

Cattedra di Political Sociology

The role of media in exposing political corruption and its impact on democratic governance and societal development

Michele Sorice

RELATORE

Maria Astolfi
098582

CANDIDATO

Index

INTRODUCTION	3
THE IMPACT OF MEDIA ON CORRUPTION	6
<i>Corruption- Types, Characteristics, and definition</i>	6
<i>Media and mass media – definition</i>	8
<i>The Function of Media in curbing corruption</i>	8
<i>Media's Contribution to Anti-Corruption Efforts</i>	11
<i>The quality of media</i>	12
<i>Journalism independence</i>	14
<i>Case study: role of the Media in the Arab Spring</i>	14
FREEDOM OF MEDIA AND EFFECTIVE ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES.....	18
<i>Media ownership</i>	20
<i>Undue media ownership social impact</i>	22
<i>Media ownership impact on freedom of expression and democracy</i>	24
<i>The problem of media ownership within the new media</i>	25
<i>How to achieve effective anti-corruption measures within this landscape</i>	27
THE ROLE OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN UNCOVERING POLITICAL CORRUPTION	27
<i>The three types of inquiry</i>	31
<i>Investigative journalism critiques</i>	31
<i>Decline of investigative journalism and the new media development</i>	33
<i>Investigative journalism impact</i>	34
<i>Case study: Watergate</i>	36
CONCLUSION	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY	42
ABSTRACT	52

Introduction

Corruption is a systemic and objectively relevant phenomenon. It is a structural aspect and a major issue that has a negative and ongoing influence on not only the economy but also the smooth operation of institutions and the lives of individual citizens, it deadens the system as a whole, leading to the degradation and debasement of the whole society

In this context, the role of the media is crucial in promoting good governance and controlling corruption. The media raises public awareness about the causes, the consequences, and the possible remedies of corruption and it also investigates incidences of corruption by reporting them. The effectiveness of the media depends on access to information and freedom of expression and on a professional and ethical cadre of investigative journalists. Thus, civil society and the media play a vital role in creating and maintaining an atmosphere in public life that discourages fraud and corruption, they, indeed, can be defined as the two most important elements in eliminating systemic corruption in public institutions.

The objective of this thesis is to analyze how media organizations investigate and report on instances of political corruption, and how this coverage shapes public perceptions of corruption. This topic is chosen for two main reasons: on the one hand, the extreme and obvious relevance of the topic; on the other hand, the desire to understand the phenomenon in depth, in order to develop effective counter strategies. In fact, while there is much talk about the fight against corruption, there is often little discussion of the underlying elements of the phenomenon. In the writer's opinion, only through a full understanding and awareness of the phenomenon can effective counteracting policies be implemented. The idea is that in-depth knowledge of the issue, therefore, is a precondition for the development of truly effective countering tools.

Chapter I of this thesis will provide an introduction to the phenomenon of corruption. An attempt will be made to define the phenomenon, describe the forms through which it manifests itself, and understand the different types of corruption based on an analysis of its characteristics. At the same, an introductory definition of the media of communication will be given as well. Just then the relationship between the mass media and corruption will be examined, first explaining the media's function within society, and then exploring how the media can influence public perception of corruption and contribute to the creation of anti-corruption programs through. To deepen this understanding, the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme research program, titled "Anticorruption Policies Revisited: Global Trends and European Responses to the Challenge of Corruption," will be analyzed, providing valuable insights into the subject matter. In this chapter, the importance of journalistic freedom will be discussed as well, specifically the crucial role of independence in the profession, given the fact that the ability to report without fear or favor, free from external pressures, is paramount for the journalists. The importance of the quality of the media will be last seen and the focus will then shift to a practical example of what has been looked at in this

chapter by analyzing the case of the media influence on the Arab Spring. Overall, Chapter I will serve as a foundation for understanding the multifaceted issue of corruption and its relationship with the mass media.

Chapter 2 delves into the significance of media independence and ethical reporting in addressing the issue of corruption. Building on the discussion of media quality and standards in the previous chapter, we explore how the absence of external pressure and adherence to ethical principles can aid in the fight against corruption. Moreover, this chapter also highlights the effects of media ownership on the dissemination of information. The impact of new media ownership on the quality of reporting and the role it plays in society is a topic of crucial importance. Although the media ownership effect has been understated and relatively unexplored, it has a direct influence on the media's ability to expose political corruption. For these reasons, the implications of media ownership and concentration on the ability of media to expose political corruption will also be discussed in this chapter. By analyzing the role of media ownership concentration in corruption exposure, this chapter will highlight the importance of media diversity and independence for effective anti-corruption measures. Finally, this chapter will consider how it would be possible to achieve effective anti-corruption measures in an ideal situation where the quality of media is not influenced by media ownership. It will examine the potential solutions to this problem, such as increasing media diversity, transparency, and accountability. Within the anti-corruption measures proposed in the second chapter of greater importance it is the role played by investigative journalism, which will be looked at in chapter 3.

Chapter 3 will focus on the pivotal role of investigative journalism in exposing political corruption, covering investigative journalists' techniques and strategies, shedding light on their profound impact on public opinion and political dynamics. This chapter aims to examine the crucial role of investigative journalism in the verification and scrutiny of information, as well as explore how this form of journalism can effectively engage readers in uncovering legal instances of corruption. At the same, investigative journalism, despite its vital role in a democratic society, has experienced a decline in usage. For this reason, this chapter contains an examination of the reasons behind this decline and address the criticisms while defending its significance. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of the Watergate Scandal, which serves as a prime example of the impact investigative journalism can have, demonstrating the ways in which it acts as a vital check and balance within society, holding those in power accountable and uncovering hidden truths. Notably, The Washington Post's pivotal investigation in 1970 shed light on the unlawful activities carried out by former US President Richard Nixon's administration, ultimately leading to his impeachment.

In the conclusion of this thesis, it will be recognized that the media alone are not a definitive solution to combating corruption, acknowledging the crucial roles played by other actors, such as civil society and the judiciary in addressing this pervasive issue of corruption. Therefore, it recognizes the importance of continuously exploring new and innovative strategies to promote transparency and accountability in the

public sphere in order to foster a corruption-free society that benefits the development of a democratic governance and of the society as whole.

Chapter 1

The impact of media on corruption

Corruption- Types, Characteristics, and definition

Corruption is a complex phenomenon of which there is no unified and unanimously agreed definition, due in part to divergences related to cultural, methodological, disciplinary, and regulatory characters existing among different countries. The World Bank's definition of corruption as "the abuse of public power for private benefit" (World Bank, 2020) has sought to bridge the gap between different conceptions of corruption. However, it is important to acknowledge that this definition may be seen as an oversimplification. While it captures the core essence of corruption by highlighting the misuse of public power for personal gain, it may fail to fully encompass the complexity and nuances of this pervasive issue.

There are some elements that allow us to better define, at least in a general way, the phenomenon. According to Aidt (2003), for one to be able to speak of corruption, there must be three elements:

1. The discretionary power, which is the possession by the public official of the authority to set or administrate rules and policies in a discretionary manner
2. The economic rents, which is the ability to extract or create rents through discretionary power
3. The presence of weak institutions, which refers to the existence of weak disincentives to corruption, which in turn incentivizes individuals to use their discretionary power to extract or create rents.

Corruption can take many forms. One study (Andvig et al. 2000, 15-18) identifies five:

1. The bribe, which is the payment given or received in a corrupt relationship, which can be a fixed sum, a percentage of a contract or any other favor in cash or non-cash payments
2. Embezzlement, which is the appropriation of resources by individuals who should administer them
3. Fraud, which is an economic crime involving deception, swindling, or manipulation and distortion of information or facts
4. Extortion, which is the extraction of money or other resources through coercion, violence, or the threat of the use of force
5. Favoritism, which is a mechanism of power abuse involving the distribution of a portion of resources in order to achieve preferential treatment for specific individuals. A type of favoritism is nepotism in which the officeholder favors his or her own kinship.

Corruption can be distinguished on the basis of certain characteristics. Heidenheimer (1970) distinguishes corruption into white, black, and gray. In order to distinguish these three types of corruption, Heidenheimer

examines the relationship between the judgment that is made of a given fact by public opinion and the judgment that is made of the same act by politicians or bureaucrats. When a fact is deemed corrupt but not prosecutable by both public opinion and politicians and bureaucrats, this is referred to as white corruption. In contrast, black corruption occurs when a fact is not only considered corrupt but is also being prosecuted by both public opinion and politicians and bureaucrats. Finally, gray corruption occurs when a fact is considered corrupt and to be prosecuted by only one of the parties. A further distinction of corruption on the basis of its characters is the one between petty corruption and grand corruption. Petty corruption is defined as small-scale corruption involving relatively small sums of money that occurs in interactions between citizens and public institutions, whereas grand corruption is defined as large-scale corruption involving large sums of money that occurs at the highest levels of the public sphere.

Shleifer and Vishny (1993) propose a further distinction of corruption, again based on its characters. In particular, they distinguish between corruption without theft and corruption with theft. The two scholars consider a situation in which the government produces a good for which there is a demand by private agents. The good is sold on behalf of the government by a public official, who has the discretion to restrict the quantity of the good sold to the point of denying the good to the private agent and then refusing to provide it. The bureaucrat, therefore, sells the good in a monopoly situation. In the model, the cost of producing the good in no way falls on the bureaucrat, as it is borne by the government. The question arises, therefore, what is the marginal cost of the bureaucrat in providing the good. Shleifer and Vishny distinguish two cases. In the first case, that of bribery without theft, the bureaucrat transfers to the government the profit made from the sale of the good and keeps the bribe for himself. In the second case, that of bribery with theft, the bureaucrat hides the sale of the good from the government while keeping the gain from it for himself. In this second case, the price the private agent pays the bureaucrat for the good may be lower than the official price. It is evident that in the first case corruption increases the total cost of the good, while in the second case it may reduce it. Furthermore, in the case of corruption without theft, the marginal cost to the bureaucrat corresponds to the price of the good set by the government, while in the case of corruption with theft the marginal cost to the bureaucrat is zero.

In conclusion, corruption is a multifaceted and a complex phenomenon that involves the abuse of public power for private benefit. It can take various forms, such as bribery, embezzlement, fraud, extortion, and favoritism. Corruption can also be distinguished based on its characteristics, including white, black, and gray corruption, petty and grand corruption, and corruption with or without theft. Understanding the different aspects and forms of corruption is crucial for developing effective strategies to combat it and strengthen institutional mechanisms to prevent it.

Media and mass media – definition

The media plays a crucial role in reducing corruption by uncovering and exposing corrupt practices, informing, and educating the public about the detrimental effects of corruption, and increasing the critical awareness of civil society. In most countries mass media (media of mass communication) such as newspapers, television, and radio, serve as the primary source of information for citizens. The availability of such information is critical for the efficiency of political and economic markets, as noted by Simons (1948), Stigler (1961), and Stiglitz (2000). Indeed, the role of the media is a of great importance since they serve as the intermediaries that collect information and make it available to citizens and consumers.

Before delving into the impact of media on society, it is essential to establish a clear definition of what constitutes mass communication. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2013), mass media refers to "any communication channel used to simultaneously reach a large number of people, including radio, TV, newspaper, magazines, billboards, films, recording, books and the internet." This definition encompasses various traditional forms of media, such as print, television, and radio, as well as newer forms of media, such as the internet and smart devices, including smartphones, smart TVs, and tablets.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize the emergence of social media as a significant player in the world of mass communication. Social media platforms provide an alternative source of information for citizens and can potentially serve as a catalyst for political change, particularly in nondemocratic regimes. Activists and citizens can use social media to share information about political wrongdoing, which can encourage greater transparency and accountability from public officials. Overall, media can be considered as sociotechnical devices that serve as intermediaries in communication between social actions. The increasing prevalence of smart and social media has resulted in a more complex and dynamic media landscape, which has the potential to shape societal values, attitudes, and behaviors.

The mass media, comprising various channels of communication that simultaneously reach a large audience, serve as a crucial instrument in monitoring the behavior of public officials, limiting corruption, and reducing the political rents of incumbents. Scholars and practitioners alike widely acknowledge the pivotal role of the media in strengthening processes of democratization, improving the quality of government, promoting economic development, and combatting corruption. In this regard, the media performs a vital function by uncovering and exposing corrupt practices, informing, and educating the public about the detrimental effects of corruption, and enhancing the critical awareness of civil society. We are now going to focus on the various functions that media can play regarding corruption.

The Function of Media in curbing corruption

The role of the media in combating corruption can be categorized into three main functions: watchdog, promoter of integrity, and citizen engagement. As a watchdog, the media serves as the fourth pillar of

democracy by monitoring and observing the behavior of public officials in the legislature, executive, and judiciary, thereby promoting checks and balances within the system.

The media's watchdog function can be executed through day-to-day monitoring of government performance or through investigating and exposing particular transgressions, which can pressure decision-makers to take action. Continuous oversight over individuals and institutions can also be provided by the media, allowing for the identification and public shaming of public officials who use their influence to hide instances of corruption or remain inactive when presented with evidence of corruption.

