018). A discussion broad as never before broke out in the media and the situation remained controversial. Weekly magazine *Polityka* wrote:

The fate of the public media is sealed. As long as the Law and Justice government holds power only the point of view of one party will be acceptable, and obedient journalists will convey it to the public. (Rzeczkowski, 2016).

Whereas a journalist from *Newsweek Polska* commented:

Instructions come from above: the editor-in-chief receives texts with "day messages", and the author of the program receives instructions on what to ask his guests. It is obvious that the government should be praised and the opposition should be chased. The chairman personally oversees everything. Chairman Kurski. (Kim and Gębura, 2016).

In an interview entitled 'TVP no longer for the elites' with Danuta Holecka, one of the main anchors of prime-time news program TVP1 *Wiadomości*, the journalists stated:

We give the floor to those who, until now, no one wanted to listen to, whose harm has not been sufficiently 'attractive' to the media. (*TVP już nie tylko...*, 2017:19).

In answer to the charge that primarily politicians from Law and Justice are invited on the program, which was called 'propaganda' by political opponents, and 'leveling the field' by supporters of the ruling party, Holecka argued that 'equalize the proportions in the media world':

Indeed, Law and Justice politicians appear more often, but let us remember that it is the party that governs and changes Poland today. Whom, then, should you ask about these changes if not representatives of the government, who are members of Law and Justice? (*TVP już nie tylko...*, 2017:20)

The crisis in Polish public media is visible and deep. Jakubowicz (2007c:247–249) listed several elements, such as the crisis of dual policy toward public broadcasters, identity crisis, the legitimacy of existence, governance, financing, and additionally technological delay. We should also mention the progressive commercialization of Polish public television, which, besides Spanish television, has the highest advertising revenue, reaching 70 percent. These negative phenomena are present not only in Poland but also in both Central and Southern European countries, which further encourages comparisons with the model of the Polarized Pluralism System. The situation in TVP resembles Italian-style 'particracy' practices (Roncarolo, 2008:309). During Berlusconi's term of office, these were referred to as 'Berlusconization of the media'. A similar situation exists in Spain, where public television was instrumentalized by PESOE under Gonzales and then by the right-conservative Partido Popular under Aznar (López-Escobar, Sabada and Zugasti, 2008:183–184), and Rajoy (2011–2018), and Pedro Sánchez Pérez Castejón, since 2018.

Just as in Southern Europe, the political parallelism observed in Polish public media has the nature of party politicization and changes along with the alternation of power (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012:49). It is an exemplification of the 'politics over broadcasting' system by Hallin and Mancini, in which the parliamentary majority actually controls public television and radio. In this case, the news agenda is not the result of the autonomous decisions of journalists, but is under the strict control of the ruling majority (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:106), and party logic limits media logic by influencing the content of the main news and current affairs programs. Media partisanship grows along with intensifying political rivalry between the main parties competing for power. In Poland, this took place in the electoral campaigns in 2007, 2010, 2011, and 2015. In Southern European countries, parallelism refers to both public and private media. Meanwhile, in Poland, these conditions do not appear, political control is restricted to the

public media, although in the years 2007–2011 the opposition controlled them. This practically does not occur in the Southern European region. Because of that the term ‘systemic parallelism’ (Jakubowicz, 2007c:106), seems to be a more fitting concept to describe the mechanisms in the relationships between political actors and public broadcasters in Poland.

### 3.2.4 Negativism of private broadcast media

The biggest national, private broadcasting media, such as television stations TVN, TV Polsat, Radio ZET and RMF FM – were built, developed, and managed by Polish managers and journalists. TVN started broadcasting in 1997 and put into life the vision of a long time TV journalist, reporter, director, and manager – Mariusz Walter. In 1982, he left TVP and, thus, opted for the democratic opposition. Jan Wejchert was co-founder of the media and entertainment holding ITI, which owned the TVN station. In 2015, the TVN Group was sold to the American media corporation Scripps Networks Interactive, which specializes in lifestyle, cooking, and travel shows. Discovery Communications, one of the biggest providers of educational and documentary shows, bought the TVN Group in 2018. From the very beginning, TV POLSAT has been in the hands of the same owner, Polish entrepreneur Zygmunt Solorz-Żak. The station’s founder and, de facto sole owner has never worked in the media nor had any journalistic experience, and so from the very beginning he treated television as a business that is supposed to generate income. Radio enthusiasts - the legendary journalist - Wojciechowski (Radio ZET) and the skillful manager with anti-communist views - Tyczyński (RMF FM), created two national radio stations - RMF FM and Radio ZET. They were both linked to the democratic opposition. Radio ZET was established with the help of foreign investors (Eurozet media holdings, which belongs to the French Groupe Lagardère). In 2007, Tyczyński decided to sell RMF FM to the German group Bauer GK, which never before has owned a radio station in its portfolio and has never been active outside the press market. In consequence, after thirty years of development of the media market, only one out of four nationwide radio and television broadcasters, TV Polsat, remains in the hands of a Polish owner.

A high level of autonomy and independent creation of their media content characterize holdings and media groups investing in the radio and television market. This is not synonymous with a lack of political sympathies and dislikes, as well as with the absence of the problem of disrespecting the rules of journalistic professionalism. There were no official agreements between the owners of TVN and TV Polsat, and radio stations RMF FM and ZET and the political

parties. There are also no indications that political parties controlled the media content in anyway. These broadcasters have their own editorial lines. Although commercial media logic would dictate the strategies of escapism or neutrality, they still participate in politics by actively commenting on and interpreting it. Their shared feature is their disappointment with the political culture of the ruling elites and a low assessment of it (in most cases justified), skepticism, and a negative attitude toward political parties and politicians. They differ in the degree of political commitment - from escapism (Radio ZET and RMF FM), through moderate criticism of political actors (TV Polsat), to open and decisive hostility (TVN). There are differences in journalistic professionalism and in the progress of the commercialization and tabloidization process.

Among the four private radio and television broadcasters, there is no visible integration between political elites, media owners, and journalists (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995:65–66). It is present in Spain (Prisa company- PSOE, Radio COPE, Telefonía de España- PP), in Italy (Berlusconi -Mediaset) or Greece, and since 2017 also in the Czech Republic (Prime Minister Babiš owns the media group MAFRA). Undoubtedly, this feature distinguishes the Polish private media from that in the Polarized Pluralism Model (Hallin and Mancini, 2004) and Politicized Media Model in Central and Eastern Europe (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c: 28–31; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2018). However, in each of the four media, a deepening of the tabloidization process is visible, although, its intensity varies. In news programs, soft and attractive information replace reliable and diversified materials. The infotainment and politiconatinment (Riegert, 2007:3–6; Piontek, Hordecki, and Ossowski, 2013:86–87) become an increasingly noticeable way of presenting politics, and the success of the broadcasters is measured by the income of the owners, and not by the service of the public interest.

TVN and TVN24 with their wide range of news and current affairs programs are escaping the pattern typical of the public sphere. In their program strategy, news programs are prioritized and receive a high level of funding. In the 2000s TVN's main news program *Fakty* started to compete with TVP1 *Wiadomości* for first place in the ratings. It brought the best Polish journalists and publicists on board, first Tomasz Lis (1997–2004), who was the author and star of the program, then Kamil Durczok (2006–2015) and many other respected journalists and reporters. TVN and TVN24 employed or still employ Pawłowski, Pochanke, Olejnik, Miecugow, Rymanowski, Morozowski, Sekielski, Sianecki, who often receive the highest prizes in journalistic competitions. A study conducted in 2009 on behalf of UPC confirmed Durczok's leading position in the popularity polls category of news presenter (27.3 percent of votes). Third place went to Pochanke (15.4 percent). In the talk show category, Drzyzga (31.9 percent)

and Olejnik (19 percent) were the most acclaimed. Among the entertainment presenters, Wojewódzki and Majewski received ex aequo 19.4 percent each, and Prokop 10.8 percent (*Kogo chcą oglądać Polacy*, 2009).

A strategy of a 'star', the hiring of the most famous and liked journalists, who are also the most expensive, is consistently implemented by the owners of TVN. The visibility of stars and famous journalists translated into the first position in the ranking of media brands, and the lead in the number of quotations, their range, and resonance (Szuringer, 2009:12–13). The owners of TVN rely on big, proven TV formats of which the production is amply funded. Their goal is to offer programs tailored to the needs of the most attractive marketing group, i.e., wealthy customers from larger cities between 16 and 49 years of age. However, the general decrease in the interest in politics is generating some negative trends. To keep the viewers and advertisers, broadcasters need to introduce some changes in the news programs. The current affairs programs aired for years in TVN, were canceled or moved to TVN24. An attempt to simplify the main news program TVN *Fakty* and to present sensational, catchy news stories has been visible for some time. This tendency has been confirmed in research by Piontek (2009b:358). This researcher found in 2008 one hundred and forty-four news-bites out of one hundred and seventy-seven were qualified as soft. Miecugow answered these accusations, explaining that tabloidization occurs under the influence of viewers' expectations, which cannot be ignored by commercial media:

R. Stępowski: It is the viewers who force the media, including TVN24, to tabloidize? The news is to be short, light and sensational...

G. Miecugow: Yes, but not entirely. We air documentaries from the series 'Ewa Ewart recommends' and conversations, 'Another point of view' - these are not easy positions of our program. Two parallel trends are developing. Anyway, this phenomenon occurs not only in our country. Admittedly, the most popular programs are still entertainment programs in our open channels, but at the same time, thematic channels are being developed. Serious conversations will probably never attract such a large audience as 'Dancing with the Stars', but thanks to such productions as the one mentioned above, other, more ambitious projects can be realized. (*Prestizż dziennikarza zależy od ilości kliknięć*, 2010).

