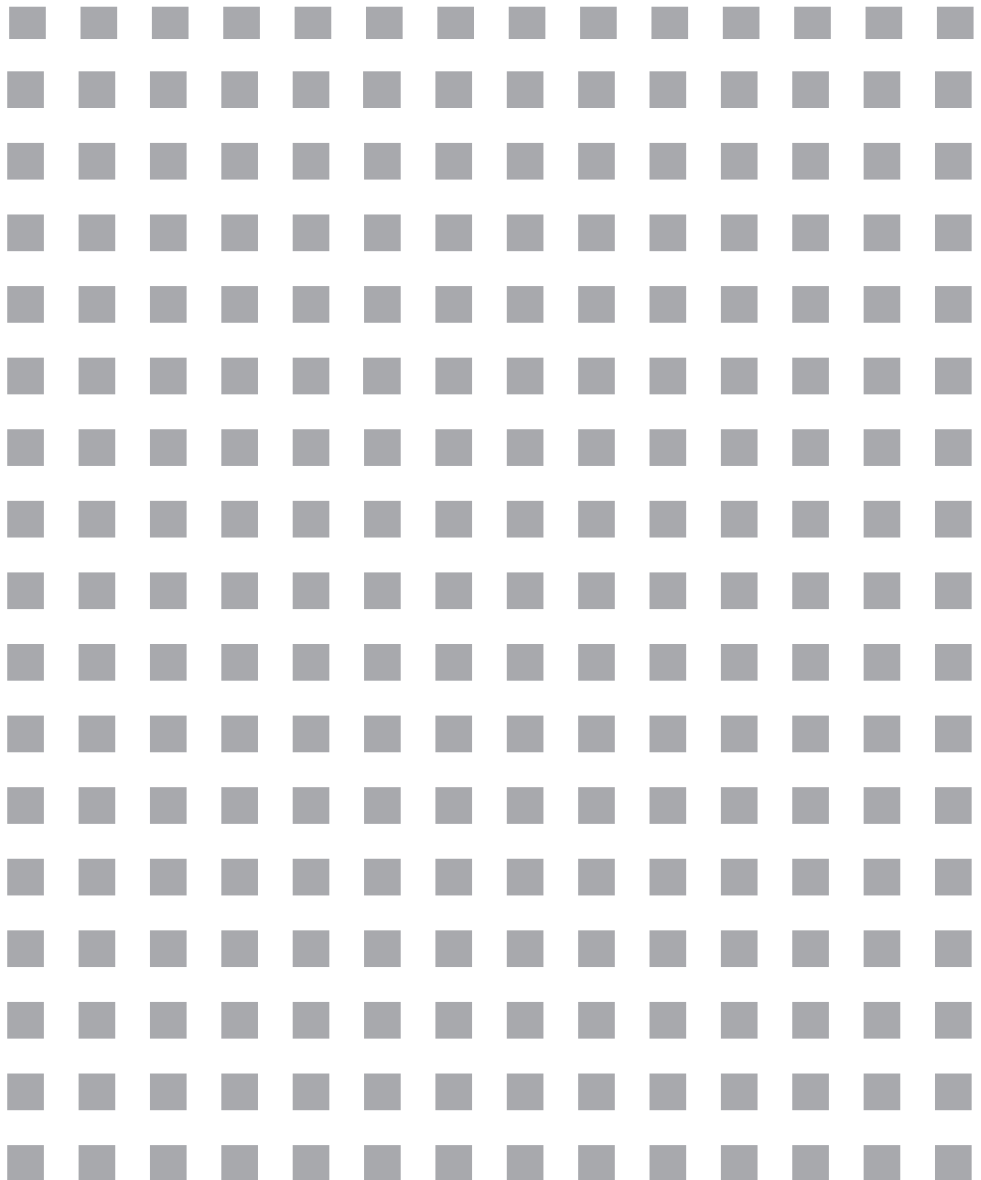# Book reviews

Lucyna Szot (2012), *Dziennikarze mediów lokalnych w Polsce. Między profesjonalizmem a koniecznością przetrwania* **(Local media journalists in Poland. Between professionalism and need to survive). Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, pp. 418, ISBN: 978-83-229-3381-7.**