The media's watchdog function faces several challenges, including tight governmental control over the press, media consolidation, and increasing market pressures. In countries such as North Korea, Myanmar, Russia, and China, governmental control over the press is particularly strict, limiting media freedom and independence. In the United States, market pressures are increasingly influencing media ownership, while political leaders' labeling of critical reporting as "fake news" threatens the public's trust in journalism as an unbiased and factual source of information.

Such challenges have become more accentuated in recent years, as indicated by the 2019 Freedom of the World data, which showed that freedom of expression has progressively decreased in the past 13 years (Freedom House 2019). Despite these challenges, the media continues to play a vital role in exposing corruption and promoting transparency and accountability in public institutions, highlighting the importance of maintaining media freedom and independence in modern democracies. Moreover, it is worth noting that the media's freedom is frequently curtailed by inadequate legal structures. According to a study conducted in 2010, less than 7.5% of African countries possess an enforceable right to information legislation (Darch and Underwood 2010). This highlights the need for robust legal protections that guarantee media freedom and enable journalists to act as watchdogs against corruption without fear of retaliation.

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on the second role of the media that we are going to focus on, the role of promoting integrity, especially in response to the growing social disillusionment with governments' efforts to combat corruption. Ibelema (2008) has observed that in many emerging democracies in Africa, there is a pervasive civic cynicism towards the political process and the credibility of actors in the state, civil society, and the media. Such attitudes often lead to a normalization of corruption in people's daily lives and represent a significant obstacle to anti-corruption efforts. To counter this, approaches that leverage the media to promote integrity and transparency can play a crucial role in shifting public attitudes.

Campaigns that aim to promote integrity through the media can take various forms, but they often involve creating a national discourse that emphasizes the importance of integrity, transparency, and accountability. By educating the public on the negative effects of corruption and promoting positive values, such campaigns can challenge civic passivity and promote a sense of civic responsibility. Popular media such as television channels that reach large audiences have proven to be particularly effective in promoting integrity (Schiffirin 2014).

One example of such a campaign is the Integrity Idol initiative, which has had significant impacts in countries such as Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nigeria. The campaign aims to generate debates on the importance and benefits of public integrity by recognizing and rewarding honest government officials publicly on national television shows. Candidates are nominated by the public, and citizens can vote via various channels. Overall, promoting integrity through the media can be a powerful tool in the fight against corruption, as it helps to raise awareness and encourage positive change.

The third role of the media, the role of promoting citizens engagement in anti-corruption efforts has been enhanced by the advent of new technologies and digitalization. This has led to the emergence of various forms of participatory and civic journalism resulting from technical innovation, the growth of the internet, networked journalism, and the proliferation of digital technology skills, which have blurred the line between media consumer and producer (Drüeke 2018). The rise of these forms of media suggests a general "watchdog culture" that can strengthen traditional investigative media and lead traditional media to adopt more participatory formats (Gillmor 2004; Correira 2012), such as Mi Panamá Transparente.

Increasing numbers of citizens worldwide have resumed and supplemented the media's work by setting alternative agendas, providing information and witness accounts from local perspectives, giving voice to marginalized groups, and documenting transgressions by governments, businesses, and traditional media (Correira 2012; Guardian 2013). These alternative and citizen-based forms of media are transforming the media landscape, patterns of distribution, and the speed and global reach of information (Schiffrin 2014). It is fundamental to note that there is no clear-cut line between the different roles played by the media - monitoring, promoting civic values, and engaging citizens to become active. All of these functions can overlap or complement one another.

To summarize, by providing the public with a critical capacity to hold those in power accountable, the media serves as a key check on corruption, increasing the political risk of those exposed for their illicit practices. Moreover, the media fosters the critical awareness of civil society, enabling citizens to better understand the importance of transparency, accountability, and good governance. This, in turn, can lead to improved public policies and more effective public service delivery. Thus, the media actively contribute to the overall welfare of society.

More precisely media exposure of corruption cases can have positive effects on society by raising awareness of the existence of the problem and prompting governments to take steps to prevent it. The exposure of small acts of corruption can lead to the prevention of more serious ones, as it would create a climate of law and order. But media's ability to expose corruption can also have a negative effect on public trust in governments, which is critical in consolidating the government's authority, keeping the orderly operation of

the political system, and improving the country's soft power. Indeed, when the media exposes corruption scandals, these can spark public outrage and undermine public confidence in government integrity.

In some cases, exposure of corruption can even lead to the downfall of a government or reform of the laws and institutions that enabled the corruption. For example, in many Latin American countries, exposure of corruption scandals has led to a wave of popular protests and the fall of governments. While, in other cases, exposure of corruption can lead to greater cynicism and disillusionment among citizens with government. that is because if citizens see corruption as endemic and widespread, they may think that the system is irretrievably broken and that there is no hope for change. This view may lead to a decrease in political participation and a loss of confidence in the ability of governments to respond to citizens' needs. Moreover, the loss of trust can fuel dissent and political polarization, creating even deeper divisions in society.

Therefore, the media's ability to expose corruption can have positive or negative effects on trust in governments. This depends on how citizens interpret the information they receive and their perceptions of the ability of the political system to respond to societal needs.

Media's Contribution to Anti-Corruption Efforts

The media plays an important role as well within the anti-corruption programs. Successful strategies to curb corruption should comprise a system of checks and balances, designed to manage conflicts of interest in the public sector and limit situations in which conflicts of interest arise or have a negative impact on the common good. These strategies should encompass a comprehensive approach to reform, addressing corruption in the public sector through government processes, such as leadership codes and organizational changes, as well as through the participation of civil society, which include the private sector, and the media.

According to Kaufmann (1999), a complementary scheme for successful anti-corruption programs consists of the formula AC (Anti-corruption Efforts) = KI (Knowledge and Information) + LE (Leadership) + CA (Collective Action). In other words, successful anti-corruption programs (AC) are dependent on the acquisition of knowledge and information (KI), strong leadership (LE) and collective action (AC). Here again, the importance of information and the involvement of civil society is highlighted, demonstrating that reform initiation are supported not only by politicians and policy makers but also by members of civil society and by the media.

The World Bank has emphasized the crucial role played by civil society and the media in creating and maintaining an environment that discourages fraud and corruption in public life, stating that: “civil society and the media are crucial to creating and maintaining an atmosphere in public life that discourages fraud and corruption. Indeed, they are arguably the two most important factors in eliminating systemic corruption in public institutions.” (Helping countries combat corruption, n.d., 2023). Therefore, it is clear that the media's

contribution to anti-corruption efforts is fundamental and indispensable, as it provides the public with critical information and serves, as stated above, as a watchdog to foster openness and responsibility in public affairs.

As stated above, the role of media in combating corruption is multifaceted, comprising both tangible and intangible outcomes (Stapenhurst, 2000). The tangible effects of media on reducing corruption are those which can be directly attributed to a particular news story or series of stories, resulting in a visible outcome. These may include the initiation of investigations by authorities, the elimination of policies and laws that create a conducive environment for corruption, the impeachment or forced resignation of corrupt politicians, the dismissal of officials, the commencement of legal proceedings, the issuance of public recommendations by a watchdog body, and so forth.

On the other hand, the intangible effects of media on corruption are those which cannot be directly attributed to a single news story, but rather arise from the wider social climate of increased political pluralism, a lively public discourse, and a heightened sense of accountability among politicians, public bodies, and institutions. Such intangible effects are the inevitable result of a hard-hitting, independent media that engages the public and promotes transparency and accountability in governance. Anyways, the impact of media on reducing corruption goes beyond the tangible and intangible outcomes. It extends to the public's perception of corruption and their willingness to take action against it. Media exposure of corrupt practices creates awareness and fosters a culture of intolerance towards corruption among the public. It increases the political risk for those involved in corrupt practices and serves as a deterrent to future instances of corruption.

Certainly, the changing landscape of media, including the rise of digital media and increased competition among traditional media outlets, has implications for the effectiveness of anti-corruption initiatives. In both developed and developing countries, for example print media is struggling with declining circulation (Ibelema 2014). This trend is especially pronounced among younger audiences, who tend to consume media on platforms with internet access and on-demand content, such as podcasts (Bosch et al. 2018). Although digitization has made information more accessible, audiences are also more dispersed than ever before (Schiffrin 2014). It is therefore not enough to simply expand the options for disseminating information; there is a need to ensure that the information provided is of high quality and relevance. This can be achieved through rigorous journalistic practices that prioritize depth and accuracy.

The quality of media

The impact of critical reporting on corruption cases depends not only on the size of the audience but also on the quality of the reporting. When investigative journalists uncover instances of corruption and report on them in a thorough and accurate manner, this can prompt advocacy organizations and government investigators to take action (Keno Verseck, 2018).

The power of information in shaping public perception and influencing anti-corruption initiatives cannot be overstated. However, the susceptibility of information to manipulation, particularly in relation to sensitive topics like corruption, is a major challenge that needs to be addressed. It is imperative to note that the reliability and accuracy of the information, especially pertaining to sensitive topics like corruption, can be easily manipulated to suit vested interests. In order to investigate factors that promote or hinder the development of effective anti-corruption policies, the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme initiated a research program titled "Anticorruption Policies Revisited. Global Trends and European Responses to the Challenge of Corruption" in March 2012. ("Anticorrp"). The program concluded in February 2017 and focused on analyzing the relationship between corruption and the media. Specifically, in Pillar 3 of the program, the research delved into how corruption is reflected in the media and what trends emerge in corruption coverage

The research program encompassed an extensive analysis of media coverage of corruption in major European newspapers, including tabloid quality and business newspapers from France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the UK, Romania, Slovakia, and Germany. Amongst the countries scrutinized, Italy emerged as the one with the highest number of articles dedicated to the word "corruption" and other related terms. The four investigated newspapers in Italy, namely *la Repubblica*, *Il Giornale*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, and *Il Sole 24 Ore*, published a staggering 46,239 articles on corruption between 2004 and 2013. More precisely, the period between 2009 and 2011 witnessed a plethora of corruption scandals in Italy, including the Ruby gate, the "cronyism of contracts" for the G8, and the Pennisi case in Lombardy, which resulted in a high number of articles being published on the topic of corruption. It is interesting to note that the newspapers seem to have given varying importance and perspectives to the same news story based on their political proximity to the parties involved. For instance, *la Repubblica* emerged as the newspaper with the highest number of articles during the Berlusconi government between 2009 and 2011. However, its coverage of corruption decreased in the months following the last Berlusconi government, while the attention of *Il Corriere della Sera* increased, particularly in relation to the discussion and approval of the Severino law.

In this thesis this research program is explored because it recognizes the paramount significance of the media in shaping public opinion and engaging in the fight against corruption. The findings within the research program serve to reinforce the understanding of the critical role played by the media in these domains. Moreover, the research highlights the vital importance of media outlets maintaining journalistic integrity and impartiality when addressing sensitive topics like corruption. By focusing on this research program, the thesis aims to contribute to the broader understanding and advancement of transparent societies, where the media actively participates in combating corruption and empowering informed citizens.

Journalism independence

But the most obvious requirement for journalist accuracy is its independence. The legal framework (freedom of information laws, licensing laws, and libel laws), financial and economic pressures, the concentration of media ownership, government ownership of the media, professional ethics, and the degree of direct repression of journalists by the state or private actors all play a role in determining the independence of the media (Ibelema 2008; Schiffrin 2014; Mendes 2013; Weaver 1977). Restraints on media freedom can develop into government censorship, detention, arrest or physical abuse of journalists, self-censorship, or cash for coverage.

Ensuring accuracy in journalism is a vital aspect of the profession, but perhaps the most crucial element is independence. A journalist must be able to report without fear or favor, free from the influence of external pressures. However, several factors can impact the independence of the media. We mentioned above that the legal framework, including freedom of information laws, licensing laws, and libel laws, can restrict the freedom of journalists to report and expose the truth. Additionally, financial and economic pressures, such as the need to generate revenue or satisfy corporate interests, can compromise journalistic independence. The concentration of media ownership, where a small number of corporations own a significant portion of the media, can also restrict the diversity of viewpoints and the independence of individual journalists. Furthermore, government ownership of the media or its regulation can impede the ability of journalists to operate independently and investigate critical issues. Professional ethics and the ethical standards of media organizations are also critical factors in ensuring journalistic independence.

Finally, the degree of direct repression of journalists by the state or private actors, including censorship, detention, arrest, physical abuse, or threats, can significantly impact the ability of journalists to report without fear. When these factors combine, they can develop into a situation where the media's freedom is significantly curtailed, and journalists may face self-censorship or even the temptation to accept cash for coverage, which could undermine journalistic independence and accuracy. As such, safeguarding the independence of the media is vital to ensure the accuracy and credibility of journalism, and this requires a concerted effort from journalists, media organizations, and the public.

Case study: role of the Media in the Arab Spring

The term "Arab Spring" refers to a wave of protests that swept the Arab world in 2011. It began in Tunisia, and the demonstration quickly led to the demise of numerous rulers. Beginning with Ben Ali in Tunisia and on through Mubarak in Egypt, to Saleh in Yemen, and Gaddafi in Libya. Furthermore, the Arab Spring was responsible for the outbreak of civil war in Syria. What happened in the Arab countries in 2011 was one of the most significant events in the history of the early twentieth century.