Empirical research conducted during the 2005 political campaigns (Łódzki, 2011b; Zubrzycki, 2006), and during the 2009 European Parliament election campaign (Łódzki, 2011a) indicate that the television station did not adhere to the rule of equal access for all subjects active in the electoral race, and focused only on coverage of the main political actors. Research on the content of TVN *Fakty* in 2006 showed that 38 percent of news was devoted to Law and Justice,

20 percent to Civic Platform, and 14 percent to the remaining parties. In about 60 percent of the analyzed information, journalists attempted to remain independent, in more than 10 percent were their political preferences visible (Zubrzycki, 2006:104). A comparative content analysis of TVP1, *Wiadomości*, TVN *Fakty* and TV Polsat *Wydarzenia* conducted by Łódzki, shows that out of all three news programs, TVN *Fakty* was the most critical toward political actors (Łódzki, 2010:200), and attacked them the most severely (Łódzki, 2011a:233). It quite often showed politics in a distorted mirror, reliant on satire, irony, and ridiculed pathologies, irrational behaviors, and faults of politicians. In the media monitoring conducted by Press-Service, TVN *Fakty* usually occupied first place in the number of reportages containing irony and sarcasm, only occasionally yielding to TV Polsat *Wydarzenia* (Gembalik, 2009). A characteristic feature of TVN *Fakty* is the last news-bite in the prime time news program, which uses humor, ridicules and belittles human vices and stupidity, which also includes politicians. The highest number of such messages in TVN was noted between November 2009 and November 2010. For instance, in July 2010 more than thirty news items were recorded, which is decidedly more than in TV Polsat *Wydarzenia* or TVP1 *Wiadomości* (*Analiza dzienników informacyjnych*, 2010:11). TVN *Fakty* discussed a lower number of subjects, but more time was devoted to them than in other programs. This was also visible during the 2005 (Łódzki, 2010:130) and 2009 (Łódzki, 2011a:241) campaigns, and is confirmed by the Press Service's research (*Analiza dzienników informacyjnych*, 2010:5).

In the 2005 presidential and parliamentary campaigns TVN's journalists were critical of all political actors, regardless of their position on the political scene. The most negative statements concerned Law and Justice, then the Democratic Left Alliance, but also other remaining parties - League of Polish Families, Self-Defense, Polish People's Party. All the main candidates in the presidential campaign, i.e., Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (Democratic Left Alliance), Lech Kaczyński (Law and Justice) and Donald Tusk (Civic Platform), were assessed negatively (Łódzki, 2010:180). The principle of criticism toward all political actors, visible in numerous editorial materials, reports, columns, comments, etc., was confirmed by a study of the 2009 European Parliament campaign coverage. The journalists working for TVN to the highest degree stressed the unfair, egoistic and unethical behaviors of politicians (Łódzki, 2011a:241). The visibility of party leaders was increased, and the main focus was on the political game, conflicts between the main actors and scandals caused by politicians. Besides TVN *Fakty*, TV Polsat *Wydarzenia* has to a great extent covered aggressive speeches of political actors - representatives of the party, the president, and the employees of

his Chancellery, the Prime Minister and the government. Between November 2009 and November 2010, the news broadcast by TVN *Fakty* accounted for about 40 percent of all materials from the four analyzed news programs of this nature on Law and Justice and for about 19 percent on Civic Platform (*Analiza dzienników informacyjnych*, 2010:12).

The content analysis of TVN *Fakty* carried out in two election periods (2005, 2009), as well as evaluation of current affairs programs in TVN and in TVN24 do not allow us to conclude that closer relations between TVN and any political party have developed or that staff have become integrated with the political elite. Criticism was directed toward all political actors but its intensity differed. An extreme example was the conflict with Law and Justice leaders and the resulting ban on contacts for politicians of this party with TVN journalists. In this case, the adversary model took on an extreme form. The station's attitude toward other relevant political parties was similar - unpredictable and sometimes biased. This severe criticism was not, as it seems, rooted in the convictions and political preferences of TVN owners and the journalists employed there. First of all, it was caused by the disappointment with the whole political class and its low skill and ethics, secondly by media logic, i.e., the will to maintain high ratings, which is more surely provided by criticism of all political actors than by awarding support to any political formation.

TVN and the oldest information TV channel TVN24 were and still are leading in the number and viewer ratings of current affair programs such as: 'Dot over the i', Sekielski and Mrozowski's 'Now us' (2005–2010), as well as their 'Contact Lens' (since 2005), Mrozowski's authorial program 'That's how it is', etc. These programs fulfill the watchdog function, watch out for irregularities and scandals, spot a politician's mishaps and weaknesses, and sometimes ridicule them, regardless of their party affiliation. It has not always been done in accordance with the rules of journalistic ethics (e.g., presenting Renata Berger's tapes recorded with a hidden camera during the party's convention in September 2006 in 'Now us'). The journalists were and still are hostile toward Law and Justice and the Kaczyński brothers, and currently toward Jarosław Kaczyński, which is expressed in the recurrent lack of objectivism and one-sided framing of Law and Justice and its leaders as those players who are responsible for the extreme conflicts on the political scene.

Civic Platform, the Democratic Left Alliance, and Polish People's Party were treated much more gently, although coverage of these parties was not free from criticism and biased commentary. An example of such behavior is the episode of 'Now us' devoted to Mirosław Drzewiecki – the Minister for Sport in Tusk's government and his trouble with the American police. The program was watched by

more than two million viewers, which ensured TVN the leading position on the market with 22.83 percent of the audience share (*Fakty w lutym*, 2011).

The Smoleńsk catastrophe in April 2010 had a considerable, though short-lived, influence on the coverage of politics in TVN. Interestingly, the coverage analysis of national mourning in TVN *Fakty* after April 2010 (Lipnicka, 2010) shows that the Presidency of Lech Kaczyński, so heavily criticized by journalists of the station before the catastrophe, has not been evaluated once. A stand was also not taken in the matter of the burial of the Presidential couple in Wawel Castle. During the presidential campaign, journalists tried to refrain from explicit and sharp criticism, which was frequent in previous campaigns.

The logic of TVN's coverage of politics is expressed in the construction of the news-bite itself, which remains under the influence of traditional Polish journalism. It is almost always accompanied by a commentary, the journalist is usually a judge in the case, he/she always knows better, he/she often advises politicians on how to act. A journalistic visibility dominates over visibility of the political actor. Politicians' statements are usually in the background of the information, sound-bites are commented, evaluated, and summarized by the reporter or the presenter in the studio, who usually has the last word. On the other hand, commercial media logic is visible, which is expressed in infotainment and politicotainment, which increasingly often are present in the programming offered by the station and penetrate into the way politics is reported.

The analyses of the 2005, 2009, 2010, and 2015 campaigns have confirmed the presence of framing of politics as conflict, competition, and race, which allows us to state that coverage of campaigns as a game and horse-race is quite extensive in the case of TVN. The station presented the results of research sponsored by TVN as well as by other centers, analyzed and commented on them. The biggest amount of time was devoted to leaders, other candidates were marginalized or totally disregarded. We can also observe elements typical of customized coverage. In 2009, it was TVN *Fakty*, which to the largest extent (43.3 percent compared to 29.7 percent in TV Polsat *Wydarzenia* and 27.7 percent in TVP1 *Wiadomości*) have focused on information on the leaders of the electoral race (Łódzki, 2011a:238), their skills and personalities. The same trend was visible in the 2010, 2011, and 2015 elections. On the other hand, the 2005 (Łódzki, 2010), 2008 (Piontek, 2009b:362–363) and 2009 (Łódzki, 2011a:229; Piontek, 2011c:177) research show that much more time was devoted to electoral information, politics, social issues in TVN *Fakty* than in TV Polsat *Wydarzenia*. The acquisition of the media group by an American owner in 2015 had no influence on the character of the coverage of politics in TVN *Fakty*. The one-sided approach toward Jarosław Kaczyński, Law and

Justice, its members, and both Szydło (2015–2017) and Morawiecki's (2017 on) government is still present.

TVN reactions and behavior is typical of a broadcasting medium in the Hybrid-Liberal model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c). No relationships between the broadcaster and political parties or governing formations are present. These relations are devoid of features of political parallelism. There is no evidence of control or influence exercised by political actors. This TV station is autonomous, but has clearly-defined preferences and is governed by its own logic, to which the coverage of politics is subordinate.

Zygmunt Solorz-Żak adopted a different strategy for his stations than the TVN Group. The emphasis is on entertainment and sports (TV Polsat Sport, TV Polsat Sport Extra, TV Polsat Futbol), and in third place on information. TV Polsat has very quickly gained the reputation of a tabloid medium with low standards. Its main target group are residents of small towns, with lower incomes, less well-educated, with low expectations and bad taste. The range of information and current affairs programs is much more limited than in TVN, although, TV Polsat news has existed since 2008. The main news program is TV Polsat *Wydarzenia*. For years, it had the lowest viewer ratings and the lowest social impact of all three evening news programs. Compared to TVP1 *Wiadomości* and TVN *Fakty*, it is the most tabloid. It excels in infotainment, broadcasts a small number of news-bites concerning politics, and a lot of sensational and entertainment information, devoid of any greater social significance. TV Polsat *Wydarzenia* is characterized by low professionalism, the journalists often commit mistakes, and the most technical shortcomings appear there (Gembalik, 2010).

