

# Studying the anti-corruption capacity of the local press in Poland

Bartosz Czepil<sup>1</sup>

<https://doi.org/10.25167/brs4594>

Submitted: 21 Nov 2021; Accepted: 4 Feb 2022; Published: 15 Jul 2022

## Abstract:

*The problem of the anti-corruption role of the local media is under-researched, not only in Poland, but also in international studies. Therefore, the article contributes to the theoretical reflection over the anti-corruption capacity of the local press in Poland by proposing an analytical model for studying it. In the first part, the growing importance of research on the anti-corruption role of the local press in Poland is presented. Secondly, the concepts of local press and corruption are defined in order to clarify the analytical scope of the proposed model. Then, the ambiguous nature of the anti-corruption capacity of the local press is described based on existing literature. The main part is focused on building and elaborating on the analytical model for researching the anti-corruption capacity of the local press. The model integrates three interconnected components of the capacity, which might be grasped by the idea of a trio including determinants, types and impact. Thereby, a multidimensional surrounding and diversified scope of anti-corruption functions of the local press in Poland are demonstrated.*

## Keywords:

**local media, corruption, anti-corruption capacity, local government, analytical model**

## Citation (APA):

Czepil, B. (2022). Studying the anti-corruption capacity of the local press in Poland. *Border and Regional Studies*, 10(2), 89-112. <https://doi.org/10.25167/brs4594>

## **Introduction**

The importance of free and pluralistic media as a tool against corruption is commonly recognized by international organizations like the OECD (OECD 2018), European Union (European Parliament 2020) or Transparency International (Global Corruption Barometer 2021). There is empirical evidence, based on cross-country comparisons, showing that higher press freedom leads to lower corruption, especially when it is coupled with effective institutions of horizontal accountability, a well-educated population, competitive elections and rule of law

---

<sup>1</sup> Bartosz Czepil, Ph.D. (ORCID: 0000-0003-4907-795X) – Department of Regional Studies, University of Opole; e-mail: [bczepil@uni.opole.pl](mailto:bczepil@uni.opole.pl)

(Brunetti, Weder 2003; Lindstedt, Naurin 2005; Camaj 2013; Hamada 2019; Berti et al. 2020). Thereby, it must be underscored that free media can be an important force limiting corruption, but some other conditions must be in place to make its anti-corruption function effective, mainly accessibility (people's ability to obtain the information), responsiveness (those in power must know and react to people's expectations) and accountability (ability to keep those corrupted responsible) (Färdigh 2013). Thus, the anti-corruption potential of media heavily depends on their institutional surrounding.

What is common for the research on relations between media and corruption is that they usually focus on the country-wide media, without any special attention paid to the local media. The anti-corruption role of the local media is under-researched, despite an abundance of research on corruption at the local level. This abundance is embodied by tackling diversity of research problems, like determinants of local corruption (Benito et al. 2015; Bergh et al. 2017; Erlingsson et al. 2020), relations between decentralization and corruption (Fissman, Gatti 2002; Fjeldstad 2004; Treisman et al. 2009), political results of local corruption (Muñoz et al. 2016; Benito et al 2019; Ferer 2020) or methods of curbing it (Klitgaard et al. 2000; Huberts, Six 2012; Drápalová, Di Mascio 2020). There are studies underscoring transparency and access to information as important obstacles to corruption at the local level (Benito et al. 2015, Dupuy, Williams 2018; Pyman 2021), however it is difficult to find systematic and in-depth analysis focusing exclusively on anti-corruption role of the local media.

This article is focused strictly on the local media as an obstacle to a local corruption. It is aimed at proposing an analytical model for studying the role of local press in curbing local corruption in Poland. The model is built mainly on the international scholarship concerning media's anti-corruption potential, however it is embedded in and adopted to the conditions specific for Poland. It is based on the assumption that studying anti-corruption capacity of the local press must take into account three interconnected components of anti-corruption activity, which might be grasped by the idea of a trio including determinants, types and impact (effects). Thus, the model is aimed at presenting a theoretical picture of the local press anti-corruption capacity but, it also provides analytical framework articulating possible research paths for those willing to study local media as a toll against corruption.

The article is comprised of the following parts. Firstly, a general overview of Poland's changing media and political landscape is presented in order to demonstrate the growing importance of studying the local media's anti-corruption capacity. Secondly, the concepts of local press and corruption are defined in order to clarify the analytical scope of the proposed model. Thirdly, the ambiguous

anti-corruption role of the local press in Poland is presented by synthesizing already existing research on this field. The fourth part is the most important one as it presents and elaborates on the proposal of the analytical model that could be applied when studying the anti-corruption capacity of the local press. The last part is devoted to conclusions.

### **Growing importance of studying the local media's anti-corruption role in Poland**

The anti-corruption report published by the European Commission in 2014 pointed to a higher corruption risk at the local and regional level where „checks and balances and internal controls tend to be weaker than they are at central level” (EU. Anti-corruption Report 2014: 16). In the report it is underlined that there are considerable differences regarding quality of regional governance between the EU member states. If we take a look at the European Quality of Government Index for 2021, we will notice that the Polish regions not only represent poor quality of governance, but also have experienced deterioration since the 2017 measurement (Charron et al. 2021). According to the newest Global Corruption Barometer, 21% of the Polish respondents think that “most or all people” in the local government are corrupt (Global Corruption Barometer 2021: 60).

At the same time, the media landscape in Poland is undergoing significant changes that undermine capacity to curb corruption. According to both international (Wiseman 2020; see also the table 1) and domestic studies (Stępińska 2021), the Polish government has undertaken steps significantly limiting the freedom of press. As far back as 2017, Poland has dropped to the category ‚partly free’ in the Freedom of the Press index published by the Freedom House (Freedom of the Press 2017). In the context of corruption in the local government, the most relevant process seems to be taking control over the regional media – the move labeled by the governing party as “repolonisation” of the media. In February 2021, the Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection approved the purchase of the publishing house Polska Press by the state-owned energy giant PKN Orlen. Previously owned by a German private company, it will now hand over control of 20 regional daily papers (out of 24) to the government covering 15 out of 16 voivodeships, 120 weekly magazines and 500 on-line portals reaching 17 million readers (Wiseman 2020, p. 10). Despite public declarations of the new managing authorities that no changes in editorial boards will be made, the transaction was followed by gradual replacement of 13 out of 15 editors in chief of the regional dailies (Białach et al. 2021)<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> It is worth mentioning that the study conducted by Besley and Prat found that the extent

The ownership change raises the question about the possibility of a new role of the local media, inasmuch as their independence of the central authorities might give them stronger importance and credibility as anti-corruption platforms. It must be noted that the local media represent an important source of information for the local communities in Poland. The most recent studies on the readership of the local weeklies showed that this was a source of information for a significant portion of the population – in one month 135 local weeklies reached 5 million people, which is 17 % of the adult population. It was comparable to the reach of the top country-wide weeklies. The readers' structure was also diversified in terms of age, education and income (Badania czytelnictwa... 2015). According to the survey conducted in 2018, the local newspapers were the most important source of information about the functioning of the local government as 42% declared so (the second most important source were members of family and neighbors) (CBOS 2018).