One of the reasons behind the Arab Spring was undoubtedly social media, which has the ability to humanize political tyranny and hence aid in the spread of democratic ideas across borders. Indeed, social media, specifically Twitter, played a big part in amplifying the incident that began the Arab Spring, which occurred on December 17, 2010, the day in which the news of a young man named Mohamed Bouazizi setting himself on fire in front of the governorate's administrative building in Sidi Bouzid, quickly spread throughout social media across the globe (Lotan et al., 2011). The young man's decision to engage in an extreme act can be attributed to a complex interplay of factors, including his challenging living conditions, which necessitated his involvement in the illegal trade to earn a livelihood. The seizure of his belongings, which likely represented a significant portion of his meager possessions, appears to have been a triggering event that exacerbated his already precarious emotional state, leading him to resort to the extreme gesture.

The impact of Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in Sidi Bouzid was greatly amplified by its rapid dissemination on social media, particularly on Twitter. This event served as a catalyst for widespread popular discontent, especially among Tunisia's youth. At the time, Tunisia was ruled by President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, who had been in power since 1987 after succeeding Habib Bourguiba, Tunisia's modern father. While Ben Ali's government was widely regarded as one of the more moderate regimes in the Arab world, it was also known for its lack of genuine opposition and limited adherence to Western democratic standards (Elgindy, 1995).

Mohamed Bouazizi's drastic action brought to the forefront the underlying issues of high youth unemployment, the problem of the deteriorating economy, and the one of the escalating prices of essential goods. These factors, combined with the shock of Bouazizi's self-immolation, catalyzed the first major anti-Ben Ali protests. The initial demonstration took place in Tunis on December 27, 2010, and quickly gained momentum. The protests soon led to widespread unrest, overwhelming the security forces, and resulting in violent clashes with the police. As the New Year approached, the situation grew increasingly tense, and between January 8 and 9, at least 25 people lost their lives in various cities across the country (Howard et al., 2015). The country was on the brink of a perilous and potentially violent crisis.

The wave of protests that began in Tunisia in late 2010 quickly spread to Algeria, where citizens took the streets in both peripheral cities and the capital, Algiers. However, unlike in Tunisia, the situation in Algeria remained relatively stable. The memory of the violent civil war of the 1990s, fought between the army and Islamist groups, was still fresh in Algerians' minds, and this likely contributed to their reluctance to challenge the status quo. Nevertheless, corruption and widespread discontent were the primary drivers of the protests in both countries (Arampatzi et al., 2018). While tensions in Algeria persisted for several weeks, the situation never escalated to the same level as in Tunisia. Indeed, in Tunisia, the resignation of President Ben Ali marked a point of no return, leading to the declaration of a state of emergency by Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi. This marked the first government to fall as a result the Arab Spring protests.

Following the events in Tunisia, several groups of protesters in Egypt also began organizing to take the streets in January. The power of President Hosni Mubarak initially seemed not to be challenged, he had been in power since 1981 and was determined to avoid the fate of Ben Ali in Tunisia, attempting to calm the situation by reshuffling the government, firing his prime minister, and appointing a new vice president. However, the situation easily deteriorated, and Mubarak was losing the support of the international community. Ultimately, he too was forced to resign, and the power was temporarily transferred to a military junta pending new presidential elections. The swift political downfall of two longstanding leaders, Ben Ali in Tunisia, and Mubarak in Egypt, in less than a month sparked protests throughout the Arab world. The protests spread from North Africa to the Persian Gulf, with the whole Arab world experiencing political upheaval and social unrest.

In late January, the Arab Spring protests had spread to the Persian Gulf region, with demonstrations taking place in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and to a lesser extent, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Meanwhile, Libya was embroiled in a civil war, and several constitutional monarchs had dismissed their cabinets and committed to constitutional reforms. Some governments attempted to quell the unrest by promising significant investments in infrastructure projects, unemployment benefits, food subsidies, and salary increases for civil servants and military personnel. While Morocco and Saudi Arabia were able to contain serious domestic uprisings, the situation in Bahrain, Jordan, Syria, and Yemen remained highly uncertain. The outcomes of the Arab Spring protests in these countries were yet to be determined. Overall, the Arab Spring had a profound impact on the region's political landscape, leading to the downfall of several long-standing authoritarian regimes and sparking widespread demands for greater political participation and reform.

While democratization movements had existed for decades, this one is different and is of great importance within this thesis because of the role that social media and mobile phone technologies played in enabling citizens to organize and mobilize for political change (Hussain & Howard, 2012). These technologies allowed democracy advocates to build extensive networks and create social capital, facilitating political action and amplifying their voices. Social media also played a critical part in shaping political discussions and anticipating significant events on the ground, indeed the surge in online revolutionary discussions frequently preceded major protests and uprisings (Howard et al., 2011). Additionally, social media helped to disseminate democratic ideals across international boundaries, connecting activists across the region and beyond.

The role of social media in shaping political debates during the Arab Spring was significant, particularly among the key demographic group of young, urban, and educated individuals, many of whom were women (Hussain & Howard, 2012). These individuals used platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to pressure their governments and political organizations, while also using Western news sites like the BBC

and CNN to spread credible information to their supporters. As a result of utilizing digital technologies, advocates of democracy crafted a message of freedom that gained a momentum of its own, disseminating concepts about liberty and revolution to an unexpectedly vast audience. As stated above another critical impact of social media, within this revolution, was the increase in online revolutionary discussions that frequently anticipated major events on the ground, with discussions about liberty, democracy, and revolt on blogs and on Twitter frequently directly preceding mass demonstrations. For instance, in Tunisia, 20% of blogs were assessing Ben Ali's leadership on the day he resigned, up from 5% the previous month. Following this, the main topic for Tunisian bloggers was "revolution" until a public gathering of at least 100,000 people took place, eventually forcing the old regime's surviving leaders to relinquish power (Howard et al., 2015). Another notable contribution of the media to the emergence of the Arab Spring was its instrumental role in disseminating democratic ideals beyond national boundaries, with democracy activists in Egypt and Tunisia using these platforms to communicate with people outside their countries. These links helped influence Western news stories about events on the ground in many instances, which in turn spread the news about ongoing events throughout the area.

The power of social media during the Arab Spring protests can be attributed in part to the fact that the youth of Tunisia and Egypt were particularly adept at using technology to promote democracy. With a median age of 30 and 24 respectively. These countries had a relatively young population, with a median age of 30 and 24, respectively. Specifically, in Tunisia, 23 percent of the total population of 10 million were under the age of 14, while in Egypt, 33 percent of the 83 million inhabitants were under 14 with 93 subscribers per 100 people in Tunisia and 67 per 100 people in Egypt (Howard et al., 2013). Tunisia and Egypt also had active blogospheres even before the revolutions, with ordinary citizens using their internet access creatively to provide critical coverage of government abuse. In fact, in many cases, this citizen journalism was more effective at exposing government wrongdoing than traditional news outlets. For example, a video showing the Tunisian president's plane arriving and leaving elite shopping destinations in Europe with only his wife as a passenger, which was widely shared online since its publication in August 2007, generated significant public outrage. As a result, the regime has taken various measures to crack down on YouTube, Facebook, and other online applications. In Egypt, democracy advocates were able to take advantage of Cairo's status as a media center, using the city's lively online public sphere to organize and mobilize politically disaffected youth, in fact, the hashtag #sidibouazid, most prominently associated with Tunisia's political uprising, was used in 13,262 Tweets, many of which recounted personal experiences of suffering caused by an oppressive and incompetent regime (Howard, 2011).

Governments have also acknowledged the strength of opposition groups equipped with social media and attempted to block access to platforms such as Facebook and Twitter or arrested bloggers and others who used social media to spread critical information about the government. However, democracy supporters

proved to be tech-savvy and had the support of hackers and skilled computer coders who were able to circumvent government censorship (Howard et al., 2015). Additionally, government censorship of traditional media channels drove citizens to seek out reliable information online, which was widely available in both countries.

In conclusion, the Arab Spring represents a pivotal moment in the history of the Middle East and North Africa, with the power of social media being a major contributing factor in its spread and impact. The ability to share information and images of political oppression across borders enabled the people of the region to unite in their pursuit of democracy and political change. As the world continues to grapple with the complex issues of governance, freedom, and democracy, the lessons of the Arab Spring remain as relevant today as they were over a decade ago.

Chapter 2

Freedom of media and effective anti-corruption measures

“So vital is the role of the media and the freedom of expression along with that of the press that it has been called the first freedom. Indeed, any successful attack on human rights by governments often starts with a suppression of the freedom of the press. Once this freedom is denied, governments are free to abuse basic human rights without publicity and frequently with impunity”

International Federation of Journalists. 1997 Op. Cit. p.13

In light of the above, it is imperative to underscore the critical role that media freedom plays in promoting effective anti-corruption measures. Indeed, only if it is free, can media reporting provide reliable and responsible information. For this reason, a free media together with an effective parliament and an independent judiciary, which can be defined as the protector of a free press, is one of the prerequisites for good governance. Several research conducted in the fields of economics and political science (Ahrend 2002; Brunetti and Weder 2003; Chowdhury 2004; Camaj 2013; Staning 2015) highlight a positive correlation between press freedom and low levels of corruption. Journalists in the course of their work perform a social watchdog function, investigate incidents of malfeasance, and stimulate public awareness of the phenomenon by raising the threshold of accountability required of political representatives and/or public officials.

However, this assumption runs the risk of being too general, viewing press freedom as a dichotomous variable, as a factor that is or is not there in each social context. Instead, as several studies show (Hanitzsch 2007; Hallin and Mancini 2004), the estimation of press freedom is subject to different assessments and can be influenced by different parameters that characterize the journalistic culture of a given context, which will be evaluated in this article.

In essence, media freedom and effective anti-corruption measures are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Free media serves as a bulwark against corruption and ensures that those in power are held accountable for their actions. Conversely, effective anti-corruption measures provide the necessary framework to promote media freedom, as corrupt officials often target journalists and media outlets in an attempt to suppress information and silence dissent. As such, the protection of media freedom and the promotion of effective anti-corruption measures are critical components for a development of a good society and must be upheld to ensure the protection of human rights and the rule of law.

For the reasons above stated the freedom of the media has been a longstanding concern for governments, civil society, and media organizations alike. To better understand the importance of the freedom of media a definition is necessary, according to Weaver (1977), media freedom is the i) absence of governmental restrictions on the media; ii) complete absence of governmental and other restrictions; and iii) the presence of conditions that ensure the dissemination of a plurality of ideas to a large audience. In countries where these conditions are not present, governments may and usually do censor news, indeed in such countries the role of traditional mass media in promoting accountability might be limited (Djankov et al. 2003; McMillan and Zoido 2004) and the provision of better information does not necessarily lead to socially beneficial outcomes (Malesky et al, 2012). In these countries, journalists face significant challenges and threats, including harassment, assault, arrest, and even death in the line of duty. But, even in the most developed countries, fear of legal consequences such as libel suits can cause the media to refrain from publishing certain matters, even if they are in the public interest. This fear not only undermines media freedom but also deprives citizens of the information they need to hold governments and other powerful actors accountable.

One of the main challenges faced by journalists is government pressure on the economics of the newspaper business. In many countries, newspapers are required to registration with the government, and as a matter of form; license can be revoked at will by these government. Tanzania's Newspaper Regulations, for instance, impose strict limitations on the ability of newspapers to change their address, the provisions of their constitutions nor even their "objects," that is, their aims and values, all of these restrictions lead to the banning of two tabloids in 1998 under this provision. Moreover, in many developing countries, the main source of advertising is the government; in recent years Zambia, Malawi, Uganda, and Bangladesh among others have either restricted advertising to specific newspapers or removed all ads, with the exception of those in the state-owned press. Elsewhere, some governments have restricted and controlled newsprint imports or apply punitive tax audits. Charges of contempt or of insulting the government or the country as a whole are also commonly used to silence critical voices. For instance, In Ethiopia, the freedom of expression has been limited due to a variety of reasons, like by the Marxist government or simply by the continuing economic under-development, while in Ghana, by contrast, press freedom is limited by old colonials' laws, that discriminate against journalist in court cases. These examples show that freedom of expression is

limited in many countries, for a variety of reasons. Demonstrating that models of domestic politics have long challenged the possibility of a perfectly informed world.

To combat this limitation many policies and actions have been proposed throughout the years. Indeed, the Charter for a Free Press is an example of a set of principles to combat these limitations, it was endorsed by journalists from 34 nations at the Voices of Freedom World Conference on Censorship Problems held in London between the 16th and the 18th of January 1987. "They (the Charter's principles) deserve the support of everyone pledged to advance and safeguard democratic institutions," cited Boutros-Ghali, the then-secretary general of the United Nations. The provisions, he continued, express goals "to which all free countries aspire" despite being non-binding. It affirms that censorship, direct or indirect, is unacceptable, that independent news media must be allowed to emerge everywhere unhampered by government intervention, that national frontiers must be opened to foreign journalists, and that licensing of journalists must be eliminated.

As we navigate the complex landscape of media freedom, it becomes increasingly crucial to delve into the intricate dynamics of media ownership. This aspect not only significantly shapes the media landscape but also wields a direct influence on the extent of media freedom. In the following section, it will explore how ownership structures, whether they are private or public, can influence the content that is produced by the media and how it can ultimately limit their freedom as well. By examining the relationship between media ownership and media freedom, we can gain a better understanding of the complexities of media regulation and the importance of protecting the independence of the media.