The situation of journalists working for Polish local media is very challenging. They play an important and responsible role in local societies, providing a framework for a pluralistic public debate, serving as a watchdog of a local society, being the mouthpiece of democracy at the local level, etc. On the other hand, in comparison to journalists working for national media, they experience much greater pressure exerted on them by political and economic actors. They need to put in much more effort to preserve their journalistic independence, while their working conditions and salaries are worse than those of journalists working for national media. However, local media journalists in Poland have been very rarely the subject of scientific research. This is one of the reasons why every study like the one of Lucyna Szot is of great value.

Another reason is the rapidness of change in the media environment. Our knowledge in this field is never sufficient. Additionally, Polish empirical research on media is quite rare. However, the study of Lucyna Szot combines complementary research methods, including the analysis of source materials, such as internal documents of newsrooms and legal acts, and — above all — empirical research including quantitative and qualitative methods. In 2011 and 2012 the author carried out over 100 surveys among journalists working for local media, including radio and television stations, newspapers and magazines. In total, the survey covered journalists working for 16 different newsrooms of local media (of public, community and private ownership). What is important, the research took into consideration only journalists specializing in informative content. Additionally, the author of the study conducted 26 in-depth interviews with editors-in-chief and their deputies.

One might say that the publication does not concern the Polish local media, as it states in its title, but the local media of the one of Poland's cities, namely the city of Wrocław (the abovementioned newsrooms were based mainly in Wrocław). Nevertheless, it would not be true. Why? Because the detailed research conducted by Lucyna Szot, serves her as a kind of magnifying glass. First she took a closer look at the media of Wrocław and scrutinized them. Thanks to this approach she has reached the advanced level of knowledge of journalists working for these media. Then she "zoomed out" to look at the situation of Polish local media journalists in general. The ability that allows Lucyna Szot to broaden the perspective and look through a different lens at Polish local media and its journalists is the great advantage of her work.

The book is structured in four chapters. Each of them presents a different aspect of the main subject of study. The first one focuses on a theoretical approach to the scientific concept of journalism as a profession. It provides the necessary background for empirical research and its findings. Additionally, it raises such issues as objective and engaged journalism models or current trends in the profession.

Also, in this part of the publication the author gives a handful of information about conditions of Polish journalism and its historical, cultural, social and economic determinants.

The second chapter concerns the specificity of the Polish local media system, including its structure and different types of ownership. It presents newsroom management problems and the process of content production. One of the subsections is particularly noteworthy, in which the author examines closely the structure of two newsrooms: the one of a regional newspaper and another one of a radio station based in Wrocław, both representing different types of ownership.

The third chapter is a crucial part of the study. It is well-structured and summarizes findings of empirical research conducted by the author, mainly the surveys carried out among journalists of the local media. It analyzes the wide range of determinants, including internal and external factors that have an impact on local media journalism, e.g. structure of the media outlets, ownership, economic and political pressure. The most interesting part of this chapter is the one which presents quantitative data concerning the views of journalists on journalistic independence, professional success and salaries.

The last chapter of the book focuses entirely on journalistic professionalism. It complements information given in the previous chapter and continues discussion on the survey's results. Thanks to the additional presentation of the results of the in-depth interviews, interpretation of the findings of the quantitative research becomes much easier. In this part the author analyses a so called "triad of professionalism" including technical skills of journalists, their relevant knowledge and ethics. Among others, she focuses on such determinants of journalistic professionalism as professional autonomy and professional standards.

While the traditional media are in decline and the process of tabloidization speeds up most media researchers agree that maintaining a high level of professionalism and quality of journalism proves very difficult. The situation in local media newsrooms is even worse. Therefore, journalistic professionalism and "struggle for survival" are often put in opposition, as happened in the subtitle of Lucyna Szot's book, which reads: "Between professionalism and the need to survive." However, in my point of view, this way of thinking could be wrong for local media. Perhaps, even if it is difficult, the only way to survive is to serve the audience with high quality journalism and to strictly follow journalism ethics and standards also for economic reasons. Maybe this would be the only way for traditional local media to become truly competitive — and to compete for attention of the public with other sources of entertainment and information.