**Table 1: Poland's position in the international ranking of the freedom of the press**

Ranking	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
World Press Freedom Index	22/180	19/180	18/180	47/180	54/180	58/180	59/180	62/180	64/180

Source: Reporters without Borders <https://rsf.org/en/poland>

Not only has the media landscape changed, but political institutions have also been transformed in a way that builds the groundwork for corruption (Makowski 2021). One part of this process is centralizing tendencies in governmental policies towards the local government. Current studies have shown that both competences and financial resources are drained from the local government in favour of central authorities (Sześciło 2018; Wojnicki 2020). As a result, the local democracy and financial condition of the local government are weakened creating more opportunities for corrupt practices. Of importance, these centralizing tendencies are accompanied by clientelistic politics of the central government towards the local governments. This form of politics is based on the special purpose funds distributed by government on a discretionary basis and with preferential funding for the local governments with the ruling party affiliations (Swianiewicz, Flis 2021a; Swianiewicz, Flis 2021b; Sześciło et al. 2021). In this

---

of state ownership of newspapers and concentration in the ownership of newspapers are positively correlated with corruption level (Besley, Prat 2006).

context the capacity of the local media to perform anti-corruption functions seems to be more important than ever.

In summary, as much as the traditional media-anti-corruption nexus makes studying the local press an important undertaking, it is the peculiarity of the local corruption and current changes in Poland's media and political landscape that elevates its significance.

### **Defining the local press and corruption**

The local press in Poland developed as an independent actor with an ability to perform the watchdogging function only after the collapse of communism in 1989, which opened the way for the explosion of the local media's activity (Chorążki 1999). There is no single, commonly accepted definition of the local press in Poland. In 1989, Włodzimierz Dziki distinguished the local and the sublocal press: the local press covered one voivodship or the big city or cluster of medium-sized cities with adjacent areas, while the sublocal one covered an area smaller than a voivodship like a small town, village, or a parish (Chorążki 1991). However, the administrative division in Poland changed in 1999 leading to a reduction in the number of voivodships from 49 to 16 making them much bigger entities. Nowadays, the concept of local press in Poland is connected with the new administrative division of Poland into voivodships, districts and communes (Kowalczyk 2011), but still there is no consensus on defining the local press. Stanisław Michalczyk makes a clear distinction between the regional press (covering one voivodeship) and the local press, the second one being divided into micro-regional and sublocal. The microregional covers cities over 200 thousand people, old voivodeships (prior to the 1999 reform) and local branches of the regional press, while the sublocal press covers territory of one commune (Michalczyk 2000). Marian Gierula defines the local press by referring to the criterion of content, treating the local press as 'the part of the press system that can be distinguished from the whole system on the basis of the dominant content being focused on life and functioning of local communities' (Gierula 2005: 32). For Gierula, even regional and country-wide press can be included into the local press as long as its content co-creates local communication networks (Ibidem).

Building of the decentralized, local self-government based on three, above-mentioned levels of territorial organization was accompanied by the emergence of different types of local press. These types might be classified according to the three general categories of publishers: the local press published by private enterprise, the local press published by local government (either

directly or indirectly) and the local press published by a variety of public organizations like political parties, confessional institutions, trade unions, non-governmental organizations (Dzierżyńska-Mielczarek 2012). The first two are the most important segments of the local press (Męcfal 2020). The local press published by local government are not of interest in this article as it is commonly acknowledged as ‘the local government’s press’ (Szostok 2010) serving mainly as an instrument used by local authorities for self-promotion and power consolidation, without any watchdogging functions (Adamczyk 2011; Szostok, Rajczyk 2013; Łęcka 2018). The local press with anti-corruption capacity is mainly published by the private publishers, as they are formally independent from the local government, relying on readers and advertisers. Thus, considering the remarks made above, the model to be proposed in this article defines the local press as a press covering the topics related to occurrences on a geographical area smaller than the voivodeship and published by a private publisher, whether in printed or online version<sup>3</sup>. This means, for example, the press covering developments in one commune, one district or a few districts (but not the whole voivodeship). The author would like to make a clear distinction between the local and the regional press, allowing us to focus on the lowest level of the Polish press system being closest to the local communities.

Arnold Heidenheimer distinguished three models of defining corruption by social scientists: (Heidenheimer 1978, s. 4–6): a) public office-centered, b) market-centered, c) public interest-centered. The public office-centered definitions are rooted in the legal-administrative paradigm, strongly influenced by Max Weber’s ideal type of bureaucracy. From this perspective, corruption occurs with violation of the legal rules determining duties and competences of an office holder. The market-centered definitions were applied mainly to the societies without clear distinction between public and private realm characterized by the emergence of the black market of administrative decisions. The black market is operated by officeholders who sell public goods, and such corruption is considered as an informal mechanism of distribution of scarce goods controlled by the state. The public interest-centered definitions assume that the public interest is primary to the legal framework, therefore, what is essential for corruption is not a violation of the office holder’s formal duties, but a breach of public good (Heidenheimer 1978, s. 4–6). The last model is gaining importance in studying corruption nowadays. There is a growing body of literature criticizing the purely legalistic definition of

---

3 As it is more common that the local press is published in both printed and online version, or sometimes only online, geographic scope of distribution of given title is losing its importance as a distinctive criterion of the local press. Currently, it is the content what decides about the local character of the press and according to the author’s definition given press title is a local one if it is interested in covering stories from geographic area smaller than the voivodeship.

corruption (Kaufman 2004, Johnston 2006, Warren 2006, Vaiman et al. 2010), pointing at a variety of practices constituting breach of public good for particular gain that might be legal or located in the gray zone, which makes them difficult to prosecute. The studies of corruption at the local level in Poland show that aside from clear-cut cases of illegal bribery, practices like nepotism, cronism and patron-client relations are even more widespread in the close-knit communities of the local level (Rutkowski 2008; Walczak 2013; Adamowicz 2015; Bartnicki 2019, Czepil 2020). For example, a comprehensive, country-wide survey of the attitudes towards corruption in the local government conducted in 2002 showed that 45% of those surveyed encountered nepotism, while 11 % experienced bribery among local councilors. When asked about corruption among local executive officials, 35% of respondents encountered nepotism among them and 10 % experienced bribery. In the survey, local executive officials were also interviewed with 30% of them accepting situations categorized as clear-cut cases of conflict of interest (Kubiak 2002). According to the more recent survey conducted in 2016 in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship 43% of the local executive officials believed that nepotism occurs in the local government (Nogalski et al. 2016). Therefore, the model proposed is based on wide understanding of corruption as a form of particularism embodied by preferential distribution of public goods towards those individuals and groups that have special connections with given center of power (Mungiu-Pippidi 2018: 23). Such a definition is wide enough to cover not only clear-cut cases of illegal bribery, but also phenomena described above. Thus, it is assumed that the anti-corruption activity of the local media might refer to the wide range of practices, characterized by particularistic usage of public resources (like administrative decisions, local laws, social benefits, subsidies, employment opportunities), beneficial to preferred actors at the local level. Such particularism might be the result of outright, illegal bribery, but can be also embedded in nepotistic, cronistic or clientelistic networks not considered as a violation of the law.

