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Politicalization of the media in Poland - the process of direct and indirect dependence of the

media on politics.

“Politicalization of the Media in Poland - the process of direct and indirect dependence

of the media on politics“ includes an analysis of the process growing dependence of

media on politics. The analysis is based on the theoretical part, in which the legal bases

are presented, as well as the conditionality of media and at the same time political

activity in Poland. The analysis, it’s based on the development of the media market also

on the development of the political scene in Poland.

Although the analysis requires a full historical context. The author decided to delve

deeper into the period 1989-2020, because only since 1989 the Republic of Poland can

be considered a fully free country.

Even though Poland is now a democratic country, it is possible to observe a permanent

increase in the dependence of the local media on politics and politicians. The political

dependence of the media until 1989 cannot be discussed, as the media operating

during this period cannot be considered independent, which was, of course, a

consequence of the current political system of that time.

After the 1989 revolution, citizens, scientists and above all journalists expected the

media to become politically independent. But that did not work. The last two great

waves of intensive media development (the 1990s and the end of the first decade of

the 21st century) were the result not only of the economic situation but also of the

growing dependence of the media on politics and politicians. At the same time, this

process continues and appears to be the growth of not only indirect but also direct

dependence of the media on the already mentioned subjects.

The period 1989-2020 was also chosen for other several reasons. The key year

here is 1989, in which the systemic revolution took place. One of its many

consequences was the pluralization of the media market. Private radio and television

stations were established during this period, which were exempt from the political

regime and could thus operate independently and openly. Also important are the first

years after the revolution, when a number of media entities emerged and disappeared

in the media market.

31 years is a period of time that allows a relatively broad observation upon the

progress of changes that took place in the Polish media. It opens with a change in the

format of public television (TVP) and the creation of the first private radio station with

the first private television station in Poland. In addition, the wiretapping affair in the

Polish government, which, thanks to the politicization of the media in Poland, had no

effect on either the main characters of this affair or its investigation. A lot of space is

also devoted to the drastic changes in the functioning of the media after 2015. It is not

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only about the actual nationalization of Polish Public Television and Polish Public Radio

but also about starting the takeover of local media by state-owned companies.

Regarding the definition of content - the analysis covers radio and television

media. Such a definition is justified by the fact that in the case of print analysis it would

be necessary not only to extend the time period but also to analyse a large number of

titles. This applies to virtually every period analysed, including the years 1945-1989.

During this period, it is necessary to deal not only with newspapers and magazines that

were published officially, but also those that were published through dissident

movements. Even more complicated is the elaboration of the most important period

1989-2020. In 2020 alone there were over 1,500 titles on the Polish market, without

those that ended their existence during the last quarter century. The processing of the

entire press a task so large and demanding that it deserves a special publication, I count

on it in my next scientific research.

For the same reason I decided to resign from processing Internet content. During the

25 years of its existence a large number of news and journalistic servers and pages

have appeared which present all sorts of possible perspectives. This applies in

particular to the period 2007-2020, when the number of internet media titles

increased rapidly. In recent years their number has been even higher and more diverse

than the press, which was a consequence, not only in the emergence of new subjects

but also in the transfer of many printed titles to the Internet. For this reason, the

Internet should be processed separately or together with the press.

The hypothesis is the discovery that currently the Polish media is dependent on

politics both directly and indirectly. For many it may seem that such a hypothesis is an

attack on the free and independent media operating in the democratic country that

Poland is, but everything is just the opposite. The analysis of the development of both

the Polish political scene and the media market is to prove that even after 1989 there

are conditions in Poland allow independent media to operate and that it is the media

that has decided to give up this independence for various reasons. It is certainly not

possible to point to one particular moment in which such a decision was made. In

particular, at the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century, it was possible to

observe the presence of a huge number of independent radio and television stations,

which enjoyed the freedom of speech acquired a few years ago. It is a fact that in the

last 30 years the situation on the media market has changed so much that nowadays it

is almost impossible to talk about independent media. What is particularly interesting

is the fact that politicians are responsible for the political independence of the media in

several cases, even incompletely. Therefore, the hypothesis of the dependence of the

Polish media on politics and politicians is not a slander or an attack, it is only a

statement of the state, which is the result of many years of complicated processes - not

violent reconstruction of systems.

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Research question: What are the reasons for the process of politicizing the media and

increasing their dependence on politics in a democratic country like Poland?

As Poland fulfils the criteria of a democratic country, I can see at a glance that there is a

lack of objective media on its territory that are free from political dependence. Even

more surprising is the fact that since a few years almost no one has denied that, and

often those political connections are for the audience crucial when it comes to choosing

a favourite broadcaster.

The search for reasons regarding the growth of political dependence takes place mainly

in two areas. First, it is the economic environment of media markets. After many years

and during the acquisition of experience, managers of media entities have found that

the cheapest topics for news and journalistic activities are politicians and the political

situation. At a time when social, scientific, cultural and investigative programs often

involve enormous costs, policy issues are prepared very cheaply and inexpensively.

One news team (journalist, cameraman, sound engineer and car technician) based in

the Chamber is able to provide up to 30% of the daily content on news television. Such

a team will not only provide a summary of events in the Chamber itself but will provide

also commentaries on all events of the day and at the same time offers opportunities

for further journalism. News work in exactly the same way on radio stations which

provide the content of news broadcasts in an easy and cheap way by obtaining political

commentary.

Secondly, it is impossible to omit the efforts of politicians who always do their best to

influence the media as much as possible. At a time when they cannot gain direct or

indirect influence over the existing media, the simplest solution for them is to create

their own entity, which will be fully controlled by the given political force. Although this

is not a completely new idea (this is the way that the press was used to it since the

beginning), but it was the period after 1989 that enabled various parties to implement

the idea of political radio or television. However, it is also necessary to remember that

it is the economic conditions that influence the fact that the efforts of politicians to

create a political media are most often used in the press and the Internet, which was

excluded from this research.