TV Polsat behaves more like a typical commercial broadcaster in the Hybrid-Liberal than Politicized Media Model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c: 26, 29). It is directed at a wide audience, and taking a stand on either side of the political scene could diminish that effect, which, in turn, could influence profits. A content analysis of TV Polsat *Wydarzenia* during the 2005 campaigns (Łódzki, 2010:178) show that the station presented the highest number of electoral news, but it was short and superficial. It presented the most neutral information (over 33 percent compared to 19 percent in TVP1 and 28 percent in TVN). These observations are confirmed by research conducted by other scientists at a later time (Tomaszewicz, 2006). In the program, 35 percent of all presented news was light in nature and focused on social subjects, scandals, crimes, weather, and other issues immaterial to the public interest. Information on national politics was prepared with a certain distance, and no political commitment on either side (84 percent). In 73 percent of cases, the information confronted the position of the coalition and opposition, but without maintaining a proper balance in terms

of criticism and praise. Political actors were criticized frequently (one hundred and twenty-nine times) and occasionally praised (eighteen times). More often criticism concerned Jarosław Kaczyński than the opposition (Tomaszewicz, 2006:112). High journalistic visibility in the presented news and relatively low level of control by political actors is also worth mentioning (Łódzki, 2011b:235). Similar to TVN *Fakty*, and characteristic for commercial media logic, the horse-race and the personalization coverage models dominated.

An analysis of program content conducted in various electoral periods and between elections does not allow us to advance a thesis that TV Polsat supported any political party. Law and Justice was criticized much more often than other parties, but it did not result in such spectacular tensions as in the case of TVN. Relations with the remaining parties in the analyzed periods were characterized by ideological distance and avoidance of involvement in the course of political events. Generally, TV Polsat is an example of a television station entirely guided by commercial media logic. Like many American broadcasters, it does not have a sense of social mission, and the level of news programs is low (Płudowski, 2007:67).

TVN and TV Polsat, are affected to varying degrees by ailments typical of today's commercial media, such as tabloidization, declining journalistic professionalism, and global de-professionalization. However, both stations avoid the Foxification of news. (Wanta, 2008:112)

An interesting trend appeared in TV Polsat *Wydarzenia* following the 2015 elections and was especially visible at the turn of 2017 and 2018, when Szydło was replaced as Prime Minister by Mateusz Morawiecki, which was followed by changes in some government posts. In February 2018 viewer ratings of TV Polsat *Wydarzenia* (16.44 percent) exceeded that of TVP1 *Wiadomości* (15.15 percent) (Kordupski, 2018). Coverage on political actors had the most subtle character in comparison to the anti-Law and Justice TVN *Fakty* and the anti-Civic Platform TVP1 *Wiadomości*.

The RMF FM and ZET radio stations are leaders on the radio market since they entered the media market (Kordubski, 2018b). Stanisław Tyczyński, founder and long-lasting owner of Poland's biggest radio broadcaster – RMF FM, was a founder of the oppositional Radio Free Poland in 1981, and his anti-communist views are well known. These have undoubtedly influenced the negative attitude of RMF FM toward the post-communist left. This commercial station has opted for entertainment and infotainment. In a short broadcast RMF FM *Fakty* news from Poland and abroad is presented in short chunks, it is only signaled, without additional insight. One of the most important prime-time current affairs

programs was 'Counter-espionage of Kamil Durczok' and after his departure, 'Counter-intelligence by RMF FM'. An analysis of the content of the 'Counter-intelligence of Kamil Durczok' in 2006 has encompassed forty-three editions (Kostro, 2006). The representatives of the ruling Law and Justice were invited most often (44 percent), followed by the largest opposition party, Civic Platform (24 percent), and Democratic Left Alliance (12 percent). Interviews were characterized by content-related criticism and substantive assessment of the activities of the politicians and parties they represented (Kostro, 2006:118). They were devoid of elements of open partisanship, propaganda, and ideological bias, which was probably due to the personality of the journalist and not to the programming policy of RMF FM radio. The program of Durczok, who at the time was one of the most popular journalists in the country, was an attempt to improve the ratings of the station, and thus inscribed itself in commercial media logic.

The station's partisanship manifested itself in other programs, in open and sharp or sophisticated form, or gentle and hidden under the guise of objectivity. Under the Democratic Left Alliance (2001–2004), the radio was definitely anti-this party, and under Law and Justice (2005–2007), it was anti-Law and Justice. Critical comments appeared in the news program RMF FM Facts every hour (Fakty co godzinę), but mainly entertainment genres were used for this purpose, including true-political fiction. This was based on the knowledge that the target audience consisted of young people not interested in politics, bored with classic information and publicist genres. Open or hidden criticism was present in satirical programs, based on irony, sarcasm, and humor, such as 'The most non-political novel by Klara Veritas' (Najbardziej niepolityczna powieść Klary Veritas), 'The third twin' (Trzeci Bliźniak), 'Gander's Swan Song' (Łabędzi śpiew Gąsiora). Not only was the governing formation criticized. Opposition parties could not count on the station's favor either. In RMF FM's editorial line the dominant hue was a deep aversion or even contempt of the whole political class, which is reflected in the following fragment of the program, in which Klara Veritas, the author of the novel 'Gander's Swan Song' has described the political situation in Poland as 'putting powder and lipstick on a dead body':

Konrad Piasecki: What do you think, will there be a brawl or death from boredom? In the announcements it looks almost idyllic - Law and Justice are to sing, the Platform is to wave the blue flag, the League of Polish Families is to give out white roses. Is it going to be so nice?

Klara Veritas: One thing that is certain is that nothing is certain here. Yes, all the demonstrators will try to show their human side - to convince everyone that, contrary to the obvious evidence, they are a part of Western civilization. But it will be a walk with nitroglycerin - the slightest shock may lead to an explosion, the most simple

coincidence, and especially a carefully-prepared and provoked coincidence. The mental and ethical level of the so-called political class in Poland leads me to expect everything – in my opinion, everything bad. (Klara Weritas, 2006)

Just as in the case of TVN and TV Polsat, RMF FM's editorial line is determined by its owners and managers. They shape its content autonomously and are guided primarily by commercial media logic. There can be no talk of support for any political party. Political bias and partisanship were changeable and unpredictable, and they stemmed not only from the anti-communist views of the owner but also from the short-term situation and adopted market strategy. With the 2007 takeover of the station by the Bauer Group, a visible intensification of content tabloidization took place. The station opted for satirical and entertainment programs and the coverage of politics is dominated by infotainment.

Radio ZET was influenced by the personality of its founder - Andrzej Woyciechowski, a respected journalist with extensive radio experience. The station was not aggressively set toward the competition on the market. It calmly realized its developmental strategies, which, undoubtedly, translated into its style and program offer. Radio ZET had a different target audience than RMF FM, which considerably influenced the positioning and content of the news programs. Its listeners are middle-aged inhabitants of large cities, well-educated managers, more interested in politics than RMF FM's listeners. The station has news programs - 'Wiadomości Radia ZET', Olejnik's interviews – 'Radio Zet's Guest' [Gość Radia ZET] and a Sunday show called 'The seventh day of the week' [7 Dzień Tygodnia], hosted by the same journalist interviews with representatives of the biggest political parties. Just like other commercial media, radio ZET is critical toward political formations. In June 2009 Jarosław Kaczyński accused the station of taking part in Civic Platform's government propaganda and 'serving that party.' He also accused journalists working there of organizing a witch-hunt and presenting the party in a negative way, which according to him had a negative impact on the party's result in the European Parliament elections (Łyczko, 2009). Another conflict occurred in March 2011, when one of Law and Justice' leading politicians, Mariusz Błaszczak, accused Monika Olejnik of unprofessional and unethical behavior, which, in his opinion, was expressed in the unequal treatment of guests on 'The seventh day of the week' program. As a consequence of the incident, politicians from the party announced that they would no longer participate in the program (Macheta, 2011). Despite these accusations from Law and Justice politicians, there are no visible connections to any political formation, nor do Radio ZET owners or journalists support a particular politician or a political party.

The commercial media in Poland, as illustrated by the examples of TVN, TV Polsat, RMF FM, and Radio ZET, have grown into economically strong entities, which for years have been at the top of the list of richest companies in Poland. On the one hand, economic success and a sound market position have strengthened the independence of the media and their independence from political actors, freeing them from political pressure and thus, political instrumentalization. As Garton Ash claims, Jarosław Kaczyński is attempting to 'orbánize' the media, as in Hungary, however, in the case of the broadcasters active in Poland, it is not that easy (*Prof. Garton Ash*, 2018). On the other hand, they act under strong economic pressure of the owners, advertisers, and competitors. In all four cases, the pursuit of revenue and profit results in economic instrumentalization, progressive commercialization, and tabloidization, de-professionalization of the profession, strong negativity, and favoring of low tastes, which differ only in scale and pace.

### **Summary: Political parallelism - political and structural bias go together**

Hallin and Mancini (2004:96–98) claim that political parallelism is strongly developed in Mediterranean countries, of which broadcast media are a great example. In the Polish media system we can observe a certain dualism. On the one hand, although the media declare certain values and a defined editorial line, they are autonomous in creating their content and are not connected to political actors in a formal way, as in the previously mentioned examples of Berlusconi and Babiš. Often, it is politicians who seek the attention and support of the media, as is the case with Law and Justice, which tries to maintain good relations with the media of Father Rydzyk, or with the weeklies *Sieci* and *Gazeta Polska*. Indeed, politicians are seeking the sympathy and favor of these media, and not the other way round. On the other hand, public media are breaking this pattern. They are not independent, and the coverage of politics is determined by the ruling party. In this case, the concepts of systemic parallelism (Jakubowicz, 2007c:107) and political instrumentalization seem to best reflect the essence of the relationship between public media and political actors.