### **The ambiguous role of the local media's anti-corruption role in Poland**

The study of anti-corruption function of media in general must take into account different models of relation between media and those in power entailing different anti-corruption capacities. Rodney Tiffen enumerated five different models in this context, with only some of them having anti-corruption potential: the watchdog, the muzzled watchdog, the wolf, the lap dog, the yapping pack. In the watchdog model, media have a real opportunity to expose misusing of power and thereby contributing to public interest. The muzzled watchdog means that media are „muzzled” by restrictive laws limiting their opportunities to hit hard. The wolf

model sees media as overly critical and careless about accuracy of reporting, which might be destructive to the public interest. The lap dog model does not have anti-corruption potential, because media outlets are subordinated to those in power. The yapping pack model refers to the media system where the media focus on trivial issues instead of important ones, and they follow each other on this path (Tiffen 1999: 206-239). Thus, the anti-corruption potential of media, whether on the central or local level, heavily depends on their institutional surrounding, with great importance on political institutions.

In Poland, the problem of the anti-corruption function of the local press was rarely under comprehensive investigation. The research on relations between media and corruption are usually focused on the country-wide level (Zaborski 2006; Macała 2006; Nowakowski 2017), very often being discussed in the context of investigative journalism and its crisis, where in the center of attention are influential, national media outlets (Palczewski, Worsowicz 2009; Hoffmann 2018). However, if one takes into account scarce studies on the role of the Polish local media as a ‚fourth power‘, the conclusion is rather ambiguous. As presented in the next paragraphs, there are a lot of voices pointing at the weakness of the local media as an anti-corruption watchdog, and equally there are some studies concluding that the media might be an effective watchdog.

The local press face several obstacles to act as an impediment to corruption. According to estimates for the local press in the 90s, out of approx. 600 local titles published by private owners, only 130-150 were able to act as an independent watchdog, thanks to financial self-sufficiency and a stable group of readers (Chorążki 1999: 63). The local, private media face the problem of limited independence, based on the fact that they might be financially dependent on the local entrepreneurs and the local government being advertisers. In such conditions the local media outlets are not likely to engage into critical reporting on local authorities and influential enterprises as it poses a risk of cutting off advertising revenues. It is also easier to apply the defamation laws against them with the aim of encumbering the journalistic inquiry (in particular Article 212 of the Penal Code), based on the local media cases gaining less publicity and the editors being reluctant to incur the costs of court battles (Mechanizmy Przeciwdziałania 2012: 237; Bychawska-Siniarska, Głowacka 2013:11-12). Both the economic dependence on the local players and risk of being prosecuted might lead to the chilling-effect, which means the self-censorship among journalists who are worried about a possible retaliation.

Critical reporting sometimes encounters the problem of being denied information in the form of refusal of interviewing and providing public data



(Pokrzycka 2013). What might significantly weaken anti-corruption role are also close, informal connections between the local media and its social, economic and political surrounding, typical for small communities. As a result, the watchdogging function might be superseded by different forms of cooperation with local government, from hidden political engagement to open political engagement in favor of local politicians (Męćfal 2016). It is not uncommon for journalists to resign from the newspaper to become PR and communication specialists for the local government or a particular candidates during local elections, thus building some connections between these two sectors based on the revolving door phenomenon. Last but, not least, studies of journalists' attitudes towards their own role show that mainly journalists who were professionally active in the system transformation period identify themselves as watchdogs, whereas the younger generation perceive themselves as information providers (Stępińska et al. 2017:138-139). In such conditions, the function of the local elites' critic and monitoring body is significantly limited and positions the local media in Poland closer to the muzzled dog metaphor.

Notwithstanding, as previously mentioned, there are some studies showing that local media might perform watchdogging functions. The study of the regional press of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship conducted in 2005 found that the media's watchdogging function is fulfilled mainly by journalistic intervention in which problems of ordinary citizens are exposed, while investigative journalism resulting in exposing corruption was non-existent. The author of the study concluded that the main reason behind that was that the journalistic intervention is cheap and fast, while investigative journalism demands hard work with documentation and witness searching. The other reason had to do with the decline of citizens' trust towards public institutions, accompanied by a high level of trust towards local media which results in using power of media by citizens, instead of asking for help from public institutions (Kuca 2006).

Wojciech Adamczyk provided a good insight of the local media's anti-corruption function by utilizing country-wide data. The data was taken from the Association of Local Newspapers which since 2008, on a yearly basis, organizes the „Local Press” competition inviting local newspapers all over Poland to submit articles in the category of „investigative journalism and journalistic intervention”<sup>4</sup>. The competition creates a unique opportunity for researchers interested in the local media's watchdogging function, because they can find out about the number of investigative and interventionist stories written by local journalists every

---

4 For the website of the competition see: <http://gazetylokalne.pl/o-konkursie/>.

year (see table 2). The study based on the analysis of 227 articles submitted in 2012-2013 for this competition found that the local media are an effective tool for exposing local pathologies and might lead to changes of the local legislation and resignation of officials entangled in misconduct. Another important conclusion is that the articles representing investigative journalism, meaning the ones usually addressing different forms of corruption and misuse of power, were less numerous (37 out of 227) than the articles representing journalistic intervention in which local community problems are addressed. However, in the second category there were a lot of articles devoted to conflicts with local officials, financial irregularities and functioning of the local institutions which also might have an anti-corruption impact (Adamczyk 2019). This is because the anti-corruption activity of the media, as will be shown in the next part, is not only about exposing clear cases of corruption, but also about promoting integrity and empowering the local population, so journalistic intervention can be treated as one of the types of anti-corruption activity.

**Table 2: The number of articles submitted by local newspapers for the competition organized by the Association of Local Newspapers in the category *investigative journalism and journalistic intervention***

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
The number of articles	287	203	70	128	87	140	132	no data	no data	95	84	76	92

Source: Adamczyk 2019 and data acquired (for 2017-2020) from the Association of Local Newspapers by the author

### **The model and its interconnected components**

The anti-corruption capacity is the ability to counteract corruption and bring changes into the local community in the form of better governance standards, whether by monitoring, advocating, facilitating or investigating activities. In order to grasp the anti-corruption capacity of the local press in Poland, one should not focus solely on the activities, but also on both determinants and effects of such activities. As presented in the previous section, local journalists face various obstacles to critical reporting, but at the same time some of them are still engaged in critical and watchdogging journalism. This justifies questions not only about barriers limiting anti-corruption functions, but is also motivation to find out why some local media may be likely to conduct anti-corruption activities and determine what the real impact is of these activities. Thus, the model for

studying anti-corruption capacity must include three interconnected components: determinants, types of activity and its impact. In the next paragraphs, already existing proposals on this matter will be presented as a conceptual foundation, then transformed and integrated into the model.