Media ownership

"Not as of today the press is a powerful tool the ruling class uses to maintain its dictatorship. Big capital dominates not only with its banks, monopolies, financial power, courts, and police, but with the almost unlimited means of its propaganda and ideological corruption, "

P. Secchia, 1950

From newspapers to TV, to publishing houses, to film productions, to the internet, it's evident that those who hold the power of communication means are the ones who control the narrative, exposing the ridiculous farce of information plurality and the undeniable functionality of these means as propaganda apparatuses and profits of the financial oligarchy. In imperialism, monopolies develop the phenomenon of combination, aimed at ensuring greater stability of their businesses by exercising extensive control over all the branches related to a specific industry, not only overproduction but also over distribution and trade of its products, thus making media apparatuses tremendously useful. This concentration of power also means that the media becomes an instrument of manipulation and control, distorting reality and shaping public opinion according to the interests of the ruling elite. This concentration of power in the hands of a few individuals and

corporations leads to a homogenization of ideas and values, limiting the possibilities for dissenting voices and alternative viewpoints to be heard. For this reason, it is crucial to recognize the potential dangers of media ownership concentration and to work towards ensuring that media outlets remain independent and representative of diverse perspectives.

The concept of excessive media ownership concentration is straightforward, referring to the notion that a single person or corporation holds significant control over a substantial portion of the media market. The concentration of media ownership has been defined as “an increase in the presence of a company or a reduction in the number of media companies in any market as a result of several possible processes, which include acquisitions, mergers, agreements with other companies or even the disappearance of competitors.” (Sánchez-Tabernero et al, 1993) However, beyond that very general idea, there is a lot of complexity to the notion, due to the fact that the media landscape is constantly evolving and becoming increasingly complex. Indeed, as traditional media continues to play a significant role in the lives of many individuals, new distribution platforms and forms of horizontal and vertical integration have emerged, bringing with them new risks of abuse of dominant positions.

Understanding the various types of media ownership is essential in addressing the just mentioned challenges. Media ownership can be classified into several types, including public ownership, private ownership, conglomerate ownership, cross-ownership, joint venture ownership, community ownership, and employee ownership. Public ownership refers to media outlets that are owned by the government or publicly funded institutions. Private ownership, on the other hand, entails media outlets that are owned by private individuals or companies. Conglomerate ownership involves media outlets that are part of a larger corporation that owns multiple businesses across different industries. Cross-ownership occurs when one company owns multiple types of media outlets, such as newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations. Joint venture ownership involves two or more companies joining together to own and operate a media outlet. Community ownership refers to media outlets that are owned and operated by a local community or non-profit organization, while employee ownership pertains to media outlets that are owned and operated by their employees.

The impact of media ownership on news coverage is profound, affecting both the volume and content of information presented to the public. Corporate preferences, market incentives, and the constraints of the political and economic environment can all influence the coverage of events, potentially distorting facts and influencing public opinion. For instance, while newspapers may provide interpretations and analyses, they can also provide information which may lead to the distortion of facts, potentially shaping the opinion of readers. Similarly, television has a powerful ability to sway public opinion through the presentation of violent and sensationalized images of war, conflict, and crime, making it a potent tool for manipulating public perception.

Basically, media ownership plays a crucial role in shaping the type and amount of information that is publicly available to citizens. However, the profit-driven nature of media outlets often leads to a focus on sensationalism and entertainment, rather than in-depth coverage of important issues. This has the potential to reduce complex societal problems to mere sound bites, catering to mass consumption and trivializing the gravity of these issues. Moreover, the pressure to increase ratings and clicks often leads to the production of clickbait headlines and misleading information, further eroding the trust in the media, and undermining its crucial role in democratic societies. In this context, media ownership becomes even more significant, as parent companies exert a homogenizing effect on the coverage of their media holdings, leaving citizens with less frequent and less diverse information to monitor or influence their leaders' activities.

Undue media ownership social impact

The discourse on media ownership and its societal impact tends to oversimplify the matter by reducing it to a binary of public versus private ownership. Such a simplistic view neglects the intricate nuances and potential biases that can arise from the diverse forms of ownership. As this chapter will demonstrate, the issue with media ownership is not limited to the dichotomy of public versus private ownership but rather the inherent biases and lack of editorial freedom that can result from certain types of ownership structures.

Focusing on the debate between private and public ownership, some advocates of private ownership argue that in countries where the government is the largest media owner, efforts should be undertaken to strengthen the independence of the media, through the privatization of existing state-controlled media. Contrary to this belief there is one according to which the privatization of media does not always produce the desired results, especially when it takes place in a developing country where the state apparatus is dominated by a small, entrenched business elite. (Stapenhurst, 2000). Although differences exist between public broadcasting corporations and private media empires, certain examples demonstrate that regardless of whether ownership is public or private, it should not be based on bias and favoritism from the owner, but rather on the freedom of expression for journalists. Indeed, public broadcasting corporations in such countries as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and South Africa, have developed loyal and respectful audiences due to their journalism's independence. On the other hand, the private media empire of former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, for example, has not always enjoyed such a reputation.

In the end, framing the media ownership question strictly in terms of private-versus-public ownership may not be the best approach. The concentration of media ownership in the hands of either the state or the private sector, or even in the hands of a small number of both, is only likely to increase the opportunities for journalistic "gatekeeping" by editors acting on behalf of owners, as both have their own vested interests to protect, ultimately limiting journalism's potential as a tool for curbing corruption (Shugaar, 1994). Therefore, ensuring diverse and independent media ownership should be a priority for any democratic society.

The media landscape in many countries is marked by highly concentrated ownership, a longstanding and contentious issue (Doyle, 2015). Concentrated media ownership is a fundamental matter of power and wealth distribution that each generation must address with its own set of tools, according to Noam (2016). This issue is compounded by the fact that highly concentrated firms can take advantage of economies of scale, spreading out production costs across larger product and geographic markets to generate profits (Doyle, 2015). However, this creates a natural gravitational pull towards oligopoly and monopoly in the media industry, given the high fixed costs and low marginal costs involved (Doyle, 2015). Unfortunately, market factors are unlikely to counteract this harmful dynamic. The concentration of media ownership is thus both a market reality and a public concern, with concerns about its impact on pluralism and diversity being amplified as digitalization allows for a global media market (Iosifidis, 2014).

The scholarly debate in social science has repeatedly highlighted how media ownership concentration can influence editorial boards and newsrooms, leading to limited content variety and the marginalization of less popular and more costly content. Furthermore, this concentration can lead to the complete commodification of cultural industries. Despite this, media control concentration remains one of the least-regulated media policy problems of the last three decades, to the point that scholars seem to be losing hope that European policy will ever be able to harmonize adequate ownership rules and go beyond only discussing the problem (Iosifidis, 2007; Papathanassopoulos, 2018). Metrics unmistakably show that asset concentration is increasing at the global, national, and municipal levels. Power relations in society have not been rebalanced as a result of digitalization; rather, digital communication platforms mirror and reproduce dominant media structures. However, legislative efforts have recently arisen to address the negative impacts of media ownership concentration. The situation further deteriorated as we witnessed a shift in the balance of power within media companies during the 2000s, with business and market departments acquiring impact on strategic decision-making processes. Media acquisitions and other forms of collaboration among media firms decreased news variety, and media power gathered in the hands of a few business groups, particularly at the regional and local levels. Economic imperatives drove structural changes in media markets, and media policymakers were either indifferent or ineffective in their efforts to mitigate negative repercussions for democracy.

Another important aspect to consider in the context of media ownership concentration is the potential for conflicts of interest to arise. In many cases, media owners have interests in other sectors of the economy, such as telecommunications, banking, or real estate. This can create conflicts of interest when the media reports on issues that are relevant to these other sectors, potentially leading to biased or incomplete reporting. For example, a media owner with interests in the telecommunications sector may be less likely to report critically on government policies related to telecommunications regulation or may be more likely to promote the interests of their own telecommunications company over those of competitors. Similarly, a media owner with interests in the real estate sector may be less likely to report critically on issues related to

urban development or housing policy or may be more likely to promote their own real estate projects. These conflicts of interest can also affect the editorial independence of journalists, who may feel pressure to report in a way that is consistent with the interests of the media owner, rather than pursuing independent and objective reporting. This can have a chilling effect on freedom of expression, as journalists may be less likely to report on controversial or sensitive issues for fear of offending the media owner or jeopardizing their own job security.

To address these concerns, some countries have adopted regulatory frameworks that aim to promote media pluralism and limit the concentration of media ownership. These frameworks may include limits on the percentage of the market that a single media owner can control, restrictions on cross-media ownership, and requirements for transparency and disclosure of media ownership structures. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution to the issue of media ownership concentration, it is clear that this is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires ongoing attention and research. By promoting media pluralism and avoiding undue concentration of media ownership, we can help to ensure that the media plays a positive and constructive role in promoting democracy, freedom of expression, and informed public debate.

Media ownership impact on freedom of expression and democracy

Media ownership concentration has been linked to various issues, one of the most significant is the potential threat it poses to democracy and freedom of expression. This is because democracy relies on active citizenship, which requires a diverse range of perspectives and voices in public debates. The media plays a central role in providing these forums, and undue concentration of media ownership can limit the variety of ideas, opinions, and viewpoints reflected in public discourse. In other words, media concentration can undermine the ability of the media system to represent all political, cultural, and social groups in society. According to the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression (2009), the uniformity of content produced or disseminated by the media is a clear consequence of ownership concentration.

More precisely, media ownership concentration is widely recognized as a threat to national democracy (Meier, 2007) due to a number of reasons. Firstly, media concentration reduces the number of perspectives available, leading to a decrease in journalistic and political diversity. Additionally, competition in investigative journalism is hampered when fewer sources are available, which can be either corporate or public. Concentrated ownership also directs editors to pursue the media owner's objectives, rather than serving the public interest. Moreover, large multinational media conglomerates have grown into powerful political players, beyond the reach of democratic control. Such conglomerates may provide one-sided political support that influences or even distorts election results for their own economic or political benefit (Baker, 2007:16). Further, strong media ownership power increases the risk of corrupting politics, creating mutual benefits and impacts, and may even allow owners to influence political decision-making, thereby creating their own regulatory framework. This can be achieved through editorial bias and economic

influence, resulting in political power, as has been seen in cases such as Silvio Berlusconi in Italy and Andrej Babi in Czechia. Lastly, conglomerate ownership can lead to the exclusion of topics and issues that influence the strategic interests of owners from journalistic observation and examination.

Media concentration also has a few perceived advantages. For instance, strong conglomerate media organizations have the capacity to collect and allocate sufficient funds for conducting effective investigative journalism on political powerholders. Moreover, they are better equipped to withstand economic and political pressures and can safeguard their newsrooms from external interference. But concentrating on the above-written potentially negative consequences, media ownership concentration is considered anti-democratic because it reduces political and cultural diversity, impeding citizens' ability to access and exchange information necessary for informed decision-making (Freedman, 2014). Furthermore, Freedman (2014) argues that media concentration "further commodifies the cultural industries themselves, transforming them from vehicles of symbolic interaction to capital accumulation engines that foster the exploitation of creative labor." In contrast, media pluralism is essential for a healthy media landscape and contributes to a well-functioning democratic system.

The problem of media ownership within the new media

The new century has significantly altered the rules of the "media monopoly" game. On the one hand, the digitalization of the complete media and communication environment - from news production along the value chain to distribution and consumption of news - has not only transformed the incumbent media industry but has also allowed for the emergence of global digital platforms. However, severe, and frequent crises have caused havoc in the news business. (Trappel et al., 2015). From the 2001 dot-com bubble to the 2008 and 2018 financial market disasters to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-2021. According to Sjøvaag and Ohlsson (2019), the majority of critical media concentration research happened during the profitable years of the media business; thus, a revision under these new and improved conditions is required.

Indeed, despite efforts by governments and global tech platforms to control the Internet, as it has been discussed above, the Internet initially offered high hopes for media pluralism, with the potential to produce new players in the media and communication markets that would compete with strong legacy media, foster media freedom, and generate a diversity of viewpoints globally (Trappel et al., 2022). However, the Internet has proven to be part of the issue - a driver for focus - rather than part of the answer. Indeed, never before has media ownership generated so much richness. This wealth motivates various maneuvers to maintain control, with such firms pursuing market power through concentration or regulation protection. While, traditional media such as television and periodicals still play a significant role in shaping public opinion, the rise of new technologies such as social media, blogs, and other user-generated content platforms really changed the way people think about the media, more precisely, the ease of accessibility to information has led to the belief that the issue of media ownership is less critical than it once was. However, the influence of

concentrated media power is still a significant concern. Although citizen journalists, hacktivists, and other watchdogs have emerged as a counterbalance to traditional media gatekeepers, the risks posed by concentrated media power are rapidly evolving and intensifying. In fact, despite the emergence of new forms of media domination and concentration, old hierarchies of media ownership and control continue to persist.