Commercial television like TV Polsat and TVN, and radio stations such as RMF FM and ZET are autonomous in the process of creating content of political and current affairs programs. They are guided by their own logic. The attitude toward political formations is different from that of TVP. Commercial stations are dominated by a critical approach to political actors, referred to as negativity - a well-known and well-researched trend in the Liberal (Farnsworth and

Lichter, 2008:48–53) and Hybrid-Liberal (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c) models. In their case, we need to speak of structural bias. This criticism, which is sometimes very sharp (TVN vs. Law and Justice or RMF FM vs. Law and Justice, and, in 2000, also the Democratic Left Alliance) and often devoid of objectivity, can also be treated as a type of market strategy. Surveys of trust in particular politicians revealed rather low scores (e.g. Bronisław Komorowski and Donald Tusk) or very low scores (Jarosław Kaczyński) (*Zaufanie do polityków*, 2010:9). In the 2006 survey, only 5 percent of respondents chose politicians, whereas selected 40 percent of journalists as a group which cares about the public interest. Over 57 percent assumed that journalists are honest and reliable in their work, and have shown trust in them (*Ocena pracy dziennikarzy*, 2006:2–3). Paradoxically, such a high assessment of journalists and low of politicians, can be the consequence of the perspective of journalists on the political elites. They feel entitled to criticize an entire political class and, in doing so, to find the approval of the public. Thus, they reach voters with different views. In the 2010 presidential campaign, voters mainly identified themselves with the center -33 percent - and with various hues of the right-wing -30 percent, and only 18 percent agreed with left-wing views. A significant number of voters were unable to define their views on the left-right (19 percent), as they were not interested in politics or were disgusted with it (*Wybory prezydenckie w cieniu katastrofy smoleńskiej*, 2010:9). In the 2011 parliamentary elections, power remained in the hands of Donald Tusk's party (39.18 percent of votes), which beat Jarosław Kaczyński's party by 10 percent. The nature of the relationship between the media and political actors has not changed in the following years. The same crucial features of the media system, as noted in the second half of the 2000s, are present also in the 2010s. In the next parliamentary elections in 2015, after eight years of Civic Platform rule, Law and Justice won with 37.58 percent in the Sejm and 39.9 percent in the Senate elections. Several months previously, Poles chose a president from the same party. Kaczyński's formation has gained full power and has commenced the process of deep changes in public media. The politics of this party, in a very short time, led to a deep polarization of the media as never before.

Negativity and criticism of the media is an attempt to keep voters disillusioned with politics and to attract new ones. The difference lies in who is criticized more intensively and more often and who is criticized less sharply and only occasionally. This type of bias, which is based on criticism of all political actors, especially those in power, is present in many countries that Hallin and Mancini include in the Liberal and Democratic Corporatist models, as in Germany (Esser and Hemmer, 2008:298–300) and Sweden (Strömbäck, 2008a:166–167). It is

described as structural bias, which translates into horse-race coverage of politics rather than coverage of issues (Gulati, Just, Crigler, 2004:237).

Commercial stations TV Polsat and TVN have tried to maintain pluralism by inviting representatives of different political options, but actually, guided by the media attractiveness of invited guests, they always chose the same politicians and experts. They put emphasis on the background, interpretation, and opinion, although, commentary and interpretation very often dominated over information and report. In this context, Polish journalism seems to be closer to the tradition of French, rather than Anglo-Saxon or German information-based journalism, although in recent decades there too has been a clear downward trend in broadcasting of hard information in favor of soft news, interpretation, and opinion (Farnsworth and Lichter, 2008:51; Esser and Hammer, 2008:299). Generally, Polish journalists employed by private stations are not politically entrenched like Italian, Greek, or Spanish journalists. They do not belong to political parties and do not support them formally. Media logic means that their behavior and coverage of politics show more features observed in the Liberal than in the Polarized Pluralism System of Hallin and Mancini, which, in the case of Central and Eastern Europe, allows us to locate them in the Hybrid-Liberal Model more than in Politicized Media model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c: 26–27). There is a high level of aggression in the political discourse, especially of the representatives of Law and Justice, within the framework of structural bias and its own model of political coverage (horse-race and personalization coverage). More than 25 percent of all materials on this party distributed in TV Polsat and TVN's prime time news programs between November 2009 and November 2010 contained these types of statements (*Analiza dzienników informacyjnych*, 2010:12–15).

The analysis conducted in this chapter allows us to indicate the dominant models of politics coverage in the Polish media (see: Fig. 3.5).

The first includes public media, managed by institutions appointed by the President and Parliament. Since the beginning of the 1990s, employment there has been determined by political factors, favor, or outright support of the governing party/coalition. This, in turn, resulted in varying degrees of instrumentalization of public media and domination of the ruling parties' logic, which is clearly reflected in the media content and in types of politics coverage. The term 'entrenched journalism', introduced by Spanish researchers, is very useful in the context of the Polish media system. It dominates politics coverage in TVP and Polish Radio. It needs to be underlined that in the case of public media, party bias is typical, and it is dependent on election results. The media support the party/parties which rule at a given moment, but the transfer of power and

changes in the managerial positions in the media are reflected in changes in the level of support and hostility for political actors. This rule was derogated from only in the period between 2007 and 2010, when the President and the government came from competing parties. At that time, public media were under the control of Law and Justice, which was in opposition, and were supported by the President from the same party.

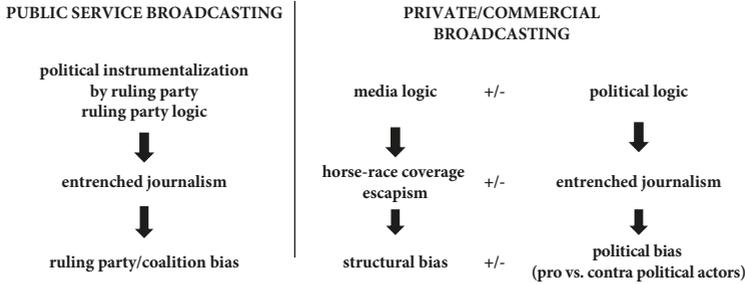


Fig. 3.5: Dominant models of news coverage in Poland  
Source: Author.

In the case of private media, coverage of politics is governed by more complex mechanisms. On the one hand we have quality media, on the other hand, commercial-tabloid media, and they all have to stay in a competitive market. The number of viewers, readers, and listeners defines advertising revenue, which basically is the main source of income of media companies in a market economy. Therefore, media logic is a fundament of their activity. As a rule, such media are dominated by horse-race and personalization coverage models or political escapism. If the media, mainly tabloids, judge political actors, they usually criticize all of them, regardless of the character of their ideological or programming preferences. They focus on infotainment, politainment, on sensation, scandals, and attractive news. If they present a political actor in a good light, it is usually a temporary and volatile action. Thus, structural bias is characteristic for commercial and tabloid media, observable in tabloid dailies *Fakt* and *Super Express*, as well as in private radio stations RMF FM and Radio ZET, and on TV channels - TV Polsat and TVN. In many cases, media logic is accompanied by political logic, although its scale differs from owner to owner and from journalist to journalist. The media consistently present a clear editorial line, speak out in favor or against, support or criticize political actors. Very often, in the case of daily newspapers and opinion weeklies, editorial preferences are declared in the

subtitles on the first page. Entrenched journalism produces political bias, as is the case in politics coverage in the dailies *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Nasz Dziennik*, *Gazeta Polska Codziennie*, opinion weeklies, as well as in TVN *Fakty*, Radio Maryja, and TV Trwam. Polish journalism has never developed pack journalism typical of the American Liberal Model. The journalistic circle is deeply divided according to political beliefs, and whether they stand for or against certain parties - in power or in opposition. Journalists who maintain a sense of perspective and whom remain neutral toward political actors are very difficult to find. The polarization of the journalistic community and the media intensified significantly after 2015, and this is reflected in the media content and presence of strong political bias. Nevertheless, the media are not controlled by elites and ruling parties, as is observed, for example, in the case of Hungary (Urbán et al., 2017).



## **Conclusion: The Polish media system on the map of Europe**

The main aim of this analysis is to explain how the political context determines the development and structure of the media system in Poland. Undoubtedly, the relationships between, on the one hand, political actors, i.e., politicians and political parties, and on the other the mass media, i.e., the media ownership and journalists, are crucial. Other elements of the media system context are secondary to this study (see Fig. I.1).

The media system is one of the most dynamic elements of the social system. It is constantly transforming, mainly due to rapidly-developing communication technology. Less than a decade ago, the traditional media dominated the process of political communication. At present, their position has been considerably limited by online issues and social media, which in the hands of politicians, journalists (professional users), and citizens (non-professional users), have gained a new meaning and have left a mark on the nature of their mutual relationships (Davis, Holtz-Bacha and Just, 2017; Nożewski, 2018).

These transformations are global in nature, but in Poland, as well as in the whole of Central and Eastern Europe, it coincided with deep political and economic reforms and social changes. At the beginning of the transformation in the 1990s, it seemed that the media systems in this part of Europe, which has just entered the path to democracy, would evolve toward the Polarized Pluralism Model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012, 2015a, 2015c, 2018), with strong state control and far-reaching politicization of the media. Now, after thirty years of development, can we prove the thesis right? What about those countries outside the European Union?