The model provided by Pipa Norris and Sina Odugbemi (Norris, Odugbemi 2010: 19-21) lends itself as a useful starting point for elaborating on determining factors behind the capacity of media to perform the anti-corruption function. In their study devoted to media's contribution to democratic governance, special attention is given to the conditions under which the media can perform functions of watchdog, agenda-setter and gatekeepers. They have distinguished three sets of determinants:

1. The role of the state – the state creates the broadest context for media to act by establishing general constitutional framework and legal rules regulating the status of media and journalists in a given political system. The libel laws, censorship, state monopolies of radio and television, restrictions on access to public information, requirements for registration and licensing for journalists and newspapers, taxation laws belong to the usual measures limiting media freedom.
2. The role of the markets – media competition can be limited through oligopolies and a high level of concentration of ownership of the private media, but the balance between state-owned and commercial media is also important, as well as the structure of ownership of the print sector. Additionally, demand for celebrity and entertainment journalism might undermine the media's capacity to cover serious public affairs.
3. The role of the journalistic profession – the standards of training and entry into journalistic profession, together with organizational culture of the media outlets play important role as forces facilitating or limiting the media's capacity. The role of professional bodies like journalist associations, trade unions or press councils is also important, however it must be added that they are shaped by the broader context of norms and values embedded in the national culture of journalism.

Although the above presented picture is very general, the author believes that it might be adapted to the Polish local media assuming that some changes will be introduced. Firstly, the state specific determinants should be expanded by including local government and some of its characteristics like the level of political competition, multi-term-office holding and the level of partisanship. Secondly, the local community as a fourth set of determinants should be included with characteristics like the size of an administrative entity, NGOs density, voter turnout, urbanization, access to Internet, and level of affluence. The changes are introduced

not only to adapt the model to the local level, but also to consider additional factors that might contribute to the stronger/weaker anti-corruption capacity. As stated in the introduction, the media's anti-corruption effectiveness depends also on accessibility (people's ability to obtain the information), responsiveness (those in power must know and react to people's expectations) and accountability (ability to keep those corrupted responsible). Thus, the new determinants included can be additional factors contributing to the anti-corruption capacity, because they might improve the likelihood of journalists engaging in critical reporting, but they also might reinforce the local impact of this reporting. Thereby, we can enumerate four sets of determinants behind the anti-corruption capacity of the local press:

1. The role of the central and local government;
2. The role of the markets;
3. The role of the profession;
4. The role of the local community.

When it comes to elaborating on different types of anti-corruption activity, the most important source of inspiration is a general proposal by Wasil Schauseil (2019: 3) who enumerates three functions of media regarding corruption:

1. Watchdogging corruption – monitoring, investigating and exposing public officials' misconduct;
2. Promoting integrity – campaigning in favor and debating over importance of values like integrity, transparency, accountability;
3. Engaging citizens in anti-corruption efforts – empowering people by giving voice to marginalized communities, setting alternative agenda and acting as a networking platform (here ICT appears especially important).

The above-enumerated functions show the wide scope of possible actions when studying anti-corruption activity of the local press. Most of all, they expand research focus beyond purely investigative activity and pave the way for researching a variety of actions with a possible anti-corruption impact, however not clearly aimed at exposing specific cases of corruption. For example, the very description of the local public life might be interpreted as a form of anti-corruption activity (even if journalists do not perceive it in this way) with some intangible impact as the local decision-makers have the feeling of being monitored. A report on Internet portals in Polish towns with a population of fewer than 20 thousand people states that "practically each portal dedicated to local issues will sooner or later deal with politics" and local politicians are aware that there is a forum reviewing their performance (Danielewicz, Mazurek 2012:43). Inspired by the

above-mentioned typology and referring to the practices of the local press in Poland, we can distinguish four specific types of anti-corruption activity according to their anti-corruption involvement:

1. Monitor – observing and reporting about everyday local public life (politics, economy, culture, NGOs);
2. Advocate-protector – intervening as a reaction to citizens' problems reported to the local media;
3. Facilitator – reporting about corruption charges brought against local public figures and institutions;
4. Muckraker – conducting an independent investigation focused on corruption among local public figures and exposing its results.

The last component of the model refers to a possible impact of the above-mentioned activities understood as a local effects triggered by reporting. It must be noted that the mere presence of the monitoring or muckraking activity does not necessarily imply an accountability impact, which is why this impact must be verified. In the literature we find two interesting proposals elaborating on effects of anti-corruption activity. Rick Stapenhurst writes about two types of effects of media on corruption (Stapenhurst 2000: 3):

1. tangible – there is a visible outcome of the media reporting in the form of resigning from the office, dismissal, launching an investigation, changing existing laws and institutions, electoral defeat and reinforcing the work of anti-corruption bodies;
2. intangible – limiting corruption is a by-product of the social and political climate created by free media like stronger pluralism and competition, invigorated public debate and participation or feeling of being kept accountable among public figures.

Another typology is presented by Sheila Coronel (2010: 124) who focused on three types of effects of investigative journalism on corruption:

1. deliberative – report might trigger discussion over the problems raised and how to tackle them (special hearings and studies might be initiated by different institutions);
2. individualistic – report might trigger sanctions against particular individuals or institutions accused of irregularities;
3. substantive – report might trigger changes of laws, rules, procedures or policies, additionally special bodies might be established.

While intangible effects of the anti-corruption activity are very important, they are difficult to trace, because operationalization of intangible impact might cause problems. It seems that the second proposal offers stronger precision and gives better analytical lenses for tracing effects of the anti-corruption activities. It is easier to operationalize deliberative (e.g. discussion during the local council proceedings or public meetings), individualistic (e. g. losing elections or dismissing local officials) and substantive effects (adopting code of conduct or stronger transparency rules), which is why the second proposal is included as the last component of the model.

Below, the analytical model is visualized based on integration of the three components examined above and their more specific characteristics. It must be stipulated that this is still a theoretical scheme that must be further operationalized into empirically accessible indicators. At this stage it serves as a general framework for ordering and directing research design, by showing a multidimensional surrounding and diversified scope of anti-corruption functions of the local press in Poland. The model is constructed mainly with the aim of researching a large number of press outlets in Poland in order to give a more quantitative picture of the anti-corruption capacity<sup>5</sup>. This approach would be based on using both secondary and primary data. In order to assess some of the characteristics included into determinants of anti-corruption capacity (especially determinants connected with the role of local government, the role of profession and the role of local community), it is enough to use secondary data provided by national electoral commission, statistical office or published by media outlets. But the most important would be a primary data necessary for comprehensive evaluation of the capacity. There are no perfect ways to do this, but in the author's opinion, self-assessment scales might be a good solution. These would be a self-assessment scales allowing for the measurement of:

1. perceived level of importance of different determinants behind the anti-corruption capacity;
2. declared level of engagement into four types of anti-corruption activity;
3. declared level of anti-corruption impact in the local community.