To sum up, Lucyna Szot's book is unique, firstly because it focuses on the local media, and not on the national media, as most of the other research conducted in this field does. Secondly, because it provides the reader with valid and reliable empirical research. It gives a multifaceted insight into the situation of journalists and at the same time provides a very comprehensive look at the Polish local media

landscape. This knowledge is important because the survival of newsrooms is not the only thing that depends on the professionalism of journalists and on the quality of the journalism they offer. The welfare of local communities and the quality of democracy at the local level is dependent on it too.

Anna Paluch
UNIVERSITY OF WROCŁAW, POLAND

Michał Kuś (2013), *Telewizja publiczna w Hiszpanii. Pomiędzy polityką i rynkiem* **(Public television in Spain: Between politics and the market). Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wroclawskiego, pp. 129, ISBN: 978-83-229-3368-8.**

In his latest book *Public television in Spain. Between politics and the market*, Michał Kuś has addressed an interesting issue of the history and present of public television in Spain. The dividing lines of the work are the death of dictator F. Franco Bahamode in 1975 and the parliamentary elections in Spain in 2011. Adopting such a time perspective allows the showing of the evolution in Spanish public television in a period of less than 40 years. The author raises the question whether in the case of contemporary Spain any particular or unique model of functioning of public media can be noticed, or there is simply a common trend, which prevails in most European media systems, that also applies to Spanish conditions. As he notes in the introduction/foreword to the book:

> When writing about the past and present of Europe, one cannot leave aside the problem of participation and role of the individual institutions of a political system (mainly parliament and political parties) in the process of shaping and functioning of modern European electronic media markets. State and political control over these markets may take many forms. The existing legislation in this area is clearly the starting point. State and political control can be analysed on the personal level (e.g. way of appointing the staff in the media industry), economic level (regulations on financing the media) and the level of controlling content distribution. Therefore the scope and forms of control result from many different factors.

It is the problem of the links and the complex relationships between the electronic media and politics that the author of this peer reviewed work primarily focuses on.

It should be emphasized that Kuś thoroughly accounts for the choice of this particular topic for his book. Firstly, since its establishment, television has been perceived as the medium which exerts the most powerful influence on public attitudes and opinions. This is the reason why it was and often continuous to be subjected to special form of control, mainly in relation to broadcast content. The moral and cultural arguments, on the one hand, and the economic ones, on the other, have often been used to justify control. As Spanish television does not meet all the criteria for the model of public television, it is clear that Spain has not been a random choice. The commonly

accepted concept, which distinguishes between the two following models: commercial broadcaster (American model) and public television (European model) and accordingly the two media regulation systems: commercial and public broadcasting, has proved to be insufficient in the case of Spain. The differences observed in these models are based on disparate roles of a state, ways of financing the medium, its objectives in relation to broadcast programmes, the models of audience and social legitimization. Spain has not been a random choice. As the author explains, the traditions of strict political control over the media were inherited in Spain after the period of authoritarian rule. Moreover, the model of financing state-owned (public) television based on revenue from advertising, which is not typical for European countries, was adopted. In addition, despite the rapid economic development Spain still lags behind other EU countries as for the development of the media. This backwardness is, according to the author, rather structural and institutional than economic.

Both the chronological order and the order based on the issues presented have been applied in the work. The period of time between 1975 and 2011 which is covered in the book has been divided into four sub-periods closely related to the political and social history of Spain. The first chapter discusses the sub-period from 1975 to 1982: the times since the death of the dictator F. Franco Bahamonde to the seizure of power by the socialist party PSOE. The second chapter describes the phase from 1982 to 1996 — the times of the governing of PSOE. The third chapter discusses the sub-period from 1996 to 2004 — during the rule of the right-wing party known as Partido Popular.