### **The media landscape in CEE**

Unfortunately, media and communication studies in Central and Eastern Europe do not develop as quickly as in countries in the Western part of the continent, additionally comparative empirical research is not widely used here. In consequence, we lack the quantitative and qualitative data that would cover all twenty-one countries (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c), and help us answer the research questions in a solid and satisfactory way. We have access only to the fragmented empirical data from a few states, which were members of international comparative projects. Many projects and their final publications do not have an empirical

character, or each participant used a different method and analyzed information from only selected countries<sup>6</sup>. Despite this limited data, it is important to locate the Polish media system on the map of Europe.

The first and most important problem the countries of the region had to face following the disintegration of the Eastern bloc was the lack of home capital and of investors interested in the media. Those were present only in several countries, like Poland, in which Zygmunt Solorz-Żak, one of the wealthiest Polish entrepreneurs, owns TV Polsat; or Romania, where the Intact Media Group is owned by Dan Voiculescu, who is also a politician and the founder of the conservative party. As a result, in a very short time, Western media groups expanded rapidly in the lucrative, emerging market economy in CEE. In the middle of the 1990s, the press market was appropriated by such groups as Axel Springer, Bauer, Ringier, Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, Passauer Neue Presse, Orkla Media and others. At present, most daily newspapers and magazines published in this part of the continent belong to foreign publishing houses. As soon as the legal situation allowed, private radio and television broadcasters went on the attack. Currently, several media corporations function in the eleven CEE countries belonging to the European Union. The most important among them are the Swedish Modern Time Group (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, as well as Ukraine and Russia from outside the EU), the American Central European Media Enterprises Ltd. (CME) owned by the millionaire Ronald Lauder (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Croatia, and Slovenia), the Swedish group Scandinavian Broadcasting Systems (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and non-EU countries - Macedonia and Serbia), the German RTL Group Bertelsmann (Croatia, Poland, and Hungary), Murdoch's

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6 Such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania in the case of *Comparing Media Systems in Central Europe. Between Commercialization and Politicization* (Dobek-Ostrowska and Głowacki, 2008); the Baltic states, the Czech Republic, Poland and Ukraine in *Comparative Media System. European and Global Perspective* (Dobek-Ostrowska, Głowacki, Jakubowicz and Sükösd, eds., 2010); Lithuania, Poland and Russia in *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World* (Hallin and Mancini, eds., 2012); Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia in *Party Colonization of the Media in Central and Eastern Europe* (Bajomi-Lázár, 2014); some selected countries members of EU in *Media and Politics in New Democracies* (Zielonka, 2015); Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia in *Populist Political Communication in Europe* (Aalberg et al., 2016). Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia are analyzed in *Media in Third-Wave Democracies* (Bajomi-Lázár, ed., 2017; Weaver and Willnat, 2012).

News Corporation (Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia and outside the EU- Serbia). The American media corporation Scripps Networks Interactive bought the Polish TVN Group in 2016; two years later it was taken over by the American Discovery Communications Inc.

Foreign investors do not hide the fact- that profit is their most important objective. Thus, entertainment media dominate, and broadcasters and publishers escape the public sphere by deciding not to invest in information media. Poland clearly stands out in this context, as Polish companies own the majority of newspapers with a national circulation, opinion-forming journals, and TV Polsat. All main national terrestrial broadcasters have 24-hour news and business channels, which are absent in many other countries of the region or which constitute a market margin. Despite this difference, commercialization, tabloidization, increasing concentration and fierce competition, typical for the Liberal Model, is clearly visible in Polish media. Thus, on the one hand, a shift of focus from political media to commercial media is evident in Central and Eastern Europe, but on the other hand, there are several cases in which the owner is politically involved, such as the previously mentioned Dan Voiculescu, as well as the Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš.

### **The Polish media system in a state of permanent change**

I started with a few research questions. The first one concerned (RQ1) the de-professionalization of journalism. I assumed that this global trend, recognized and researched in many countries around the world, has also reached Poland and caused a lower quality of politics coverage in the media. As the case of Poland indicates, legal regulations may be very good, but the practice does not live up to them and is marked by a lack of respect for norms and rules. The authors of *Comparing Media Systems. Three Models of Media and Politics*, have not analyzed such processes as globalization and global trends in journalism, its deprofessionalization, which results from commercialization and economic instrumentalization, which is also the result of technological revolution and digitalization. Hallin and Mancini's book was published in 2004, thus, the work on it was completed much before certain processes and trends gained momentum in the first and second decade of the 21st century. At the time of writing, it was impossible to predict them. The researchers described them more than ten years later (Hallin and Mancini, 2017). For the dynamically-developing media market, one decade is like an entire epoch. In this short period, new phenomena have emerged and old ones intensified. All of them have been, and still are, of key importance for journalistic professionalism. First of all, the structural crisis of

the press caused by the global recession and the economic crisis, deepened. Its most visible symptoms are bankruptcy of media companies, the disappearance of press titles from the market, mass redundancies, and unemployment among journalists, pauperization of the environment. The direct consequence for journalistic professionalism is a closure of traditional paper editions, a switching of publishers to packages combining paper and online editions, and, indirectly, a disappearance of specialization (combining the tasks of reporter, publisher, commentator, etc.), deterioration in the quality of journalism, and an adaptation of journalism to new technological conditions. A significance of social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, for journalists' activities, needs to be mentioned. Thanks to these media, the profession has gained easy and fast access to all users, including political actors, as well as the public. This changes the nature of traditional political communication.

In addition, Europe is experiencing the syndrome of European Union (Europeanization), which is changing not only the continent but also the Union itself. In Poland, the journalistic profession is undergoing the same transformations as in many Western European countries. However, in Poland, the processes of de-professionalization and universalization of the journalistic profession are progressing faster, and negative consequences of a decline in the quality of the profession are more visible, especially in its coverage of politics. These transformations happen much faster in the democratic world than Hallin and Mancini (2012, 2017) predicted, as Waisbrod (2013) considers, whether the time of post-professional journalism has come. Perhaps this is why, even today on this level of analysis, it is not worth discussing the high (the Democratic Corporatism and Liberal Models) and low model (the Polarized Pluralism Model), but the Hybrid Media System generated by the previously-mentioned factors. Chadwick (2013:2007) presented this problem in his research on the relationships between politics and power. The author stressed that political communication is constantly changing, moving from the network and logic of the old media to a network of new media, and as a result, the values and interests of political actors are shifting. The issue of hybridization currently concerns media systems in many countries of the world, including Poland.

I was interested (RQ2) whether political parallelism was replaced in the Polish media system through political and economic instrumentalization. The answers to the two following questions, (RQ3) whether media logic leads to structural bias of commercial broadcasters, and whether (RQ4) party logic reinforces systemic parallelism in the case of public broadcasters, were supposed to help find the answer.

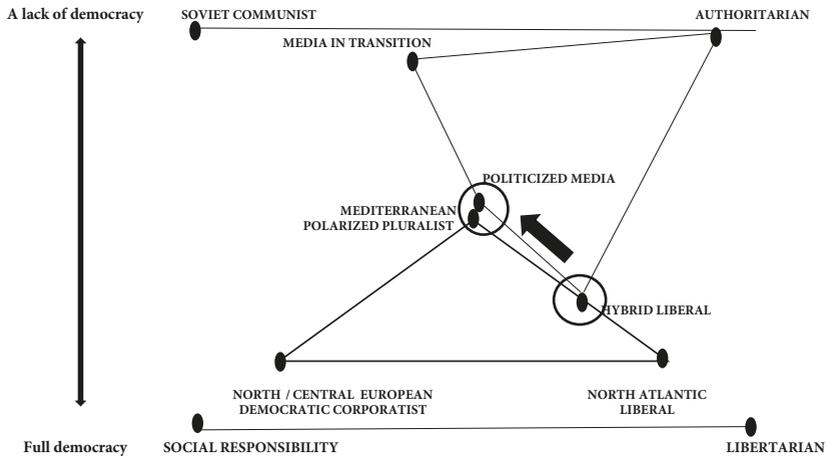


Fig. C.1: *The Polish media system on the map of media models*

Source: Author based on: Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956); Hallin and Mancini (2004); Dobek-Ostrowska (2019:261).

Political parallelism did not develop in Poland, in the form it did in Spain, Italy or Greece (Hallin, Mancini, 2004:30–33). This was, among other things, caused by the weakness of political parties at the beginning of the political transformation, and economic and political independence of media companies. Poland is an example of a combination of features of the Polarized Pluralism Model in the case of public media and the Liberal Model in the case of private media. Hence the proposal of the Hybrid Liberal Model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c: 25–28) (see Fig. C.1) and the qualification of Poland there, which was motivated by the results of empirical research conducted in 2012. These have shown that 86.4 percent of Polish journalists was against combining the profession with being active in politics, and almost 70 percent saw no alternative in politics (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015a: 185–187). When asked about pressure from political actors, 58.6 percent of respondents stated that they have experienced it very rarely or never (85 percent in comparison with Sweden and 43.4 percent in Russia) (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015a: 196). The transfer of power as a consequence of the parliamentary elections in 2015 provoked significant changes in the relations between journalists and politicians. Media partisanship has deepened and journalists have become more engaged in assessments and political sympathies or dislikes.

Public broadcasting has been politicized from the beginning of the political transformation and this situation has not changed until today. Public media were controlled by all successive political formations that managed to seize power, but after 2015, the process intensified significantly. In this sense, one should speak of the presence of party logic, which results in high systemic parallelism, as understood by Jakubowicz (public broadcasting media - political actors). Commercial media owned by private owners have no formal ties to political parties. They are guided by their own logic and create their content independently, although they are not politically neutral and have more or less visible political sympathies and dislikes, support varying ideological values – conservative, liberal, or left-wing, etc. Very often this is enhanced by negativism and cynicism on the part of commercial broadcasters and publishers, as well as criticism of all political actors. We described this attitude as structural bias (private broadcasting media - political actors), which is noticeable in the content of TVN (severe criticism of Law and Justice, the ruling party after 2015). Printed media - newspapers and opinion magazines – most often openly state their program and ideological sympathies, but it should be emphasized that this does not always translate into uncritical support for a specific political party or politicians.