The scales can be integrated into CAWI or PAPI questionnaires used as a research method to collect data among journalists working for selected media outlets.

---

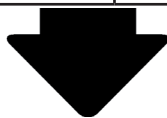
5 For example, the local newspapers that belong to the two most important country-wide associations of the local press can be studied. These are the Association of the Local Press with 63 media outlets and the Association of Local Newspapers with 70 media outlets.

**Tab. 3: Analytical model for studying the anti-corruption capacity of the local press in Poland**

<b>Four sets of determinants of the anti-corruption capacity</b>			
<b>The role of the central and local government</b>	<b>The role of the markets</b>	<b>The role of the profession</b>	<b>The role of the local community</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- taxation laws and other economic instruments that might be applied at the local level like advertising or renting premises</li> <li>- propensity of the local officials to use libel laws</li> <li>- ease of gaining access to public information at the local level</li> <li>- verbal and physical forms of harassment experienced by local journalists and protection given to them by law enforcement agencies</li> <li>- political competition at the local level</li> <li>- party affiliations, or lack thereof,</li> <li>- multi-term incumbents in mayor's office or not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- concentration of private media ownership at the local level</li> <li>- position of the state-owned media at the regional and local level</li> <li>- social demand for entertainment and celebrity journalism vs for covering public affairs</li> <li>- access to advertising from the local entrepreneurs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- experience and composition of the editorial board</li> <li>- circulation and geographic reach of the media outlet</li> <li>- lifespan and history of the media outlet</li> <li>- using a website and social media</li> <li>- support from professional associations and press councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- size of the administrative entity</li> <li>- ngo density,</li> <li>- voter turnout</li> <li>- level of urbanization</li> <li>- access to Internet</li> <li>- level of affluence</li> </ul>



<b>The four types of anti-corruption activity (where 1 means the lowest „anti-corruption involvement” and 4 means the highest one)</b>			
<b>1. Monitor - observing and reporting about everyday local public life (politics, economy, culture, ngos)</b>	<b>2. Advocate-protector - intervening as a reaction to citizens problems reported to the local media</b>	<b>3. Facilitator - reporting about corruption charges brought against local public figures and institutions</b>	<b>4. Muckraker-conducting independent investigation focused on corruption among local public figures and exposing its results</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- analysis of financial disclosures of local public officials</li> <li>- reporting on local council proceedings</li> <li>- interviewing politicians</li> <li>- describing decisions made by local authorities</li> <li>- describing conflicts and cooperation between public figures of different sectors</li> <li>- reporting on electoral promises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reporting on poor standards of local administration</li> <li>- reporting on problems with local infrastructure which should be tackled by local authorities</li> <li>- reporting on problems of local communities which should be tackled by local authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reporting and monitoring official investigations conducted by law enforcement agencies</li> <li>- reporting on charges of corruption brought by local public figures (opposition, local ngo, local businesspeople)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- investigating and exposing different forms of corruption among local public figures (bribery, nepotism, clientelism, embezzlement, cronomism) like politicians, local business figures, ngos, priests</li> </ul>



<b>Three types of anti-corruption impact understood as an effect of activity</b>		
<b>deliberative</b>	<b>individualistic</b>	<b>substantive</b>
triggering local discussion over the problems raised and how to tackle them	triggering sanctions against particular individuals or institutions accused of irregularities	triggering change of laws, rules, procedures, policies or establishment of special bodies

Source: own elaboration

There is also a possibility to use the model in more qualitative approach, in which only few cases are thoroughly studied and compared. Contrary to the above-mentioned approach, case studies give advantage of going beyond journalists' declarations in order to verify real content of the media coverages and processes triggered at the local level. There might be a discrepancy between journalists' perceptions (self-image) and facts on the ground - case studies make it possible to deal with this problem by confronting declarations with the objective local developments. The idea behind this approach is to trace interactions between the local media and local institutional setting, so different components of anti-corruption capacity are not treated separately, but as interconnected dimensions of the same process – different types of activity, depending on different determinants might bring different effects. The case study provides an opportunity to focus on the local newspaper as an actor embedded and entangled into the local institutional setting, while this setting is also an important determiner of the media's involvement and impact<sup>6</sup>. In this research path the content analysis and interviews with representatives of different local sectors can be used. The content analysis should focus on the anti-corruption reporting in order to categorize coverages into the four types of anti-corruption activity, distinguish the main actors involved and main effects triggered. The findings from the content analysis should allow for the selection of respondents with proper local knowledge - journalists from the selected cases, local politicians (mayors, councilors), representatives of the local NGOs and, if possible, representatives of the institutions described in anti-corruption materials.

## **Discussion**

The model presented above is a preliminary proposal that must be further elaborated and refined through an empirical test that would expose its strengths and weaknesses. At this stage, it serves as a general theoretical framework showing complexity of the anti-corruption capacity of the local press and articulating possible research paths. However, the author is aware that application of the model faces some methodological and theoretical challenges that must be taken into account.

The first one results from the fact that the model refers to the phenomenon of corruption at the local level. It is generally known that studying corruption

---

6 The institutional setting is comprised of different institutional actors such as the local political institutions, local NGOs, religious institutions, local entrepreneurs, voters, institutions from the central level interfering into local reality (among others law enforcement authorities, including anti-corruption and supervisory bodies).



constitutes a methodological challenge because of the illegal or unethical nature of the phenomenon, so there is a risk of limited interest in providing reliable knowledge by journalists. Having this problem in mind, it must be remembered that the model is designed not to collect data about different corrupt practices, but on the anti-corruption capacity of the local press. From this point of view the journalists-respondents would be asked rather to assess their own strengths and weakness to face the local government corruption and bring about changes in the local landscapes, instead of being asked about who is corrupt and how. Obviously, assessing one's own ability to cover corruption stories demands some reference to corrupt practices in the local environment, but one still can provide genuine self-evaluation of anti-corruption capacity without pointing a finger towards specific public figures. Thereby, whether it is CAWI or PAPI, they should be clearly framed in terms of interests in anti-corruption activity, rather than focusing on the problem of local corrupt practices. This would shift the nature of the questions, making them less threatening thus likely increasing respondents' readiness to give credible feedback.