To address this, Karl Karppinen suggests that we re-evaluate what plurality means from a radical perspective. In doing so, we must move beyond simply counting the number of independent voices or outlets present in any given media system or the diversity of viewpoints that are accessible or represented. Instead, we must focus on the conditions within a formally pluralistic media system that can result in some choices being amplified while others are left unheard, shedding light on the inequalities of access that persist in the distribution of communicative power and political voice. Communicative abundance alone does not make questions about these issues obsolete but rather reconfigures them in a more complex form (Karppinen, 2013). Karppinen's (2013) argument highlights the importance of looking beyond the surface-level metrics of media diversity and examining the structural inequalities that can arise within ostensibly pluralistic media systems. This involves recognizing that access to media platforms and resources is not evenly distributed and that some voices and perspectives may be disproportionately amplified while others are marginalized or excluded altogether. To understand these dynamics, it is necessary to move beyond a narrow focus on individual media owners or corporations and instead consider the complex networks of power and influence that shape media content and agendas. This includes examining the relationships between media outlets, advertisers, political actors, and other institutional elites, as well as the broader cultural and economic contexts in which these relationships operate, which will be done in the following part. By adopting this broader perspective, it becomes possible to identify and challenge the systemic factors that contribute to media inequality and to work towards creating a more genuinely diverse and inclusive media landscape. This may involve advocating for policies that promote media plurality and access, supporting independent and community-based media initiatives, and fostering public awareness and engagement around media ownership and control issues.

Once we are aware of the impact that media freedom has on public's awareness, it is important to consider what can happen when media outlets are free to report on government activities and expose instances of corruption, and to focus on how media can serve as a powerful deterrent to corrupt behavior and hold officials accountable for their actions. In fact, in the following discussion, we will explore how media freedom can lead in practice to effective anti-corruption measures, more precisely the focus will be on investigative journalism and public awareness which can play a crucial role in promoting transparency and preventing corrupt practices.

How to achieve effective anti-corruption measures within this landscape

One way that media freedom can support anti-corruption efforts is by providing a platform for investigative journalism. Investigative journalism can uncover corrupt practices that might otherwise remain hidden from public view and can help to shine a light on the actions of government officials and other powerful individuals. For example, in 2015, the Panama Papers scandal broke, revealing a vast network of offshore accounts used by politicians, businessmen, and celebrities to avoid paying taxes. This information was uncovered by a team of investigative journalists who were able to access leaked documents from a Panamanian law firm. The Panama Papers scandal had a significant impact on public opinion and led to several high-profile resignations and investigations.

Another way that media freedom can promote anti-corruption measures is by facilitating greater public awareness and engagement. When citizens are informed about the workings of their government and the potential for corruption, they are more likely to demand accountability and transparency. This can create pressure on politicians and public officials to act in the public interest and can help to prevent corrupt practices from taking hold. For example, in India, the Anna Hazare movement in 2011 drew widespread public attention to corruption in government, leading to the passage of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act in 2013, which created an ombudsman to investigate corruption cases involving public officials.

However, it is important to note that media freedom alone is not enough to guarantee effective anti-corruption measures. Other factors, such as the strength of judicial institutions, the rule of law, and the political will of government officials, also play important roles. In addition, media freedom can be curtailed by various forms of censorship, harassment, and intimidation, which can limit the ability of journalists to carry out their work effectively. In summary, the relationship between freedom of media and effective anti-corruption measures is complex and multifaceted. While a free and independent media can play a powerful role in promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance and can lead to the development of the society as a whole, other factors must also be in place to ensure that anti-corruption efforts are successful.

Still in this thesis the focus is on promoting media freedom to combat corruption and supporting investigative journalism is one of the most effective way to do, since it helps to create a more transparent and accountable society, where corruption is less likely to take root. The focus should now be on what investigative journalism is, analyzing its methods and techniques and how effective it can be in uncovering political corruption, concentrating on the Watergate scandal.

Chapter 3

The role of investigative journalism in uncovering political corruption

The role of investigative journalism in uncovering political corruption cannot be overstated, and there is no better example of this than the Watergate scandal in the 1970s. Journalists were instrumental in exposing the

corruption and abuses of power that ultimately led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon. This event is considered a watershed moment for the profession, highlighting its ability to hold those in power accountable and prompting a surge in journalism school enrollment and high credibility for the profession. Despite this success, investigative journalism has faced numerous challenges in recent years, particularly in the United States. A prevailing argument suggests that media ownership concentration, coupled with a pursuit of sensational news coverage, has eroded the vigor necessary for investigative reporting. This concern arises from the belief that consolidated ownership and the quest for high viewership or readership have compromised the commitment to in-depth investigations and reporting. Business pressures, including the conflict between investigative reporting's demands for time and resources and profit expectations, also discourage such reporting. Furthermore, news companies are hesitant to support investigations that may result in expensive lawsuits. Despite these challenges, there have been numerous investigative stories produced in the past decade. Major newspapers have exposed corruption, injustice, and environmental mismanagement and local network and television news often produced investigative stories focused on various types of consumer fraud in areas such as healthcare, social services, and home mortgages. These stories still demonstrate the potential of investigative journalism to uncover wrongdoing and promote accountability in government and society.

Investigative journalism is distinct from general journalism, with its own unique definition, techniques, tools, and values. Over the decades, it has established itself as a crucial element of the media landscape, contributing to the dissemination and uncovering of important stories and hidden cultural issues. Its methods and values have helped to build a culture of accountability and transparency, empowering citizens, and holding powerful individuals and institutions to account. Through its commitment to in-depth research, rigorous fact-checking, and ethical reporting, investigative journalism has played a vital role in shaping our understanding of the world around us. The importance of investigative journalism has been recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which has endorsed its merits and issued a definition of what this type of journalism entails. According to UNESCO, investigative journalism involves the "revelation of issues that are hidden either deliberately by someone in a position of power, or accidentally behind a chaotic mass of facts and circumstances, with the analysis and exposure of all relevant facts to the public." (UNESCO, 2018). This citation underscores the significance of investigative journalism as a tool for promoting transparency, accountability, and democracy, and highlights the vital role that journalists play in uncovering and reporting on important issues that might otherwise remain hidden from public view. UNESCO is not the only organization to have provided a definition of investigative journalism. For instance, Steve Weinberg (1996), a professor of journalism, defined it as "telling stories that someone does not want told on the basis of one's own initiative and work, and with an eye to the public interest." Meanwhile, media theorist it has been argued that "an investigative journalist is a man or woman whose profession it is to discover the truth and to identify lapses from it in whatever media may be

available." (Hugo de Brugh, 2008). These definitions emphasize the importance of taking the initiative to uncover and report on facts that may be relevant to the public, even if they are hidden or actively concealed by those in power. Investigative journalism is thus the greatest instrument for active journalism.

As previously noted, investigative journalism differs from regular news reporting. Investigative journalism involves a much deeper level of research and analysis than is typically required for covering other news events. It is the type of journalism that goes beyond press releases and official statements, delving deep to uncover stories that are of vital importance to the public. Besides the citation above stated that gives the reader a general understating of investigative journalism, there isn't an exact and clear definition of investigative journalism that has been approved by the critics. For the "purists", what sets it apart is the work of the reporter. These journalists are driven by a relentless commitment to uncovering the truth and bringing important issues to light, no matter how difficult or challenging the task may be. Journalism to be investigative, must be thorough and linked to the investigation of the journalist, who must analyze documents and interview witnesses. Other scholars, however, have focused on the final product, namely the investigation as the discovery of something unknown to the general public. Nevertheless, what matters most is the reliability of the statements: the author of an investigation gathers as many sources as possible to put together irrefutable evidence on a matter of public relevance, often exposing details that someone wants to keep secret.

At the same time, there are professionals who argue that all journalism is investigative by nature, as the search for news implies the search for facts. However, the difference does exist. In fact, the term "investigative journalism" implies an in-depth investigation aimed at uncovering what normally escapes the chronicles. Indeed, investigative journalism is characterized precisely by the desire to shed light on hidden events. In addition, there are other factors that make investigative journalism particularly challenging, such as the need for a lot of time, adequate preparation, financial availability of the newsroom, as well as a solid reference publisher. More precisely investigative journalist makes use of analysis of institutional documents, reports based on database analysis, analysis of open sources which are available on the web or in documents, confidential institutional or private sources, current legislation, and reserved documentary material. It is clear that what sets investigative journalism apart from traditional journalism is primarily the continuous search that investigative journalists must undertake to find primary sources that are not typically available to the general public but are often hidden and difficult to uncover. To better understand the difference, it could be said that while the ordinary reporter's job is to report that something happened, the challenge for the investigative reporter, on the contrary, lies in discovering why. Investigative journalism reaches inside the event and inside the news, by going beyond the "daily facts". To do so it needs more time, and it occupies more scape than news reporting, it involves a long elaborative process; First, study, preparation, accumulation of data and materials; then verification, correction, updating.

To make an investigation worthy of being called such takes a long time, weeks, or months. The team of journalists (it is commonly a working group to follow it) in doing this research and excavation work must be perfectly organized, to waste as little time as possible. Indeed the investigation takes a lot of time, since it requires: a) to understand well the problem one has to investigate; b) to read, before leaving, a large amount of documentation, at least to realize what has been written on that subject; c) one has to talk to many sources; d) one has to compare all the material; e) one must slowly unearth, if not the truth, at least a piece of truth about the subject matter that has been entrusted to us. The journalists that today are willing to take on their shoulders this commitment is always less.

When starting an investigation, the first choice you make is editorial, you consider the target readership and the style of the paper. Next are the choices to be made in the area of human resources: who will lead it? Who will collaborate? Finally, those thematic and media ones: Focus on the goals to be achieved and establish the channels with which to conduct them. To begin with, precise documentation is needed: publications, budgets, texts, statistics, readings. Very important are the relationships with sources, which can be habitual or occasional. The personal relationship may be established by conversation, interview, questionnaire, or telephone; the group relationship by the same means, but the interview is preferred. The group, in the case of political authorities, will include both opposition and majority members. A confrontation must take place; different points of view must emerge. It is essential, in fact, that the conductor of the inquiry divest himself of all prejudices and set aside his own opinions to make room for those of others. Once found, all the material is collected in special "folders," made available to the newspaper, which also contains a record of all the interviews done. Not everything will be needed: an indispensable operation is that of selection, which anticipates the final ones of articulation and final identification. The writing of the investigation, often published in installments, is the last stage of this long journey and the least difficult one. The investigation must also serve economic and business purposes. Investigations are an expensive investment: it costs transportation, accommodation, stay, and sometimes even sources. And in times of perennial crisis, costs must be cut or at least contained. So, it happens very often that newspapers publish, under the "label" of investigation, material of a compilation nature that in reality has nothing to do with it. The inquiry is, or should be, a real investigation respecting all the procedures and steps reported so far.

The investigative journalist considers the reader as their primary reference point, and strives to serve them by providing in-depth, accurate, and timely information. This information consists not only of objective facts but also of analyzed news, based on the customs and values of contemporary society. It is crucial to note that despite investigating and gathering documentation on their subject of interest, the investigative journalist is not an investigator and should not substitute for the police or judiciary. Rather, their aim is to promote public awareness and consciousness of a particular situation or event in order to encourage a critical understanding of reality. This kind of investigative journalism is difficult to fit into the constraints and pace of a newsroom and is more typical of independent professionals, such as freelance journalists, who exemplify the practice.

The three types of inquiry

Not all investigations are the same, not all address the same issues, nor do they have the same objectives. But these elements, important as they are, are not enough to make a classification. It has been recognized that the other differences may depend on the journalistic ways of conducting investigations and proposing their results. Like how an inquiry is presented. Writing an inquiry in the first person, basing it on one's own impressions and orientations, is obviously different from writing an inquiry made up only of data, comparisons, and analysis. It is obvious that these two will present themselves to the reader with different styles and purposes. The cut of the news story, in general, is a direct consequence of the ends that the journalist and the newspaper set for themselves at the stage of selecting and gathering information. In addition, the style adopted, by presenting the message in a certain key, succeeds in persuading the reader and directs him or her to a certain interpretation of the facts.

A classification of types of inquiry has been made by analyzing certain constants and certain characters of the work: It is possible to distinguish at least three types of inquiry: a) the investigative type, which aims at ascertaining controversial or unclear facts and which, when it respects the rights of the individual and does not give in to easy sensationalism, is the spearhead of a journalism understood as the 'watchdog' of society; b) documentary inquiry, which aims to disseminate information that already exists but of which little is known because enclosed in specialized texts or environments or otherwise not illuminated by the mass-media spotlight; c) interpretive inquiry, which, dealing with known facts, aims to explain causes and evolution, often using expert opinion. It is important to note that this is a conventional classification: no one follows this or that model; indeed, in most cases, many features of the three types converge in the same inquiry.

Investigative inquiry aims at the clarification of controversial events, real mysteries for the public. Part of this type are investigations into political scandals, court cases, sports malfeasance, economic wars. We are always in the presence of a precise and concrete fact. The intent is fact-finding and answering questions such as how did things happen? What happened? The function is the one of vivifying and controlling and the journalist plays the role of a detective who by investigating, observing, and raving engages the reader in his "detective story." The broader category of cognitive inquiry, which looks into social phenomena, economic shifts, and cultural patterns, includes both interpretive and documentary inquiry. There are differences between the two. The former aims to give an objective account of the reality examined and to answer questions such as how are things? What is happening? It records and highlights data by listing their connections. It wants precisely to document an unclear or unknown reality. Or present exotic adventures.