Coverage of politics in Poland clearly oscillates between party and media logic. This is reflected in increasingly widespread treatment of political competition as a horse-race and personalization coverage, which is typical of Hallin and Mancini's Liberal Model (2004), and the Western and Central Model of Brüggemann et al., (2014:1056). Alongside this trend, we can observe coverage that is deeply rooted in entrenched journalism (López-Escobar et al., 2008:185), characteristic of the Polarized Pluralism Model and the Politicized Media Model in the case of Central and Eastern Europe (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015c:28–31).

The death of ninety-six politicians, including President Kaczyński and members of the political elite in the Smolensk catastrophe in 2010, had a significant impact on the mediatization of politics in opinion-forming media. The political struggle has moved from the political scene to the written press and to television and radio news, as well as television and radio current affairs programs. The journalists themselves often exchanged their positions of independent commentators for those in candidates' electoral staff, paradoxically following in the footsteps of journalists from the American Fox News. Important exception was TVN *Fakty*, which distanced itself from assessment of the late Lech Kaczyński, political actors, and especially Law and Justice and the party's candidate in the presidential elections in 2010 (Lipnicka, 2011), who before the plane crash near Smoleńsk, were their main objects of criticism. However, this stage of a reduction in the anti-Law and Justice reporting did not last long. The

next step in deepening of media politicization followed the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2015, which were won by Law and Justice. The sharp polarization of the political scene which followed the elections, was reflected in the content of weekly newspapers and journalistic culture. The media, or at least a significant part of them, have lost their sense of objectivity to power and politics. Thus, some commentators on the Polish political scene claim that Kaczyński is attempting to “Orbánize” the country (*Prof. Garton Ash...*, 2018), but the strongly-rooted external media pluralism can protect Polish media from the Hungarian path and self-censorship of journalists (Urbán, Polyák and Szász, 2017:145–148).

Our analysis shows that political parallelism is linked with some press titles, mainly opinion weekly magazines and a marginal number of daily newspapers. Political instrumentalization is clearly present and leaves no doubt, at least in the case of public media, and party logic demonstrated actively by the ruling parties, deepens systemic parallelism, which has become particularly visible since 2015. Economic instrumentalization is typical of commercial broadcasters and publishers. The vast majority of them distance themselves from politics. TVN’s casus is an exception, which confirms the presence of structural bias in the case of some operators on the market. Thus, what kind of media system is typical for Poland thirty years after the fall of communism?

A decade after Hallin and Mancini (2004) presented the three models of media systems, the authors themselves admitted that fundamental changes have taken place inside the models (Hallin and Mancini, 2017). In the Liberal Model in the USA, bias and political entrenchment, embodied in foxification of information, have appeared, the quality of information media has drastically decreased and journalistic professionalism has declined. Traditionally politicized and active in the public sphere, media that demonstrate high professionalism in the Democratic Corporatist Model are gradually being replaced by red top tabloids, in which concentration of ownership and commercialization are progressing. The Polarized Pluralism Model is probably transforming at the slowest rate. There, political parallelism remains unchanged, and the owners, which are politicized and tied to political parties, remain in their positions. Where does Poland fit in this context? The Polish media system is under strong political pressure. Until the 2015 elections, it could be classified in the Hybrid Liberal Model, but a transition of power and the changes made by Law and Justice in a very short period, have caused the media system to move toward the Politicized Model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2018). In consequence, at present, Poland is closer to the Eastern, rather than the Central Model according to Castro-Herrero et al. (2017) concept.

### Relations between political actors and journalists in the era of social media

The digitalization of the media and the development of new technologies, particularly social media, contribute to media fragmentation. It is already possible to distinguish, as I have tried to highlight in my analysis, the different ways in which politics is covered. In Europe’s case, including Poland, traditional public and commercial media still play a leading role in political communication. However, as the example of Barack Obama, and subsequently Donald Trump and other American candidates in the elections, as well as politicians, shows, social media - Facebook and later Twitter - constitute an increasingly important channel of political communication (Davis, Holtz-Bacha and Just, 2017). Thus, current political communication studies in Europe should take into account not two but three types of media - public, commercial, and social (Fig. C.2).

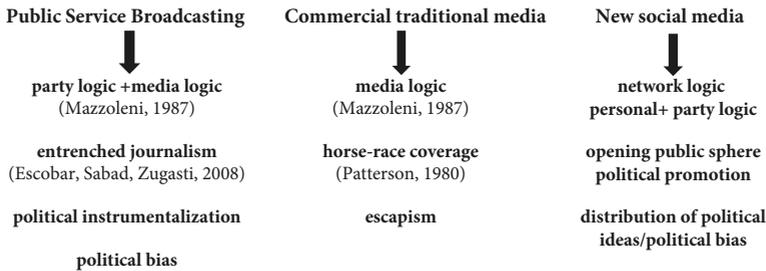


Fig. C.2: *The mass media and their character in political communication*  
Source: Author based on: Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1963); Hallin and Mancini (2004); Dobek-Ostrowska (2015c).

The role of public media in politics in CEE countries is an ongoing question. On the one hand, it is unknown whether they can survive in the saturated market, and if so, in what form. We can presume that the politicians will lose their monopoly and control over them, which will cause politicization to disappear, as politicians will no longer be able to influence the media content. Such a perspective seems to be closest to the countries included in the Hybrid Liberal (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2018) and Northern (Castro-Herrero et al., 2017) models, such as Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. After murder of investigative journalist, Jan Kuciak in 2018, the future of Slovakia seems uncertain. On the other hand, entrenched journalism in public media will not be eliminated, and strong political instrumentalization, partisanship, and structural bias will not only persist

but will be strengthened. This is confirmed by the case of Polish public television TVP after the 2015 elections; the aforementioned casus of orbánization of the media in Hungary, where, according to Ash, 'we seemingly have pluralism, but all media owners are Orbán's acquaintances' (Prof. Garton-Ash, 2018); as well as a deep politicization of the media in Bulgaria and Romania, reflected in the highest (1.09) cluster profile among the eleven countries of the region surveyed by Castro-Herrero et al., (2017:4808).

Commercial media will distance themselves from politics, and the horse-race coverage and escapism will become their most convenient strategy. On the other hand, maybe the fragmentation will result in all parties, even the smallest ones, having their own medium. What about local media? Their future is the biggest question mark. Maybe the public will take matters into their own hands and replace commercial media with their own teams open to the problems of the community. Today, all options seem possible,

Social media, Facebook, and above all Twitter, have thoroughly transformed the nature of political communication in the last decade. The public sphere has become open to every citizen, who wants to promote and circulate ideological values and political views, sympathies or antipathies toward political actors. The personal logic of the users (politicians and non-politicians) meets party logic and political bias. For this reason, studies on coverage of politics on social networks and their significance to politics are one of the biggest research challenges.

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Hallin and Mancini (2004) asked themselves fifteen years ago whether there was a need for normative media theories. At that time, they indicated that they were interested not only in measuring media systems in a normative way but also in analyzing the historical development of media institutions. They were also interested in the role of the media in political, social, and economic life, as well as in the relations with other institutions that existed there. As a result, using open access secondary data, they proposed three models. The researchers have proven that comparative analysis is extremely useful and necessary. Their proposal has been, and still is, a powerful intellectual challenge for future researchers from many countries and younger generations. These new studies should make use of empirical, quantitative, and qualitative research, taking into account internet access, social media use, press freedom (Brüggemann et al., 2014:1062), as well as foreign media ownership, political freedom, media censorship, and democratic standards (Castro-Herrero et al., 2017; Nozowski, 2018).



# Annexes

## Annex 1: Media Ethics Charter [Karta Etyczna Mediów]

Journalists, editors, producers, and broadcasters, respecting the inalienable right of a human being to truth, going by the principle of the common good, conscious of the role of the media in human life and in a civic society, accept this Charter and declare that they will perform their work in accordance with the following principles:

The principle of truth –i.e., the journalists, editors, producers, and broadcasters do their best for the information they convey to reflect the truth; they report the facts in their proper context, scrupulously and without distortion, and in the case of publicizing false information they immediately correct it.

The principle of objectivity - which means that the author depicts the reality regardless of his/her own views, relates different perspectives with integrity.

The principle of separation of information and commentary - which means that the message is constructed in such a way that it is possible for the recipient to distinguish facts from views and opinions.

The principle of honesty - which means acting in accordance with one's own conscience and the good of the recipient, not submitting oneself to any influences, incorruptibility, refusing to act against one's beliefs.

The principle of respect and tolerance- i.e., respect for human dignity, rights, personal property, and especially for privacy and good name.

The principle of the primacy of the recipient - which means that the basic rights of readers, viewers and listeners take precedence over the interests of the editorial staff, journalists, editors, producers, and broadcasters.

The principle of freedom and responsibility - which means that freedom of the media, imposes on journalists, editors, producers, and broadcasters responsibility for the form and content of the message and the consequences that result from them.

The signatories of the Charter appoint the Council, which will guard the above principles, publicly adjudicate upon the issues of observing the Charter and interpreting its provisions. The signatories also commit themselves to publicizing the content of the Charter and the information on the right of lodging complaints with the Council as well as to immediate announcement of the Council's verdicts.