The next problem to be pointed at is connected with the four types of anti-corruption activity distinguished within the model: monitor, advocate-protector, facilitator, muckraker. It is assumed that they can be ordered as having different levels of anti-corruption involvement, with the monitor presenting the weakest and the muckraker presenting the strongest. However, such ranking might be put under question, because observing and reporting about everyday local public life (monitor) can constitute greater involvement in anti-corruption, then reporting about corruption charges brought against local public figures and institutions by third parties (facilitator). The first type of activity does not directly cover specific corrupt behaviors, but it can create intangible feeling of being watched leading to self-constrain among local public officials. Thus, the problem is that in this case we deal with potential malpractices that did not happen, instead of covering any actual corrupt practices. Whereas the facilitator's activity covers actual corrupt behaviors, exposed already by someone else, multiplying pressures on corrupt public figures. In the second case anti-corruption involvement appears to be stronger, because it refers to a particular example of corrupt behaviour making it easier to demonstrate clear anti-corruption engagement. In the proposed typology of activities, the level of anti-corruption involvement was determined by journalists' engagement into covering specific cases of corruption, but it must be remembered that monitoring can be characterized by significant, although less visible, involvement as well. Putting aside the problem of anti-corruption involvement, another theoretical challenge results from the fact that the same media outlet might present several types of anti-corruption activity. In this case we face the problem of determining

dominant type or types by confronting a specific media outlet with our quadruple typology. Theoretically, it is possible that a given press outlet demonstrates involvement in all distinguished types (or none), being interesting material for in-depth case study.

Last but not least, the effects of anti-corruption activity might overlap. Whereas it is easy to make a theoretical distinction between deliberative, individualistic and substantive impact of anti-corruption activity, in empirical terms these might be different moments of the same process. When members of local council discuss irregularities committed by the local bureaucrats and this is not followed by any accountability measures, this is just deliberative impact. However, such discussion might trigger specific sanctions or even institutional solutions, which means that in this case the anti-corruption activity of journalists has both a deliberative and individualistic impact. It is possible that the individualistic impact goes together with the substantive one. Therefore, the distinguished types of impact should be treated as theoretical categories that might articulate different aspects of developments around one, specific corruption case. One story published by the local press can sometimes trigger multidimensional changes in the local life that interact and overlap each other, while the proposed categories give us imperfect lenses to trace them and to gauge their real impact.

### **Summary**

The problem of the anti-corruption role of the local media is under-researched, not only in Poland, but also in international studies. Thus, there is a need to fill in this gap, especially if we take into account the importance of effective accountability mechanisms as a precondition for stronger local democracy and quality of governance. Both the peculiarity of the local corruption and current changes of the media and political landscapes in Poland add to the growing importance of this research direction. Limiting media freedom, especially by gaining control over the regional media by the state-owned company, undermine capacity to curb corruption. This justifies the question about the role of the local media as their independence of the central authorities might give them stronger importance as an anti-corruption platforms. At the same time, centralizing tendencies in governmental policies are accompanied by clientelistic politics of the central government towards the local governments, based on the special purpose funds distributed on a discretionary basis. Therefore, it is more important than ever to study the capacity of the local press to curb corruption at the local level.

The scarce studies on the local media in Poland show rather ambiguous picture. On the one hand, there are a lot of barriers faced by the local media trying

to act as an anti-corruption watchdog, but on the other hand, there are some studies concluding that the media might be an effective watchdog. That is why the more comprehensive studies on the local media's anti-corruption capacity should be conducted with focus on the determinants, types of activity and its effects. The proposed model, based on three interconnected components enumerated above, serves as a general analytical framework articulating a multidimensional surrounding and diversified scope of anti-corruption functions of the local press in Poland. It might be applied in more quantitative research including a large number of media outlets but lends itself also to qualitative approach typical for case studies. Although the model is designed to study anti-corruption capacity of the local press in Poland, the author believes that it is general enough to be useful for researchers in other political systems with the autonomous local media.

### Literature:

- Adamczyk, W. (2011). W krzywym zwierciadle: propagandowa funkcja biuletynów samorządowych. *Przegląd Politologiczny 1*: 179-195.
- Adamczyk, W. (2019). Patologie instytucji samorządowych jako przedmiot publikacji śledczych i interwencyjnych w niezależnych mediach lokalnych. In: M. Mazur, M. Kornacka-Grzonka (ed.) *Komunikowanie lokalno-regionalne w dobie społeczeństwa medialnego. Vol. 2. Aspekty polityczne, społeczne i technologiczne*, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego: 30-46.
- Adamowicz, A. (2015). Państwo patronalne. Relacje władzy i podległości w małej wspólnocie lokalnej. Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN.
- Bartnicki, S. (2019). Głosowanie klientelizmem pisane, czyli jak zwiększać szanse reelekcji w wyborach wójtów i burmistrzów. *Studia Socjologiczne 1*, (232): 65-93.
- Badania czytelnictwa gazet lokalnych. (2015). Biuro Reklamy Gazet Lokalnych, [http://gazetylokalne.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Badanie\\_czytelnictwa\\_2014\\_2015.pdf](http://gazetylokalne.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Badanie_czytelnictwa_2014_2015.pdf) (access 17.08.2021).
- Besley, T., Prat, A. (2006). Handcuffs for the grabbing hand?: media capture and government accountability. *American Economic Review*, 96 (3): 720-736.
- Benito, B., Guillamón, D.M., Bastida, F. (2015). Determinants of urban political corruption in local governments. *Crime, Law and Social Change* 63, 34: 191-210.
- Benito, B., Guillamón, D. M, Ríos, M.A., Bastida, F. (2019). Do the illegal and legal rents of politicians affect municipal election outcomes? Empirical evidence. *Local Government Studies* 45(4): 546-568.
- Bergh, A., Fink, G., Öhrvall, R. (2017). More politicians, more corruption: evidence from Swedish municipalities. *Public Choice* 172 (3-4): 483-500.
- Berti, C., Bratu, R., Wickberg, S. (2020). Corruption and the media. In: Mungiu-Pippidi, A., Heywood, P. (eds.), *A Research agenda for studies of corruption*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar: 107-117.