Investigative journalism critiques

According to Dorothy Byrne, a former editor of C4 Dispatches, investigative journalism is facing a challenge in surprising audiences with new revelations of corruption due to the increasing assumption

among audiences that corruption is endemic (Byrne, 1999). This view assumes that there are people who view investigative journalism as a good thing in principle, but they believe that it does not exist. However, there are also people that view investigative journalism as a bad thing, usually, this group of people belongs to a generation that prefers to believe that authority is usually trustworthy and only occasionally falls into dereliction. Bernard Ingham (1991), a notable critic of investigative journalism, argues that it is not a discipline, but a mindset that is typically characterized by the arrogance, privilege, and sneering attitude of journalists in current affairs who use assertions about their responsibilities to society, the nation, and the truth to justify their pursuit of high ratings and fat salaries. He contends that journalists suffering from the "le Carré syndrome" have a chronic distrust of government and believe it to be conspiratorial, which contaminates their judgment and renders them negative, inaccurate, and unreliable. Ingham believes that investigative journalism's skepticism is both wrong and harmful. However, not only politicians and officials question investigative journalists' right to delve, but some also challenge their competence to scrutinize authority. These critics argue that legislation should create offices with sufficient skill and resources to undertake the tasks of scrutinizing authority properly. This critique is worth further examination. In 1999, for example, Nottingham City Council sought to prevent C4 Dispatches from making a film about children in care, leading to a debate about the media's effects on society and polity that has continued since the turn of the century.

In addition to questioning the justice and right of investigative journalism to exist, some critics challenge its competence in scrutinizing authority. They argue that when such scrutiny is necessary, legislation should create adequately skilled and resourced offices to undertake the task properly. Charles Moore, a former editor of the Daily Telegraph, offers a different viewpoint on investigative journalism, arguing that it diverts attention away from the core duties of journalism, which reporting and analysis. He argues that there is a higher aspiration than exposing corruption, which is to tell people the news and interpret it in a way that is honest, interesting, and helpful. However, Moore's views seem contradictory since acknowledging the importance of investigative journalism implies its necessity. Investigative journalism is necessary for those who recognize that reporting or analyzing what authority says is not always enough. This is because authority may have an agenda that conflicts with the general interest, officials and politicians can be swayed by ignorance or self-interest, and systems can work to the detriment of those who lack a voice. In such cases, there may be no institutions capable of fulfilling the necessary functions.

There are different approaches to investigative journalism, and one criterion for success is the impact a story has on many people. However, some journalists are content to focus on revealing the story of only one victim. Regardless of the scope, there is always a victim, and a villain to blame, even if it is a collective one. The villain is often the result of a failure of the system, such as the administration of justice, bureaucratic management, or regulatory bodies in various spheres. Villains may stand to make money, as seen in business stories or they may be brutal xenophobes. They may also be ignorant and deluded, as claimed in the

Dispatches series' investigation of age discrimination in employment (C4 Dispatches, 1993). The villains always want to stop the story from coming out or, at the very least, control its presentation. Investigative journalism is commonly defined as "going after what someone wants to hide," although not everything that someone wants to hide is worth pursuing. For example, Jonathon Calvert, a journalist for Insight, The Observer, and The Express, has stated that he aims to expose bad practices rather than bad people (Calvert, as cited in Jewell, 2016). Similarly, David Lloyd, the founding Head of C4 News and Current Affairs, believes that investigative journalists should ask, "What individual, what institution, does not want this story told, and of what potency are they?" The more significant the answer, the more engaging the task (Lloyd, 1998). Alan Rusbridger (1999), Editor of The Guardian, suggests that the quality of the target is what differentiates investigative journalism from mere exposure journalism. He states that there is no public interest in revealing a cricketer's love life or a rugby player's drug use from 20 years ago. However, if elected representatives are arguing a case in Parliament without revealing that they are being paid to do so, that strikes at the heart of democracy, and that is a matter of public interest. Ultimately, investigative journalism seeks to reveal the truth, and whether it focuses on one victim or many, it strives to hold the powerful accountable for their actions.

Decline of investigative journalism and the new media development

To date, however, investigative journalism has often been declared dead, killed by the laziness and lack of courage of modern journalists. While a journalist is free to do as they please, they are also an employee, and their work is coordinated with the editorial hierarchy. Since an investigation incurs high costs in terms of time and labor, the proposal may certainly come from the editor, but it must be met with strong agreement from the hierarchical structure. Given the situation of larger editorial entities, it is not difficult to imagine how many smaller organizations with fewer resources are unable to conduct investigations, primarily due to organizational limitations. One or more reporters removed from daily editorial work and "immobilized" on a topic incurs expenses, and the results are not always immediate and fruitful. Then there is the problem in Italy of the presence of impure publishers, that is, publishers who experience conflicts of interest that every editorial team must contend with. Relations with both economic and political power can only influence the choice of topics to be explored, and this applies to both the television oligopoly and the printed press, which in most cases seeks to clearly establish its political affiliation.

It is not only, therefore, a matter of laziness, there are, in fact, two main motivations behind the decision to abandon investigative journalism: one editorial and the other political. The editorial project aims to eliminate unnecessary costs, of which investigative journalism is an example, moreover, while the latter costs a lot of money, it also attracts judicial wrath. In terms of newspaper sales and TV news audience, on the other hand, quite other kinds of news, such as sex scandals and news concerning, for example, the character of the moment, whether public or political, make quite profitable already. Where the editorial product relies on political consensus or economic interests that are not directly linked to editorial results, the investigation

disappears. Where, on the other hand, it relies primarily on reader favor, inquiry is still a thriving genre. An example of this is the recent birth of the newspaper the "Fatto Quotidiano" by Antonio Padellaro with the collaboration of Marco Travaglio. A newspaper that did not ask for public funding is that it came into being thanks to the unexpected number of subscribers, all readers interested in buying it, as it tells the facts that other newspapers do not give or hide.

Recently, there has been something new in the press, as Eric Pfanner also stated in the "International Herald Tribune." He explains that something has happened recently that has changed the perspective, citing the example of the "Daily Telegraph," which, instead of giving away or selling CDs or DVDs in the hope of increasing sales, conducted an in-depth investigation into the extravagant and carefree spending of members of the English parliament. In a few days, as a result of the scoop, the newspaper's circulation increased by 10%. This confirms that investigative journalism can still sell newspapers and that readers still seem willing to reward those who do the old job of a journalist. Despite the challenges that investigative journalism faces, it still has the potential to make a valuable contribution to society by exposing failures within regulatory systems and highlighting ways in which the rich, powerful, and corrupt can circumvent these systems. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, another fundamental component of recent decades is the internet, which allows information to take giant steps forward. In this regard, it is worth recalling the launch of "Pro Publica" in the United States, an online newspaper designed to uncover and denounce abuses of power and corruption in business and government. "We are on the side of the weak against the strong, of the public against abuses," reads the homepage, where independence and non-profit purpose are reiterated. The initiative, based on Broadway, can count on \$30 million donated by self-made billionaire Herb Sandler and his wife Marion. The Sandlers liked the model of information serving the public that revitalizes skills and values of investigative journalism, leveraging the potential of the web. The "Pro Publica" newsroom, consisting of 28 reporters, is the largest task force of investigative journalists in the US. Many initiatives have blossomed on the web that emulate this spirit. The latest concerns the website of the Huffington Post Investigative Fund, launched by the online newspaper, which offers in-depth investigations and insights on specific topics and which the "Observer" defines as the most influential in the world.

Investigative journalism impact

"The truth, no matter how bad, is never as dangerous as the lie in the long run."

Ben Bradle

Investigative journalism plays a crucial role in promoting transparency, accountability, and fighting corruption around the world. Its contribution to society is evident in its ability to divert resources and expertise into unmasking potential abuses of power and developments that may significantly impact society. This type of journalism creates a system of monitoring powerful interests, which helps to check abuses of power and prevent illegal or questionable activities from going unnoticed.

One of the most critical roles of investigative journalism is to draw attention to passive shortcomings in public policy that affect the public. In this guardianship role, laws, regulations, and the operation of significant public and private bodies are scrutinized for their effectiveness and their fulfillment of the public good. This role is an extension of the liberal democratic/enlightenment ideal of limiting power and influence, creating an informal check on the activities of resourced actors. When corruption is exposed, those exposed may become angry and lash out and even involve their friends and other members of the community to act like they are being picked on or that something was unfair. However, the ramifications of these stories, in the long run, are transparency, accountability, and change. These changes ensure that no person, no matter how powerful or how much money they have, is above the law. Investigative journalism also gives a voice to underrepresented populations, resulting in law reforms, reducing stereotypes and attitudes, and creating a healthier community. Investigative reporting's function can be understood in light of the Fourth Estate press model. According to this model, the press should make the government accountable by publishing information about matters of public interest, even if such information reveals abuses or crimes perpetrated by those in authority. According to this viewpoint, investigative reporting is one of the press's most significant contributions to democracy. It is linked to the logic of checks and balances in democratic systems. It provides a valuable mechanism for monitoring the performance of democratic institutions, as they are broadly defined to include governmental bodies, civic organizations, and publicly held corporations.

Political elites are sensitive to the news because of how important the media is to modern democracies, especially "bad" news that frequently stirs up public unrest. The publication of news about political and economic wrongdoing can trigger congressional and judicial investigations. Journalism can help ensure accountability by keeping an eye on how government institutions are operating when investigations are hampered by issues and suspicions or when further inquiries are not made. Investigative reporting can examine how well these institutions actually fulfill their constitutional mandate to govern responsibly in the face of press reports that reveal dysfunction, dishonesty, or wrongdoing in government and society (Global issue, 2001). At minimum, investigative reporting retains important agenda-setting powers to remind citizens and political elites about the existence of certain issues. There are no guarantees, however, that continuous press attention will result in congressional and judicial actions to investigate and prosecute those responsible for wrongdoing. Investigative journalism plays an important role in promoting democracy by providing citizens with vital information that empowers them to hold government accountable through voting and participation. In contemporary democracies, the media has become the primary source of information about issues and processes that affect citizens' lives, eclipsing other social institutions. By nurturing an informed citizenry, investigative journalism helps to ensure that citizens have the information they need to make informed decisions and participate effectively in the democratic process.

In conclusion, investigative journalism plays a critical role in promoting transparency, accountability, and fighting corruption in contemporary democracies. Its contribution to society cannot be overstated, as it empowers citizens to hold their leaders accountable and fosters a healthier, more informed society. It is vital that journalists continue to investigate and report on matters of public interest, even in the face of potential backlash, to uphold the principles of democracy and ensure a brighter future for all.

The press's handling of the Watergate scandal was seen as the mirror reflecting the best journalism had to offer democracy: making the powerful answerable. It became a trend in American newsrooms. The profession enjoyed high credibility in the years that followed, and a remarkable increase in journalism school enrollment occurred.

Case study: Watergate

In recent history, there have been several cases in which the persistence and intelligence of investigative journalists have overturned political situations. Specifically, investigative journalism began in the first decade of the twentieth century in the United States of America, when reporters armed with pen and notepad revealed the machinations of corrupt businessmen and politicians. President Roosevelt referred to them as "muckrakers" because they "dug in the manure." From Ida Tarbell's indictment of the Rockefeller monopoly to the exposé of the alarming conditions in a Chicago slaughterhouse, their investigations showed that for every greedy criminal, there was an exploited worker or defrauded citizen. However, the investigative drive of American reporters resurfaced forcefully only in the 1960s. The relationship between journalists and power had become increasingly conflictual, and the theory of social responsibility urged the profession towards a nobler objective than mere profit: to inform citizens in order to defend the public good. These were the years of the investigations into the Vietnam War, which, although belatedly, seriously questioned the actions of the White House. In 1964, the National Security Agency, the largest US intelligence agency, manipulated information about an incident in which the North Vietnamese navy attacked two US Navy cruisers in the Gulf of Tonkin, an episode that became famous as it marked the escalation of the Vietnam War. Lyndon B. Johnson, the then President of the United States, ordered the bombing of North Vietnam and Congress authorized the deployment of a massive military force in the South of the country.

The 1970s were primarily marked by the Washington Post's investigation which led to the Watergate scandal, which is perhaps the greatest investigation in the history of journalism. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of the Washington Post, with their investigative work, still represent a model for every journalist. Their thorough and lengthy investigation led to the discovery of illegal activities by the administration of then-US President Richard Nixon. They pursued the story relentlessly, despite facing significant resistance from the Nixon administration and the media establishment. They used a combination of anonymous sources, document analysis, and shoe-leather reporting to piece together a complex web of corruption and criminality. The main revelations derived from an anonymous source dubbed "Deep Throat" (only in 2005

did Mark Felt, the FBI's number two in the early 1970s, reveal his identity). This investigation resulted in the call for impeachment and cost Nixon his presidency. This political scandal, which erupted in the United States in 1972, has gone down in history as a veritable model of investigative journalism, showing how it can be a useful toll against corruption.