The composition of the Council, the procedure of its appointment and the rules of its activity will be settled at the meeting of commissioned representatives of the signatories of the Charter.

## **Annex 2: Code of Journalistic Ethics [Dziennikarski Kodeks Obyczajowy]**

Aware of their responsibility to readers, listeners, and viewers, the associations, journalists' unions, and employers declare their commitment to the principles of the "Media Ethics Charter" and establish this Code:

### **I. General principles**

1. Journalism is a profession that serves the public. The basic obligation and privilege of a journalist is to seek the truth and to enable every individual to exercise his or her right to obtain truthful, complete, and impartial information and to participate in the public debate.
2. The task of the journalist is to enable the audience to familiarize themselves with, understand and evaluate their own assessment of reality.
3. Journalists have a special duty to exercise their profession responsibly, with respect for the recipient and in accordance with ethical and professional standards.
4. Journalists have a duty to protect the independence and credibility of their profession, freedom of speech and media pluralism.

### **II. Ethical and professional duties of journalists**

5. The journalist reports, discusses, and analyzes social facts and processes impartially, presents their context and a wide range of views on them, stating the source of the opinions quoted. In the event of difficulties in reaching one of the parties of the dispute, it shall be stated that the information contains partial data.
6. A journalist must not manipulate information. He/she is obliged to carefully assess the sources, verify the veracity of the information available and ensure that they are accurate. When conducting a discussion, a journalist may not use his or her role to sway it and to impose conclusions. The editing, development, or assembly of a verbal, acoustic, audiovisual, or computer record of reality must not falsify or distort it.
7. It is the journalist's responsibility to separate information from comments. When he expresses his own assessments and opinions, he clearly signals this to the recipient. Opinions expressed in comments may not falsify the facts in question.

8. On his own initiative, shall a journalist disclaim any inaccuracies or misrepresentations in the information he provides when such inaccuracies or misrepresentations appear.
9. The journalist, guided by the common good and a sense of justice, reveals mistakes and abuses in the activities of authorities, institutions, organizations and public and private enterprises.
10. A journalist separates his own political and social activities from his/her professional duties.
11. The journalist, with respect to his/her profession, does not give in to pressure, does not accept material benefits, and does not subordinate his/her activity to his/her own interests and those of his/her family.
12. A journalist who depicts scenes of violence, suffering, and death does so only in particularly justified cases and to the extent necessary, with a sense of responsibility for the persons shown. In any event, he/she shall take into account the sensitivity of the public, in particular, in view of the harmful effects, negative patterns and risks of depravation, which it may have on children and young people.
13. It is the journalist's duty to respect universal values, national culture and tradition, religious attitudes and beliefs and the views of non-believers, and to tolerate cultural and moral differences.
14. The journalist is forbidden to publish materials proclaiming war propaganda and hatred, in particular national, religious, and racial in nature.
15. To presume the guilt of a defendant prior to the relevant court decision is inadmissible. The journalist is obliged to inform the audience about the acquittal or release from charge of the accused in a matter previously presented by him/her.
16. A journalist must comply with legal and ethical standards when obtaining information, and respect the right of informants to protect their names and faces.
17. The journalist is obliged to protect professional secrecy. He/she shall not disclose the sources of information without the consent of the persons concerned.
18. The journalist is obliged to take particular care with regard to the statements of minors and persons who are unable to give their consent in an informed manner and to assess the potential consequences of their statements.
19. The journalist must not violate personal rights.
20. A journalist is obliged to protect the privacy of everyone, unless an individual discloses his or her privacy of his/ her own volition. Instead,

he/she may disclose details of the private lives of persons performing public functions to the extent necessary to assess their suitability to perform their functions or the manner in which they perform them.

21. A journalist shall not mislead an audience by suggesting, emphasizing, or exaggerating the sensational nature of events that are not supported by journalistic material.
  22. A journalist may not refuse a person providing information or giving an interview the authorization of a quoted statement, unless it has been previously published with the indication of the source. However, he/she is obliged to respect the informant's will as to how the information is to be used and when it is to be published, if such a reservation was made before the journalistic material was collected.
- III. The journalist and the employer
23. A journalist consciously chooses and accepts the editorial policy of the newspaper, magazine or station where he/she works, but retains the right to his/her own views and the right to refuse to carry out journalistic tasks that are contrary to his/her beliefs, ethical or legal norms.
  24. Advertisements and sponsored text shall be clearly identifiable and kept separate from other texts. Surreptitious advertising is against journalistic ethics. The journalist does not succumb to the pressure of advertisers; he/she is not obliged to conduct advertising acquisition. He/she shall not make his/her name, face or voice available for advertising purposes, unless it is for the purpose of promotion of the newspaper or the station where he/she works. This does not apply to humanitarian and social actions.
- IV. The journalist and his/her peers
25. It is the journalist's duty to defend the good name of the profession; another duty is professional solidarity, which is reflected in his/her concern for common matters and in aid for colleagues in need.
  26. Plagiarism and the use, in whole or in part, of another's journalistic, literary, artistic, or scientific work, and presenting it for oneself, are a dire violation of ethical norms.
  27. It is unacceptable to act knowingly to the detriment of colleagues, especially for personal gain.
- V. Final provisions
28. It is the responsibility of every journalist working in the Polish media to observe the Media Ethics Charter and the provisions of this Code. For any violation of the provisions of the above, the journalist shall be liable to a journalist's or trade union court.

29. Violations of the Code are the responsibility of the actual offender. If he is unknown or if the editorial team does not wish to disclose his/her identity, the person who approved the material for publication or broadcast is liable.
30. Employers will be informed of any failure to comply with the Code that is recognized by the Media Ethics Council. The decisions of the Media Ethics Council will also be made available to the public.
31. All doubts concerning the interpretation of the provisions of this Code shall be settled by the Conference of the Polish Media by virtue of its resolution.
32. This document enters into force one month after the date of signature by the members of the Conference of Polish Media.  
(<http://www.sdrp.eprasa.com/Dokumenty/kodeks.pdf>)

### **Annex 3: The Code of Good Practice for Press Publishers [Kodeks Dobrych Praktyk Wydawców Prasy]**

By accepting the Publishers' Code, the publisher declares that its activities will be conducted in compliance with the following rules:

- 1.1. The publisher shall: respect the rules of journalism in force in a democratic state, defend the autonomy of the editor-in-chief, ensure that the declared editorial line is observed, protect the achievements of the title and its reputation, work for the protection of freedom of the press, take into account the provisions of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- 1.2. The publisher shall ensure that its publishing and editorial activities are carried out without external interference, as well as that, by means of specified rights and obligations, the editorial team remains autonomous in the publisher's organizational structure.
- 1.3. The publisher builds its relations with partners co-creating the publishing market, readers as well as advertisers, based on the principles of information accuracy and responsibility.
- 1.4. The publisher shall not mislead the reader or business partner by realizing goals that are undisclosed or contradictory to those officially proclaimed.
- 1.5. The publisher shall respect the principles of pluralism of information and diversity of opinion.

- 1.6. The creation of a new press title or the modernization of an existing one shall be done in compliance with the law. In particular, this can be the adaptation of publishing solutions or formulas generally known, made available or recommended by their authors.
- 1.7. When launching a new press title, in the first issue the publisher shall specify and publish information on its editorial policy. Such an obligation also applies in the case of a material change in the editorial policy of the title.
- 1.8. The publisher shall not influence the editorial content or otherwise violate journalistic independence in order to use the title as an instrument of pressure for his own economic purposes or political convictions, other than those declared in the editorial policy. The publisher may publish its position on any matter in the title, provided that such material is clearly marked as a statement of the publisher.
- 1.9. When determining the editorial line of the title and making the journalists, who accept it by taking up their duties, familiar with it, the publisher should guarantee them freedom of expression within its limits. (<http://www.izbapraszy.pl/pliki/KDPWP.pdf>)

**Annex 4: The Code of Journalistic Ethics  
of Polish Journalists' Association  
[Kodeks Etyki Dziennikarskiej Stowarzyszenia  
Dziennikarzy Polskich]**

Accepting the principles of the Media Ethic Charter and the declarations of the International Federation of Journalists we acknowledge, that:

- The task of a journalist is to transmit reliable and neutral information, diverse opinions and to enable participation in the public debate.
  - Freedom of speech must be supplemented by responsibility for any material published in the press or broadcast on the radio, television, or the Internet.
  - The common good and the interests of readers, listeners and viewers shall have priority over the interests of the author, the editor, the publisher, or the broadcaster.
- I. Information and opinions
    1. Information has to be clearly distinguished from interpretation and opinions.
    2. Information should be balanced and exact, so that the recipient can differentiate between facts, assumptions, or gossip. Information should also be presented in the appropriate context and rest on

trustworthy sources, which - if possible - represent various points of view.

3. Opinions may be biased, but should not distort the facts or be the outcome of external pressure.
4. Mistakes and lapses need be corrected as soon as possible, even if they were not the fault of the author or the editorial office, irrespective of whether someone demands their correction.

## II. Gathering and reworking material

5. In the gathering of material, using illegal or unethical methods is inadmissible; the use of a hidden camera or a microphone and phone-tapping are acceptable - with the knowledge and approval of one's superiors - only in the case of so-called investigative journalism revealing crime, corruption, or misuse of power in the name of the public interest.
6. The privacy or intimacy of a person may not be disturbed, with a possible exception - in justified circumstances - in the case of investigative journalism. This also concerns public figures.
7. The journalist is obliged to respect the confidentiality of a source of information and the identity and image of an informant on his/her request; these may be revealed only to one's superiors.
8. Reworking or shortening information, an opinion, or an interview should not change its meaning or significance. The use of archival material or the reconstruction of events in electronic media should be properly marked.