- Heidenheimer, J.A. (ed.). (1978). *Political corruption. Readings in comparative analysis*. New Brunswick: Holt Rinehart and Winston.
- Białach, S., Pawlik, P., Pajączek, T., Cieśla, Ł., Kozanecki, P., Halicki, P. (2021). *Czystka w Polska Press. Orlen wymienia redaktorów naczelnych na ludzi bliskich władzy*, Onet.pl, 15.07: <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/tylko-w-onecie/polska-press-orlen-wymiana-naczelnich/z8dy6pl> (access 09.08.2021).
- Brunetti, A., Weder, B. (2003). A free press is bad news for corruption. *Journal of Public Economics* 87,7-8: 1801-1824.
- Bychawska-Siniarska, D., Głowacka, D. (2013). *Media lokalne i regionalne – nierozwiązane problemy, nowe wyzwania*. Warszawa: Helsińska Fundacja Prawa Człowieka.
- Camaj, L. (2013). The media's role in fighting corruption: media effects on governmental accountability. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 18,1: 21-42.
- CBOS (2018). *Zaangażowanie Polaków na rzecz społeczności lokalnej*. Komunikat z badań nr 74. Warszawa.
- Charron, N., Lapuente, V., Bauhr, M. (2021). Sub-national Quality of Government in EU Member States: Presenting the 2021 European Quality of Government Index and its relationship with Covid-19 indicators. University of Gothenburg: The QoG Working Paper Series 4, <https://www.gu.se/en/quality-government/qog-data/data-downloads/european-quality-of-government-index> (accessed 20.08.2021).
- Chorążki, W. (1991). Prasa lokalna i sublokalna w Polsce 1989-1991. *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 3-4(128): 42-51.
- Chorążki, W. (1999). Polskie media lokalne i sublokalne 1989-1999. *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 1-2(157-158): 59-82.
- Coronel, S. (2010). Corruption and the watchdog role of the news media. In: P. Norris (ed.), *Public sentinel. News media and governance reform*. Washington: The World Bank: 111-136.
- Czepil, B. (2020). Quality of Governance at the Communal Level in Poland: an Exploratory Study of the Worst Performer Case From the Opolskie Province. *Halduskultuur – The Estonian Journal of Administrative Culture and Digital Governance* 21,1: 22-55.
- Danielewicz, M., Mazurek, P. (2012). Technospołeczniczy. Rozkwit mediów lokalnych. Centrum Cyfrowe: Polska 2012, <https://www.nck.pl/badania/raporty/technospolecznicy-rozkwit-mediow-lokalnych> (access 25.08.2021).
- Drápalová, E., Di Mascio, F. (2020). Islands of good government: explaining successful corruption control in two Spanish cities. *Politics and Governance* 8, 2: 128-139.
- Dupuy, K., Williams, A. (2018). Corruption and the city. How aid donors can support integrity building in urban spaces. U4 Brief: 2, Charles Michelsen Institute, <https://www.u4.no/publications/corruption-and-the-city/pdf> (access 23.11.2021).

- Dzierżyńska-Mielczarek, J. (2012). Modele biznesowe w prasie lokalnej. *Journalism Research Review Quarterly* 4: 29-44.
- Erlingsson, G., Wittberg, E., Lindström, M. (2020). Municipally owned enterprises and heightened corruption risks. Quality of Government Series, Working Paper 2, <https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/64077> (access 13.08.2021).
- European Parliament. (2020). Safety of journalists and the fighting of corruption in the EU, PE 655.187 July, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/655187/IPOL\\_STU\(2020\)655187\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/655187/IPOL_STU(2020)655187_EN.pdf) (access 23.08.2021).
- EU anticorruption report (2014). Brussels: European Commission, COM (2014) 38, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2020-09/acr\\_2014\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files/2020-09/acr_2014_en.pdf) (access 10.09.2021).
- Färdigh, M. (2013). What's the use of a free media? The role of media in curbing corruption and promoting quality of government. PhD Dissertation, University of Gothenburg, [https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/34302/1/gupea\\_2077\\_34302\\_1.pdf](https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/34302/1/gupea_2077_34302_1.pdf) (access 18.08.2021).
- Ferrer, S. (2020). Responsibility attribution for corruption scandals. *Local Government Studies* 46, 1: 22-43.
- Fisman, R., Gatti, R. (2002). Decentralization and corruption: Evidence from U.S. federal transfer programs. *Public Choice* 113: 25-35.
- Fjeldstad, O.H. (2004). Decentralisation and corruption. A review of the literature. Working Papers:10, Chr. Michelsen Institute, <https://open.cmi.no/cmimlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2435964/Working%20paper%20WP%202004-10.pdf?sequence=2> (access 20.08.2021).
- Freedom of the Press (2017). [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/FOTP\\_2017\\_booklet\\_FINAL\\_April28\\_1.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/FOTP_2017_booklet_FINAL_April28_1.pdf) (access 17.08.2021).
- Gierula, M. (2005). *Polska prasa lokalna 1989-2000. Typologia i społeczne funkcjonowanie*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.
- Global Corruption Barometer (2021). European Union, Transparency International, [https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/TI\\_GCB\\_EU\\_2021\\_web\\_2021-06-14-151758.pdf](https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/TI_GCB_EU_2021_web_2021-06-14-151758.pdf) (access 17.08.2021).
- Hamada, B.I., Abdel-Salam, A.-S.G., Elkilany, E.A. (2019). Press freedom and corruption: An examination of the relationship. *Global Media and Communication* 15(3): 303-321.
- Hoffmann, T. (2018). Wybrane aspekty rozwoju dziennikarstwa śledczego w Polsce. *Media i Społeczeństwo* 9: 44-57.
- Huberts, L, Six, F. (2012). Local integrity systems: Toward a framework for comparative analysis and assessment. *Public Integrity* 14(2): 151-172.
- Johnston, M. (2006). From Thucydides to mayor Daley: bad politics and culture of corruption. *Political Science & Politics* 37(4): 809-812.

- Kaufmann, D. (2004). Corruption, governance and security: challenges for the rich countries and the world. In: M. E. Porter, K. Schwab, X. Sala-I-Martin, A. Lopez-Claros (eds.), *Global Competitiveness Report 2004/2005*. Palgrave MacMillan: 83-102.
- Klitgaard, R., Maclean-Abaroa, R., Lindsay, P. (2000). *Corrupt cities: a practical guide to cure and prevention*. World Bank Institute: Washington.
- Kowalczyk, R. (2011). Miejsce i rola mediów lokalnych we współczesnym społeczeństwie informacyjnym (refleksje medioznawcze). *Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne 1*: 65-88.
- Kuca, P. (2006). Dziennikarstwo interwencyjne jako przejaw kontrolnej funkcji prasy na przykładzie dzienników woj. podkarpackiego. In: K. Wolny-Zmorzyński, M. Wrońska, W. Furman, (eds). *Między odpowiedzialnością a sensacją. Dziennikarstwo i edukacja na przełomie wieków*. Rzeszów: 186-194.
- Lindstedt, C., Naurin, D. (2005). Transparency and Corruption. The Conditional Significance of a Free Press. Quality of Government Institute, Working Paper 5, University of Gothenburg.
- Łęcka, O. (2018). Kontrowersje wokół upolitycznienia mediów lokalnych. *Naukowy Przegląd Dziennikarski 3*: 75-82.
- Makowski, G. (2020). Laying the groundwork for “grand corruption”: the Polish government’s (anti-) corruption activities in 2015-2019. Warszawa: Stefan Batory Foundation, [https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Laying-the-groundwork-for-Grand-Corruption\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Laying-the-groundwork-for-Grand-Corruption_ENG.pdf) (accessed 01.09. 2021).
- Macała, J. (2006). Media wobec korupcji w III RP – w tle afery Rywina. In: M. Gierula (ed.) *Władza. Media. Polityka*. Katowice: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.
- Kobylńska, A., Makowski, G., Solon-Lipiński, M. (eds.). (2012). *Mechanizmy przeciwdziałania korupcji w Polsce. Raport z monitoringu*. Warszawa: Instytut Spraw Publicznych.
- Michalczyk, S. (2000). *Media lokalne w systemie komunikowania. Współczesne tendencje i uwarunkowania rozwojowe*. Katowice: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.
- Muñoz, J., Anduiza, E., Gallego, A. (2016). Why do voters forgive corrupt mayors? Implicit exchange, credibility of information and clean alternatives. *Local Government Studies 42*, 4: 598-615.
- Mungiu-Pippidi, (2018). Seven steps to control of corruption: the road map. *Dædalus 147*(3): 20-34.
- Męćfal, S. (2016). Forms of local media relations in local communities – case studies. *Central European Journal of Communication 9*(1): 20-36.
- Męćfal, S. (2020). Local media policies in Poland. Key issues and debates. In: A. Gulyas, D. Baines (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Local Media and Journalism*. London: Routledge, pp. 122-131.
- Norris, P., Odugbemi, S. (2010). Evaluating media performance. In: P. Norris (ed.) *Public sentinel. News media and governance reform*. Washington: World Bank: 3-30.