The scandal took its name from the "Watergate Complex," the Washington building complex that housed the "Watergate Hotel," the hotel where the wiretaps that kicked off the investigation were conducted. The case developed in the political context of the continuation of the Vietnam War, which since Lyndon Johnson's presidency had been increasingly unpopular among the American public. "Watergate" was constituted in a series of events that lasted about two years from 1972 to 1974 and began with the Nixon administration's abuse of power in order to weaken political opposition from peace movements and the Democratic Party. Important indictments were the "Pentagon Papers," a top-secret Defense Department study of U.S. involvement in the War of the Vietnam and on previous political or military conflicts in Southeast Asia, on the eve of the end of the French colonial occupation in Indochina. On June 17, 1972, the team of "plumbers" created in the shadow of the president and charged with conducting sabotage and espionage operations is caught red-handed inside the offices of the Democratic Party. The scandal erupts immediately, as soon as the culprits (notably James McCord, former FBI, and CIA) qualify as government agents, and is fueled by the journalistic investigation conducted by the two "Washington Post" reporters, who published the revelations of a mysterious source, called "deep throat," revealing the direct involvement of the presidential staff in the illegal activities. In fact, the arrested "plumbers" involved in numerous break-ins included Howard Hunt and Gordon Liddy, members of Nixon's re-election committee chaired by Justice Secretary John Mitchell. In November 1972, Nixon was, as expected, reappointed to the presidency, but subsequent attempts to cover up responsibility for the "Watergate affair" by buying the silence of captured spies came into conflict not only with the ongoing judicial process, but also with the growing outrage of much of public opinion. In 1973, the severity of the threat to the country's democratic life and the evidence at hand led to the establishment of a Senate Select Committee to investigate the White House's involvement in the "dirty business" and the culpability of the President himself. Despite realizing that his position was increasingly precarious and threatened, Nixon persisted in his battle against his accusers. In July, Congress voted to initiate impeachment proceedings against the President for the serious charges leveled against him. However, before he could be removed from office, Nixon announced his resignation as President of the United States on live television, addressing the press by saying, "Gentlemen, I hope you will continue to make me miserable whenever you find me in error. I hope to deserve your trust."

Undoubtedly, following the Watergate scandal, investigative journalism regained a primary role, and the press was once again given the function of arbiter and watchdog over political power. The major scandals of democracy are often not uncovered by the police or even by the judiciary, who are sometimes ensnared in the network of opposing interests and powers. It is thanks to the work of individual or small groups of

audacious journalists that irregularities, frauds, and even crimes have come to light in the past and continue to emerge. This case is of much importance since it highlights the fundamental role of investigative journalism in promoting anti-corruption awareness and measures. It is through the work of investigative journalists that the public can become informed and empowered to hold those in power accountable for their actions. Therefore, investigative journalism is essential in maintaining a healthy democracy, ensuring transparency, and combating corruption.

Conclusion

As we conclude this thesis on the role of media in exposing political corruption and its impact on democratic governance and societal development, it is important to mention that corruption is a systemic and pervasive problem that requires a multifaceted approach to combat it and while the media is an essential tool in promoting good governance and controlling corruption, the importance of empowering civil society to hold those in power accountable should be also recognized (Transparency International, 2021).

Corruption forms one of the greatest threats extending beyond developing nations manifesting itself even subtly within established countries through unconventional means like campaign finance laws seeking endorsements from lobby groups or wealthy individuals paving way for potential misconducts (Grossman, 2021) (Grossman, 2021). Inference can be drawn from powerful corporations wielding significant financial ability using lobby groups to sway critical decision-making processes in their favor; an example is based on the data from Center for Responsive Politics (2021) that indicates over \$14 billion was spent on federal elections during the 2020 cycle- majority of which constituted deep-pocketed donors and corporations. This sets an uneven playing field, where the interests of the wealthy and powerful are prioritized over those of ordinary citizens. Additionally, lobbying influence can steer lawmakers towards action inclined towards selfish interest of interest groups at the expense of public interest. The pharmaceutical industry The Pharmaceutical industry employing lobby support to oppose government negotiations for decreased drug prices highlights another area likely to impact ordinary citizens by raising costs borne by patients or taxpayers (Kesselheim et al., 2020). Nepotism and cronyism can be another way in which corruption manifest in the developed nations. Indeed, it frequently happens that individuals in positions of power use their influence to benefit themselves or their friends and family. In the United Kingdom, there have been several high-profile cases of politicians awarding contracts to companies with close ties to their own families. This kind of behavior, like all the others mentioned above can undermine public trust in government and create a sense that the system is rigged in favor of the powerful.

To start to build a more just and equitable world, a world that is free from the scourge of corruption and where all citizens can thrive and prosper, the society should first acknowledge this reality so to continue working to promote transparency and accountability at all levels.

This thesis delves into a specific avenue through which transparency can be fostered and corruption can be combated, highlighting the intricate interplay between the media and corruption. The media, acting as a powerful force, plays a pivotal role in exposing and confronting corruption by raising public awareness, conducting investigations, and presenting news stories related to corrupt practices. Throughout the following chapters, we explore various dimensions of this phenomenon, shedding light on different aspects of the complex relationship between the media and corruption.

Chapter I sets the stage by unveiling the intricate connection between corruption and the mass media. A comprehensive exploration of corruption ensues, encompassing its multifaceted nature and diverse manifestations. By delving into the depths of this pervasive phenomenon, the chapter illuminates its societal implications and the pressing need for effective countermeasures. Moreover, the pivotal role of the media in shaping public perception of corruption and its potential to fuel anti-corruption endeavors takes center stage. The chapter illuminates how the media, as a formidable player within society, possesses the power to influence public opinion, expose corruption, and propel the creation of anti-corruption initiatives. It underscores the significance of journalistic freedom and the unwavering commitment to professional independence as essential pillars in nurturing an informed and engaged citizenry. Within this context, the chapter casts a critical eye on the media's profound impact during the Arab Spring. By analyzing this transformative period, it unearths the profound consequences of media quality and ethical practices in shaping the course of societal change. The examination highlights the imperative of upholding rigorous standards of media professionalism and the vital role they play in fostering transparency, accountability, and resilience in the face of corruption. Through its comprehensive exploration, Chapter I implores us to recognize the intrinsic connection between corruption and the mass media. By deepening our understanding of this complex relationship, we are better equipped to navigate the challenges that lie ahead. It underscores the pivotal role of the media as a catalyst for change, calling for the preservation of journalistic integrity, unwavering dedication to truth, and the relentless pursuit of a corruption-free society

Chapter 2 delves deep into the profound significance of media independence and ethical reporting in the relentless battle against corruption. It emphasizes that the absence of external pressures and a steadfast commitment to ethical principles can serve as powerful allies in this ongoing struggle. One such external pressure that warrants scrutiny is media ownership, which has far-reaching implications for information dissemination and the overall quality of reporting. The chapter underscores the critical importance of comprehending the impact of new media ownership on the role of media within society. Within this context, the chapter extensively explores the profound implications of media ownership and concentration on the media's ability to expose political corruption. It illuminates the pressing need for media diversity and independence as vital cornerstones for effective anti-corruption measures. By fostering a diverse media landscape and upholding the principles of independence, the media can truly fulfill its crucial role in

combatting corruption. Furthermore, the chapter delves into potential remedies and solutions to mitigate the influence of media ownership on journalistic integrity. It advocates for strategies such as enhancing media diversity, promoting transparency, and fostering greater accountability to safeguard the media's ability to effectively combat corruption. By immersing in Chapter 2's insightful analysis, it is possible to gain a deeper appreciation for the intrinsic value of media independence and ethical reporting in our collective endeavor to combat corruption. In fact, it underscores the urgent need to preserve a robust and diverse media landscape, one that remains steadfastly committed to the pursuit of truth, transparency, and the relentless exposure of political corruption.

Chapter 3 delves into the pivotal role of investigative journalism in uncovering and exposing political corruption. The chapter meticulously explores the various techniques and strategies employed by investigative journalists, showcasing their tenacity and determination in pursuing the truth. By shining a light on corrupt practices and holding those in power accountable, investigative journalism has the potential to bring about significant societal change. Throughout the chapter, the influence of investigative journalism on public opinion and political action is examined in depth. Notably, the Watergate case serves as a powerful illustration of how investigative journalism can unravel complex webs of corruption and catalyze transformative political outcomes. This seminal case remains an enduring symbol of the crucial role journalists play in upholding the principles of transparency and accountability. However, the chapter also acknowledges the challenges and critiques faced by investigative journalism in contemporary times. The decline in its utilization is analyzed, shedding light on the various factors contributing to this trend. By addressing these challenges head-on, it becomes possible to revitalize the field of investigative journalism and reinforce its importance in combating political corruption. In this context, the chapter advocates for robust protections for whistleblowers. Recognizing the indispensable role whistleblowers play in uncovering corruption, it proposes comprehensive legal safeguards to shield them from retaliation and ensure their voices are heard. By fostering an environment that encourages whistleblowing and provides adequate protection, society can empower individuals to come forward with valuable information and contribute to the exposure of political corruption. Ultimately, Chapter 3 serves as a compelling call to action, urging society to recognize the profound impact of investigative journalism in exposing political corruption.

In conclusion, this thesis has demonstrated that the media plays a crucial role in exposing political corruption and promoting transparency and accountability in public life (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2013). In this thesis it has been demonstrated that the media's effectiveness in playing this role depends on a range of factors, including access to information, its independence, and ethical reporting. However, it is crucial to also recognize that the media is not a panacea for corruption and that other actors, as it has been mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, such as civil society and the legal system, also play a critical role in combating corruption. There are several other innovative ways to promote transparency and accountability in public life. One such

approach is the use of technology. An innovative approach is the use of citizen participation and engagement. Citizen participation can take many forms, including participatory budgeting, community monitoring of public services, and citizen audits of government activities. By involving citizens in decision-making processes and encouraging them to monitor government activities, we can increase transparency and accountability and reduce opportunities for corruption. Moreover, citizen participation can help to build trust between citizens and their elected officials, which is crucial for the effective functioning of democratic institutions (Fung & Wright, 2003). The importance of international cooperation in combating corruption must also be recognized, given that corruption is a global problem and as such it requires a coordinated global response. International organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund can provide technical assistance, monitoring compliance with international anti-corruption conventions, and promoting cross-border cooperation. Additionally, international cooperation can help to reduce the incentives for corruption by promoting trade, investment, and economic growth, which can reduce the opportunities for rent-seeking and other corrupt activities (Rose-Ackerman, 1999).

In conclusion, as we navigate the intricate battle against corruption, one thing becomes abundantly clear: the transformative power lies within our collective will to change. By challenging the status quo and embracing the principles of transparency and accountability, we possess the potential to reshape our societies and ignite a paradigm shift in governance. By embracing all the approaches proposed in this thesis and by putting them into practice, societies can pave the way for enhanced integrity, reduced opportunities for corruption, and fostered economic growth and development. Collaborative efforts and the exchange of best practices become catalysts for significant progress in the battle against corruption, ultimately contributing to more inclusive and prosperous societies worldwide. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that corruption is a complex issue, and there is no universal remedy applicable to all contexts. Each country must tailor its approach, considering its distinct political, economic, and social landscape. Yet, this transformative journey is not without its challenges. It requires the unwavering commitment of governments, civil society, and citizens alike. It demands the creation of robust frameworks that nurture integrity, empower whistleblowers, and dismantle the hidden networks that enable corruption to thrive.

Reflecting upon the words of the esteemed journalist and author, I.F. Stone, who once remarked, "All governments are run by liars and nothing they say should be believed" (Stone, 1952), we are reminded of the criticality of fostering openness and responsibility in public affairs. Without such vital elements, citizens cannot place their trust in elected officials to genuinely act in their best interests. By exploring fresh and innovative strategies to promote these principles, societies can initiate the vital process of rebuilding trust between people and their governments, forging a path toward a more equitable and just society for all, where

we can pursuit of a better tomorrow, harness the power of innovation, technology, and global cooperation to dismantle the walls of secrecy, and construct a future where truth, justice, and accountability prevail.

Bibliography

Ahrend, R. (2002). Press Freedom, Human Capital and Corruption. DELTA Working. *DELTA Working*.

Paper Series, 2002–2011.

- Aidt, T., Dutta, J., & Sena, V. (2008). Governance regimes, corruption and growth: Theory and evidence. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 36(2), 195–220.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2007.11.004>
- Aidt, T. S. (2003). Economic analysis of corruption: A survey. *Economic Journal (London, England)*, 113(6), F632–F652. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0013-0133.2003.00171.x>
- Andvig, J. C., Fjellstad, O., Amundsen, I., & Søreide, T. (2000). Research on Corruption. A Policy Oriented Survey. *Chr. Michelsen Institute*, 1–158.
- Andvig, Jens Chr, & Moene, K. O. (1990). How corruption may corrupt. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 13(1), 63–76. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0167-2681\(90\)90053-g](https://doi.org/10.1016/0167-2681(90)90053-g)
- Anticorrp.* (n.d.). Anticorrp.Eu. Retrieved May 18, 2023, from <https://anticorrp.eu/>
- Anticorrp Researchers Win U4 Competition for New Corruption Measurement Anticorrp. (2014). *February*, 27.
- Anticorruption fact sheet. (2020, February 19). World Bank; World Bank Group.
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2020/02/19/anticorruption-fact-sheet>
- Arampatzi, E., Burger, M., Ianchovichina, E., Röhricht, T., & Veenhoven, R. (2018). Unhappy development: Dissatisfaction with life on the eve of the Arab spring: Review of income and wealth. *The Review of Income and Wealth*, 64, S80–S113. <https://doi.org/10.1111/roiw.12388>
- Aucoin, J. L. (2003). *Encyclopedia of International Media and Communications* (D. H. Johnston, Ed.; Vol. 2). Elsevier.
- Baker, C. E. (2007). *Media concentration and democracy: Why ownership matters*. Cambridge University Press.