The last chapter includes the period between the years 2004 and 2011 — the septennium of socialist governance (cabinets of J.L. Rodriguez Zapatero). With the reference to all the sub-periods mentioned, the author examines the legal background — the Spanish legislation concerning both public and private electronic media. He also refers to the most important legal acts issued by the autonomous communities of Spain. Moreover, in each of the sub-period he discusses HR policy, financial control and control over the content of the electronic media. The analysis of the last two aspects is carried out for both public and private media. The method of analysis has been taken from the concepts on the dimensions of political (state) control over the mass media by J. Blumler and M. Gurevitch. According to the author of the peer reviewed book, the life cycles of the public media and, in general, of the electronic media market are in the case of Spain closely related to political changes. In the distinguished sub-periods there was a uniform government audiovisual policy and each of the sub-periods can be perceived from the angle of the influence of the ruling party and the Prime Minister.

In the times after the collapse of the Franco regime until 1980, public television in Spain functioned by and large beyond democratic regulations. In the years that followed the links between politics and the public media were still very close which, as the author suggests, resulted from the specificity of Spanish political culture reflected in the habits and practices of political elites. The sub-period from 1982 to

1996, with PSOE as the ruling party, did not bring any significant changes. The authority of the state continued to treat the media, including public television, instrumentally, as "political prey." Both positive and negative trends in the functioning of the television can be noticed between 1996 and 2004 when the rightist party Partido Popular ruled. The level of politicization of media remained high, although the gradual compliance of the audiovisual market regulations with the EU requirements was to liberate the public media from direct political control. However, at the same time, the dynamic development of commercialisation of the Spanish audiovisual market could be observed similarly to other European countries. During the rule of the Partido Popular the process of digitisation of Spanish radio and television began together with the advancing of tabloidization of the electronic media. Socialist rule between 2004 and 2011 brought some significant changes in the functioning of Spanish public television. The most important include: partial de-politicisation of the public media (with regards to the staff policy and the policy concerning the television programmes) and fundamental changes in the financing of public media, which brought a solution to public television's huge debt problem. The reforms carried out by the socialist party and Prime Minister Zapatero led to the reduction in employment and nearly halved the RTVE staff, which transformed Spanish public television into a kind of "bonsai" — nice, though relatively small. Despite the criticism of the reforms, public television in Spain has a chance to carry out its mission, e. g. by producing programmes on culture.

Over the last several years many different theoretical concepts on the relationships between the mass media and politics have emerged, such as the theories of J. Blumler and M. Gurevitch or D. Hallin and P. Mancini, to name but a few examples. The research on the Spanish media system carried out by Kuś is a significant contribution to the verification of the theoretical assumptions. The book by Michał Kuś provides a clear account of the specificity of the Spanish audiovisual market. It is highly recommended to all readers interested in the subject of media systems, their evolution and the ever-present relationships between the politics and the media.

Magdalena Parus
AGH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN KRAKÓW, POLAND

Adina Zemanek (ed.) (2014), *Media in China, China in the Media. Processes, Strategies, Images, Identities.* Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, pp. 212, ISBN: 978-83-233-3621-1.

In the vast landscape of media systems all around the world, China still tends to be the *terra incognita* for many western scholars. Today's media system discourse is

still dominated by Hallin and Mancini's models. By using four analytic dimensions (newspaper industry, political parallelism, professionalization and role of the state in the media system) it was possible to obtain three basic models: Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model, North/Central Europe or Democratic Corporatist Model and North Atlantic or Liberal Model. However, in 2012 the authors of Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics made an attempt to take a look outside the western world patterns, and in their next book (2012) many scholars contributed their chapters regarding media systems in eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. Dr. Yuezhi Zhao, in the chapter devoted to the Chinese media system claimed, that

> it is perhaps useful to move beyond a single model to understand Chinese media institutions and practices in the dynamic and creative tensions among political instrumentalization, commercial instrumentalization, professionalization, and pressures for popular participation in the era of digitalized and socialized communication.

Every contemporary study is essential for understanding all the on-going changes in the Chinese media system, therefore, the book Media in China, China in the Media seems to occupy a rather interesting position in the still unpopular field of Chinese media studies.

The publication was the result of the project initiated by the Jagiellonian Institute of Middle and Far Eastern Studies and the Centre for Chinese Language and Culture "Confucius Institute in Krakow."