- Nowakowski, K. (2017). Zagrożenia etyczne i korupcyjne w mediach. *Studia Medioznawcze* 2(69): 127-144.
- OECD (2018). The Role of the Media and Investigative Journalism in Combating Corruption. <https://www.oecd.org/corruption/the-role-of-media-and-investigative-journalism-in-combating-corruption.htm> (access 17.08.2021).
- Palczewski, M., Worsowicz, M. (eds.). (2009). *O dziennikarstwie śledczym. Normy, zagrożenia, perspektywy*. Łódź: WSHE.
- Pyman, M. (2021). Curbing corruption in local government: sector reforms and strategies. CurbinCorruption.com, <https://curbingcorruption.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/210618-Curbing-Corruption-in-Local-Government.pdf> (accessed 01.09.2021).
- Pokrzycka, L. (2013). Local newspapers in Poland. INFOS, no 6 (143), Warszawa: Biuro Analiz Sejmowych.
- Rutkowski, P. (2008). Klientelizm w perspektywie wyborów samorządowych – studium miasta średniej wielkości. Hipoteza klientelistyczna jako próba wyjaśnienia ‘fenomenu reelekcji’. In: J. Raciborski (ed.), *Studia nad wyborami. Polska 2005–2006*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar: 48-69.
- Schauseil, W. (2019). Media and anti-corruption. U4 Helpdesk Answer 3, Charles Michelsen Institute. [https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/helpdesk/media-and-corruption\\_2019.pdf](https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/helpdesk/media-and-corruption_2019.pdf) (access 19.08.2021).
- Stapenhurst, R. (2000). *Media's role in fighting corruption*. Washington: World Bank Institute.
- Stępińska, A. Jurga-Wosik, E., Adamczewska, K., Narożna, D., Secler, B. (2017). Postawy polskich dziennikarzy wobec aktorów politycznych: badania empiryczne. *Przegląd Politologiczny* 1: 127-141.
- Stępińska, A. (2021). Factors affecting self-censorship among polish journalist. *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 2(246): 49-63.
- Swianiewicz, P., Flis, J. (2021a). Rządowy Fundusz Inwestycji Lokalnych – reguły podziału. Warszawa: Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego: <https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Rzadowy-Fundusz-Inwestycji-Lokalnych-regu%C5%82y-podzia%C5%82u.pdf> (access 12.07.2021).
- Swianiewicz, P., Flis, J. (2021b). The Central Government Fund for Local Investments – patterns taking hold. Warszawa: Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego. [https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/The-Government-Fund-for-Local-Investment-III\\_patterns-taking-hold.pdf](https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/The-Government-Fund-for-Local-Investment-III_patterns-taking-hold.pdf) (access 01.09.2021).
- Sześciło, D. (2018). Recydywa centralizmu? Zmiany w polityce państwa wobec samorządu po 2015 roku. Warszawa: Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego, [http://www.batory.org.pl/upload/files/Programy%20operacyjne/Masz%20Glos/D\\_Szescilo%20Recydywa%20centralizmu.pdf](http://www.batory.org.pl/upload/files/Programy%20operacyjne/Masz%20Glos/D_Szescilo%20Recydywa%20centralizmu.pdf) (access 15.11.2018).
- Sześciło, D., Gąsiorowska, A., Łapszyński, R., Zakroczyński, S. (2021). Central Government Fund for Local Investments: a needs-based or politics-based scheme? Warszawa: Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego, [https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Central-Government-Fund-for-Local-Investments\\_.pdf](https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Central-Government-Fund-for-Local-Investments_.pdf) (access 01.09.2021).

- Szostok, P. (2010). Prasa samorządowa w Polsce – teorie, historia, funkcje. In: M. Barański, A. Czyż, S. Kubas (eds.) *Rola samorządu terytorialnego w modernizacji Polski*. Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski – Wydawnictwo Naukowe Śląsk.
- Szostok, P., Rajczyk, R. (2013). *Komuniowanie lokalne w Polsce. O instrumentach polityki komunikacyjnej samorządów*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Gnom.
- Tiffen, R. (1999). *Scandals: Media, Politics and Corruption in Contemporary Australia*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- Treisman, D., Simon Fan, C., Lin, C. (2009). Political decentralization and corruption: Evidence from around the world. *Journal of Public Economics* 93: 14–34.
- Vaiman, V., Sigurjonsson, O.T., Davidsson, P.A. (2010). Revising a concept of corruption as a result of the global economic crisis - the case of Iceland. In: A. Stachowicz-Stanusch (ed.) *Organizational Immunity to Corruption. Building Theoretical and Research Foundations*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing: 363-372.
- Walczak, W. (2013). Zawłaszczanie stanowisk w administracji samorządowej - element umacniania systemu władzy. *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Oeconomica* 288: 67-78.
- Warren, M. (2006). Political corruption as duplicitous exclusion. *Political Science & Politics* 37(4): 803-807.
- Wiseman, J. (2021). Democracy declining: erosion of media freedom in Poland, Media Freedom Rapid Response Press Freedom Mission to Poland, Mission Report November-December, International Press Institute, Vienna, [https://ipi.media/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20210211\\_Poland\\_PF\\_Mission\\_Report\\_ENG\\_final.pdf](https://ipi.media/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20210211_Poland_PF_Mission_Report_ENG_final.pdf) (access 09.09.2021).
- Wojnicki, J. (2020). Tendencje centralizacyjne w Polsce po 1990 roku – ciągłość i zmiana. *Polityka i Społeczność* 2 (18): 25-37.
- Zaborski, M. (2006). Skaner życia publicznego, czyli media wobec korupcji. In: A. Dylus, A. Rudowski, M. Zaborski (eds.) *Korupcja, oblicza, uwarunkowania, przeciwdziałanie*. Wrocław: Ossolineum: 161-172.



© 2022 by the author. Published by University of Opole.  
This work is an open access article licensed and distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC-BY-NC-SA).