## III. The Journalist in relation to interlocutors and recipients

9. Interlocutors should be informed about the way their utterance is to be used; authorization for the use of given information must be requested if the interlocutor makes such a reservation; statements by children may be used only with approval from their parents or a person having legal custody over them.
10. A journalist should show respect to other persons, regardless of ideological, cultural, or moral differences of opinion; this does not mean agreeing with their views.
11. No harm should be caused to the physically or mentally disabled, the elderly, the ill, or the practically challenged.
12. Special prudence should be exercised when reporting on new medical methods if they have not yet been fully tested and are merely experimental in character. Predictions and horoscopes may not be presented as reliable information or instructions.
13. The language of reporting should be careful, vulgarisms and obscene expressions should be avoided.

- IV. Crime and exceptional situations
  - 14. When revealing criminal acts and information about alleged perpetrators, far reaching consideration should be exercised, descriptions which make the imitation of antisocial deeds possible, should be avoided. The guilt of the accused should not be prejudged before a court has issued a legally valid verdict.
  - 15. In reports on wars, riots, or demonstrations, a journalist should behave as an uncommitted observer in order not to become a subject of manipulation.
  - 16. Showing close-up scenes of death is inadmissible, the bloody consequences of war or natural disasters, acts of atrocity, or violence may be described and shown only on the condition that balance is maintained between exact reporting and the sensibility of the recipients, especially with respect to the families of victims and their close ones.
- V. Conflict of interests
  - 17. The reliability and independence of a journalist is conflicting with receiving presents worth more than 200 zlotys, taking advantage of free travel, or testing products or appliances.
  - 18. A journalist is not allowed to engage in sales promotion or participate in advertising or public relations, only with the possible exception of social campaigns or charity; editorial material must be clearly distinguished from commercial or promotional content.
  - 19. Hidden advertising or concealing information for one's own benefit is highly reprehensible.
  - 20. A journalist may not use classified information obtained during exercising of his/her profession for his/her own benefit from, especially in the field of financial or economic journalism.
  - 21. Direct engagement in (party-) political activity by journalists is also an indication of a conflict of interests, thus accepting such positions or involvement in public administration or political organizations should be ruled out.
- VI. Colleagues and superiors
  - 22. Relations between co-workers should be collegial, unfair competition and the appropriation of someone else's work or ideas is inadmissible.
  - 23. Journalistic loyalty to superiors, publishers, or broadcasters is an obligation, however, they must not give a journalist orders, which are against the law, professional ethics or his/her convictions. A journalist has the right to decline such orders.

VII. Responsibility and penalties

24. Both the author of a publication in the press, radio, television, or the Internet, as well as the editor, publisher, or broadcaster of the content are responsible for violations against the principles of journalistic ethics.
25. Journalists' courts impose penalties appropriate to the character and scale of the misdemeanor by admonition, through reprimand and temporary withholding of membership rights in the SDP to expulsion from the association. The Supreme Journalists' Court may publically pronounce its verdict in the media.

Source: <http://www.tvp.pl/o-tvp/komisja-etyki/inne-kodeksy-etyczne/kodeks-etyki-dziennikarskiej-stowarzyszenia-dziennikarzy-polskich/69917>

**Annex 5: Journalistic Code of Conduct of the Association of Journalists of the Republic of Poland – SDRP  
[Dziennikarski Kodeks Obyczajowy SDRP]**

The Code of Journalistic Ethics is a basic set of ethical standards, which apply to journalists and members of the Association in their work and professional activities.

- I. The basic obligation of a journalist is to seek the truth and to publish it. Manipulation of facts is illicit. Any comment or hypothesis by the author should be clearly separated from information. Special care should be taken in researching information. An author, on his/her own initiative, must correct the information when it appears to be false or inaccurate. No motives, pressures, or suggestions justify the delivery of false or unverified information.
- II. A journalist must keep and preserve professional secrecy if an informant requests anonymity.
- III. The protection of personal rights should not be violated. However, information on the private lives of persons who fulfill a public function or who themselves introduce their privacy into public life is admissible. It is inadmissible to use injurious words which target human dignity; to make remarks which degrade a person in public opinion, or expose him/her to being discredited; or to use blackmail.
- IV. To presume the guilt of the accused prior to the relevant court decision is inadmissible.

- V. Any publications which advocate war, violence, outrage, or injure the feelings of religious persons and unbelievers, patriotic feelings, human rights, cultural individualities, or which propagate pornography are absolutely prohibited.
- VI. The journalist is not allowed to accept any profits for himself/herself or his/her family for publishing or not publishing material. Publishing of materials which are crypto-advertising in nature is inadmissible. Advertisements in the press and in electronic media, in the preparation of which journalists participate, should be clearly separated from information.
- VII. Protection of copyright is an essential ethical norm. Overt and covert, internal and external plagiarism is an inadmissible breach of this norm. This applies to the work of a journalist, as well as to the work of a person in any other profession. Authorial titles are under protection. The modification of texts and the use of materials and works is forbidden without the consent of their authors, the same applies to the use of another journalist's authorial concepts.
- VIII. Activities which harm another journalist professionally, or constitute professional disloyalty are forbidden. Malicious obstructions to journalistic publications by another journalist are unacceptable.
- IX. Execution of an official order is reprehensible if it violates ethical standards of the journalistic profession.
- X. A breach of the Association's Statute, which exposes the AJRP to losses and damages, is subject to the assessment of the journalistic judiciary.
- XI. Any behavior or activity, which discredits the journalistic profession or its good name, is inadmissible.
- XII. The actual offender shall be responsible for any failure to observe the Journalistic Code of Conduct. If he/she is unknown or if the editorial team does not want to reveal his/her identity, the person who approved the material for publication (broadcast) is accountable.
- XIII. Any act incompatible with the Code of Conduct is time-barred after 5 years after its disclosure unless the Supreme Journalists' Court decides otherwise.
- XIV. The Supreme Court of Journalism by virtue of its resolution shall resolve all doubts concerning the interpretation of the standards of the Journalistic Code of Conduct.
- XV. For non-compliance with the rules and standards of the Journalistic Code of Conduct, as well as with the adopted environmental ethical regulations, the competent journalistic court shall impose penalties depending on the

seriousness of the offence committed and the acknowledgement of guilt, from a warning to a reprimand and removal from the Association. All final court decisions on the removal will be published in a periodical or other AJRP' publications  
(<http://www.sdrp.eprasa.com/Dokumenty/kodeks.pdf>)

## **Annex 6: Ideological Declaration of the Catholic Association of Journalists [Deklaracja Ideowa Katolickiego Stowarzyszenia Dziennikarzy]**

1. Journalists of the press, radio, and television - secular and clerical, working in editorial offices under the care of the Church, as well as in other editorial offices guided by the guidelines of the Church's Magisterium in matters of faith and morality, in this day and age, feel a particularly meaningful challenge to their professional vocation posed by historical events in the modern world. The testimony, which the social environment to which we address the words of our publications can rightly expect, and the example of life, which is a meaningful confirmation of the validity of our evangelical values, direct our desires and efforts toward the creation of a professional community with the character of an association in the meaning of civil law and the Code of Canon Law.
2. The revival of the structures of social life after the turn of the 1980s, aimed at the democratization of life after the period of totalitarian enslavement of the human person and freedom of speech, empower us to take initiative also in the field of creating new structures, in this case referring to two criteria: professional - connected with journalistic work, and religious - based on Catholic teaching and religious formation.
3. The initiative to establish this association builds on similar institutions existing in other countries, which have proved themselves on many occasions to be effective for the benefit of their members, the Church and the world.
4. As a community of people concerned about the promotion of authentic doctrinal and moral values, the Association advocates the primacy of the human person in social life. We understand this primacy as the exercise of the gift of liberty, which takes into account the submission to the truth and not its arbitrary creation. In consequence, we understand the human conscience as the ability to read, not to create, moral norms concerning personal and social life. In practice, this means that we are in favor of legislation protecting the life and supernatural dignity of every human being, as formulated by the Church,

guaranteeing communities of believers to participate in public life, in shaping public opinion and in respecting and implementing Christian values in the systems of education and upbringing, enabling equal access to information to all journalistic circles, taking into account the proper place of Christian culture in individual and social life of Poles.

5. We exercise our profession as an expression of the calling and, at the same time, as a testimony of faith. In this way, we become participants in the missionary ecclesial service of the Church and human rights advocates. While we recognize that in serving the new evangelization of Europe born from Christian roots and proclaimed by John Paul II, we do not make political choices, but we contribute to enlightening political and economic activity through the light of the Gospel and to respecting and supporting the political freedom and responsibility of citizens based on truth and truthfulness. "It must shape the lives of families, communities, societies, the media, culture, politics and the economy". (John Paul II, Olsztyn - June 6, 1991).
6. For us, the good name of a Catholic journalist is a value built through continuous professional development and constant growth in the religious formation. We will willingly share the values thus obtained with other journalists, seeing this as a tangible expression of our openness to the common interests of the journalistic world, which is now experiencing the severe effects of ideological manipulation and the influence of clashing political forces, which often strive to treat our work and ourselves instrumentally.
7. The Association, while performing trade union functions toward ecclesiastical and secular institutions, in the understanding of Catholic social teaching, considers it its duty and one of the reasons for its existence to defend the spiritual and material interests of its journalists. In carrying out these functions, it is open, in accordance with its statute and principles laid down in the relevant legal provisions, to cooperation with ecclesiastical and secular institutions.

Source: <http://www.ksd.media.pl/artykul.php?article=4>

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