The book consists of three parts: Chinese Media in the Early Twentieth Century (1), Content Analyses of Chinese Media (2) and Depictions of China in Foreign Media (3).

Assuming that many readers could be unfamiliar with the history of media in China, the first chapter by Luminita Balan provides the reader with the evolution of vernacular (native language) and its reflection in the local print media market. In this paper, the author gives an interesting view on the role of the language, the process of its unifying and nation-building abilities.

The second part of the book is composed of five chapters based on the analysis of media in China. The first of the chapters by Marcin Jacoby is intriguing research on four official Chinese media (People's Daily, Xinhua Agency and China News by China News Services and China.org.cn) analyzing the media coverage of Liu Xiaobo, 2010's Nobel Peace Prize laureate. The brief view on all the linguistic strategies pointed against Mr Xiaobo depicts a picture of party-driven media in China. The next chapter by Dominik Mierzejewski puts the accent on the transparency of the Chinese government by analyzing the Nanfang Chuang magazine dedicated to budgetary issues. Although only one issue of the analyzed title may seem insufficient, the results are most interesting. The following chapter by Joanna Wardęga presents the results of media coverage research about Beijing's 2008 Olympic Games. It reveals the issue of nationalism in Chinese media and highlights the process of creating the image of contemporary China. The next paper by Zhai

Zheng indicates the debate which came out after the Starbucks coffee store opened in one of the historic parts of Beijing. It is based on the comparative analysis of one of the most popular blogs (entries and comments), local and national newspapers and news reports from dailies and magazines in the UK and US. The findings, which relate to the dichotomy between the western world and China, presents the interesting differences between the media coverage on both sides. The last paper in the second section of the book was actually written by the Editor of the tome, and it emphasizes the cultural evolution of Chinese society by analyzing over 500 articles from Shishang and Shijie shizhuang zhi yuan fashion magazines, which are issued as local editions of Cosmopolitan and Elle. The results of the research might be surprising, and show the image of respecting local values and self-aware modern Chinese women.

All the chapters in the second section of the book made interesting examples of Chinese journalistic professionalism, political parallelism and functionality media in China, stressing its role as the creator of values and the place of cultural and political debates.

The third section of the book was devoted to the image of China in other countries. It consists of five chapters, each of them presenting a different case study. The first chapter by Jarosław Jura and Kaja Kałużyńska analyzes the image of China on Zambian internet forums, starting with a brief explanation of the Chinese role in this African country. The authors gathered over ten thousand comments from Zambian Internet portals — Zambian Watchdog and Lusaka Times to conduct research focusing on Sino-African relations. The quantitative and qualitative analysis was methodologically impressive and it enabled the exploration of the perception of Chinese among Zambian netizens. The next article, authored by Michał M. Bukowski examines the image of China in the Polish media, based on content analysis of 646 articles from the Polish internet and printed media. The media coverage of China presents the focus of Polish media mainly on the Chinese government and market. Another result, which as the author claims could be surprising, is that Poles who were affected by communism do not judge The Communist Party of China in a negative way. The article that follows Sino-Polish relations is written by Zhang Xiaoying and it is a case study of The Economist. The author of this chapter makes an attempt to define the role of China as presented by the magazine. Another chapter, written by Karolina Golemo, is devoted to the image of Chinese immigrants in the Italian mass media. That brief review of many surveys conducted by Italian scholars leads to the conclusion that media coverage is mainly based on phrases linked with illegal working activities. The last article deals with issues of the Chinese diaspora in Indonesian film. The author, Dobrochna Olszewska, uses descriptive analysis to present the evolution of exposing Chinese characters in Indonesian movies. The author concludes, that nowadays that image has changed due to growing acceptance of the Chinese ethnic minority in Indonesia.

The book Media in China, China in Media makes an interesting point on the still developing area of sinology and already developed area of media studies. The media perspective is vital to know better and understand the most populous nation in the world. Although I found a lack of media system perspective in the book, I think that the questions about Chinese culture, perception of China by the western world and Chinese media are definitely important. I hope this publication will help to develop academic debate open to scholars from many research areas in Europe.

Paweł Baranowski
UNIVERSITY OF WROCŁAW, POLAND