- Belema, M. (2014). Tribal fixation” and Africa’s otherness: Changes and resilience in news coverage. *Journalism & Communication Monographs*, 16(3), 162–217.
- Brunetti, A., & Weder, B. (2003). A free press is bad news for corruption. *Journal of Public Economics*, 87(7–8), 1801–1824. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0047-2727\(01\)00186-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0047-2727(01)00186-4)
- Byrne, D. (1999). *Talk to the students of the MA Investigative Journalism*.
- Cagé, J. (2020). Media competition, information provision and political participation: Evidence from French local newspapers and elections, 1944–2014. *Journal of Public Economics*, 185(104077), 104077. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2019.104077>
- 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.
- Chowdhury, S. K. (2004). The effect of democracy and press freedom on corruption: an empirical test. *Economics Letters*, 85(1), 93–101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2004.03.024>
- Darch, C., & Underwood, P. (2010). *Freedom of information in the developing world: demand, compliance and democratic behaviours*. Chandos Publishing.
- De Burgh, H. (2000). *Investigative Journalism: Context and Practice*. London and New York: Routledge.
- De Burgh, H. (2013). *Investigative Journalism* (H. de Burgh, Ed.). Routledge. <https://books.google.at/books?id=kszXiZewk24C>
- Democracy’s fourth wave? Digital media and the Arab spring by Philip N. Howard and Muzammil M. Hussain, eds. (2013). *Information Polity*, 18(4), 48–363–366. <https://doi.org/10.3233/ip-130317>
- Djankov, S., McLiesh, C., Nenova, T., & Shleifer, A. (2003). Who Owns the Media? *The Journal of Law & Economics*, 46(2), 341–382. <https://doi.org/10.1086/377116>

- Donders, K., Pauwels, C., & Loisen, J. (Eds.). (2014). *The palgrave handbook of European media policy*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Doyle, G. (2015). Why ownership pluralism still matters in a multi-platform world. In *Media Pluralism and Diversity* (pp. 297–309). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Drüeke, R. (2018). Medien, Öffentlichkeit und Demokratie: Zur Watchdog-Funktion von Medien. *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen*, 31(3), 19–28. <https://doi.org/10.1515/fjsb-2018-0059>
- Eadie, W. (2009). 21st-century communication: A reference handbook (W. F. Eadie, Ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Elgindy, K. (1995). The Rhetoric of Rashid Ghannushi. *Arab Studies Journal*, 3(1), 101–119. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27933663>
- Enikolopov, R., Petrova, M., & Sonin, K. (2012). Do political blogs matter? Corruption in state-controlled companies, blog postings, and DDoS attacks. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2153378>
- Enikolopov, R., Petrova, M., & Sonin, K. (2018). Social Media and Corruption. *American Economic Journal. Applied Economics*, 10(1), 150–174. <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20160089>
- Evers-Hillstrom, K. (2021, February 11). *Most expensive ever: 2020 election cost \$14.4 billion*. OpenSecrets News; OpenSecrets. <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2021/02/2020-cycle-cost-14p4-billion-doubling-16/>
- Freedman, D. (2014). Metrics, models and the meaning of media ownership. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 20(2), 170–185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2012.752821>
- Fung, A., & Wright, E. O. (2003). Deepening democracy: Innovations in empowered participatory governance. *Politics & Society*, 31(1), 73–103.

- Global issues An Electronic Journal of the U. (2001). Global Issues An Electronic Journal of the U.S. Department, 6.
- Graycar, A. (2013). Donatella Della Porta and Alberto Vannucci, the hidden order of corruption: An institutional approach. *The Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 46(3), 452–453. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0004865813509326>
- Greensill: What is the lobbying scandal all about?* (2021). BBC News.
- Grossman, E. (2021). How lobbying became a \$3.5 billion industry. *Time*.
- Grunwald, H. (1993). A free society or a free press — which comes first? *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 17(1), 9–16. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45288822>
- Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). Comparing Media Systems. In *Comparing Media Systems* (pp. 21–45). Cambridge University Press.
- Hanitzsch, T. (2007). Deconstructing journalism culture: Toward a universal theory. *Communication Theory: CT: A Journal of the International Communication Association*, 17(4), 367–385. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00303.x>
- Heidenheimer, A. J. (1970). *Political corruption: Readings in Comparative Analysis*.
- Helping countries combat corruption: The role of the. (n.d.). World Bank. Retrieved May 24, 2023, from <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/799831538245192753/helping-countries-combat-corruption-the-role-of-the-world-bank>
- Howard, P. N., Duffy, A., Freelon, D., Hussain, M. M., Mari, W., & Mazaid, M. (2011). *Opening Closed Regimes: What was the role of social media during the Arab Spring?*, National Science Foundation-funded Information Technology and Political Islam project. Center for Communication and Civic Engagement.

- Howard, Philip N., Duffy, A., Freelon, D., Hussain, M. M., Mari, W., & Mazaid, M. (2011). Opening closed regimes: What was the role of social media during the Arab spring? *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2595096>
- Hussain, M. M., & Howard, P. N. (2012). Democracy's fourth wave? Information technologies and the fuzzy causes of the Arab spring. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2029711>
- Ibelema, M. (2008a). *The African Press, Civic Cynicism, and Democracy*. Palgrave.
- Ibelema, M. (2008b). The Nigerian press and the first republic. In *The African Press, Civic Cynicism, and Democracy* (pp. 93–118). Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Ingham, B. (1991). *Kill the Messenge*. Harper Collins.
- Investigative journalism. (2020, August 11). Cloth in Common. <https://clothincommon.com/investigative-journalism/>.
- Iosifidis, P. (2007). *Public television in the digital era: Technological challenges and new strategies for Europe*. Springer.
- Iosifidis, Petros. (2005). The application of EC competition policy to the media industry. *The International Journal on Media Management*, 7(3–4), 103–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14241277.2005.9669426>
- Jewell, J. (2016). Investigative journalism in the United Kingdom: Past, present and future. In P. L. Scriven, S. A. L. Thorsen, & L. Cubitt (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to British Media History* (pp. 315–326).
- Lambsdorff, J. (2017). Invisible feet and grabbing hands: The political economy of corruption and welfare. In *The Economics of Transparency in Politics* (pp. 123–150). Routledge.
- Lloyd, D. (1998). Investigative journalism: The good, the bad, and the ugly. In *Speech presented at the Third Annual Conference of the Association for Journalism Education*.

- Lotan, G., Graeff, E., Ananny, M., Gaffney, D., & Pearce, I. (2011). The Arab Spring| the revolutions were tweeted: Information flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. *International Journal of Communication*, 5.
- Luna-Pla, I., & Nicolás-Carlock, J. R. (2020). Corruption and complexity: a scientific framework for the analysis of corruption networks. *Applied Network Science*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41109-020-00258-2>
- Magnajuris. (2017, October 13). *Using journalism to fight corruption and bad governance in Nigeria*. MAGNA JURIS CONFRATERNITY (LIBERTY CHAMBERS). <https://magnajurisuyo.wordpress.com/2017/10/13/using-journalism-to-fight-corruption-and-bad-governance-in-nigeria/>
- Malesky, E. J., Schuler, P. J., & Tran, A. (2011). The adverse effects of sunshine: Evidence from a field experiment on legislative transparency in an authoritarian assembly. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1642659>
- Mcliesh, C., Nenova, T., & Shleifer, A. (2001). POLICY RESEARCH WORKING PAPER 2620 Who Owns the Media? Almost universally the largest media firms are controlled by the government or by private Simeon Djankov families. *POLICY*.
- McMillan, J., & Zoido, P. (2004). How to subvert democracy: Montesinos in Peru. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives: A Journal of the American Economic Association*, 18(4), 69–92. <https://doi.org/10.1257/0895330042632690>
- Meier, W. A. (2007). National and transnational media ownership concentration in Europe: A burden for democracy? In *Power, Performance and Politics* (pp. 75–104). Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co KG.
- Mendes, M. (2013). Overview of Corruption in the Media in Developing Countries. In *Transparency International U4 Expert Answer*.

- Mills, E. (2018). *Blockchain and anti-corruption: A new era of transparency and accountability*. Global Anticorruption Blog.
- Mincigrucci, R. (2016). *I mass media e la denuncia della corruzione: verso una tipologia del ruolo del giornalista nei casi di corruzione*.
https://www.academia.edu/29721474/I_mass_media_e_la_denuncia_della_corruzione_verso_una_tipologia_del_ruolo_del_giornalista_nei_casi_di_corruzione
- Mungiu-Pippidi, A. (2013). *The quest for good governance: How societies develop control of corruption*. Cambridge University Press.
- Napoli, P. M., & Karppinen, K. (2013). Translating diversity to Internet governance. *First Monday*, 18(12), 110. <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v18i12.4307>
- Nasrallah, A., & Sarkis, N. (2020). The role of social media during the Arab spring. In *Business and Social Media in the Middle East* (pp. 121–136). Springer International Publishing.
- Noam, E. M., & The International Media Concentration Collaboration. (2016). *Who owns the world's media?: Media concentration and ownership around the world*. Oxford University Press.
- Papathanassopoulos, S. (2018). The Europeanization of the European media: The incremental cultivation of the EU media policy. In L. Haenens, H. Sousa, & J. Trappel (Eds.), *Comparative media policy, regulation and governance in Europe: Unpacking the policy cycle* (pp. 117–132).
- Personal, B. (n.d.). WP3 « Work Package « Anticorrp. Anticorrp.Eu. Retrieved May 18, 2023, from http://anticorrp.eu/work_packages/wp3/?post_type=&publication_type
- Pietro Secchia: *I crociati della menzogna*. (n.d.). Resistenze.org. Retrieved May 18, 2023, from <http://www.resistenze.org/sito/ma/di/cp/mdcpag21-007333.htm>
- Press release from Nottingham City Council (NCC), received 8. (1999).

- Quinn, S. (2018, July 13). *What Ben Bradlee would think of Donald trump*. POLITICO Magazine.
<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/07/13/trump-ben-bradlee-truth-219005/>.
- Repucci, S. (2020). The freedom house survey for 2019: The leaderless struggle for democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 31(2), 137–151. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2020.0027>
- Ricatti, M. (2010). *IL GIORNALISMO D'INCHIESTA INI* *giornalismo d'inchiesta in Italia e uno dei maggiori esponenti italiani: Fabrizio Gatti*. Fabrizio Gatti.
- Richardson, R. (2022, February 15). *Afghanistan's watchdog journalists turn to leaks and offshore sites*. Global Investigative Journalism Network; Global Investigation Journalism Network.
<https://gijn.org/investigative-journalism>
- Rose-Ackerman, S. (1999). *Corruption and government: Causes, consequences, and reform*. Cambridge University Press. 363
- Rusbridger, A. (1999). *The ethics of investigative journalism. Speech presented at the Third Annual Conference of the Association for Journalism Education*.
- Sánchez-Taberner, A., Denton, A., Lochon, P. Y., Mounier, P., & Woldt, R. (1993). Concentración de la Comunicación en Europa. In *Centre d'Investigació de la Comunicació*. 30
- Schauseil, W., Zúñiga, N., & Jackson, D. (2019). *Media and anti-corruption*.
- Schiffrin, A. (2014). *Global Muckraking - 100 Years of Investigative Journalism from Around the World*. The New Press.
- Shleifer, A., & Vishny, R. W. (1993). Corruption. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 108(3), 599–617.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2118402>
- Shugaar, A. (1994). Italy's new hall of mirrors: Berlusconi's media cover Berlusconi. *Columbia Journalism Review*, 33(2), 15–17.

- Sjøvaag, H., & Ohlsson, J. (2019). Media ownership and journalism. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*. Oxford University Press.
- Standards for Free and Inclusive Broadcasting. (2008). In *The African Press, Civic Cynicism, and Democracy* (pp. 93–118). Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Stanig, P. (2015). Regulation of speech and media coverage of corruption: An empirical analysis of the Mexican press: Media coverage of corruption in Mexico. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(1), 175–193. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12110>
- Stapenhurst, R. (n.d.). *The media's role in curbing corruption*. Psu.edu. Retrieved May 18, 2023, from <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=d999111cf4f9d758c4f54c4f8cade452c2cc0801>
- Steinberg, F. (2001). Helping countries combat corruption — progress at the world bank since 1997. *Habitat International*, 25(4), 617–618. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0197-3975\(00\)00039-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0197-3975(00)00039-4)
- Stone, I. F. (1952). *The weekly: The business of covering the news*. Public Affairs Press.
- Trappel, J., & Meier, W. A. (2022). *Soaring media ownership concentration: Comparing the effects of digitalisation on media pluralism and diversity*. Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855589-7>
- Trappel, J., Steemers, J., & Thomass, B. (Eds.). (2015). *European Media in Crisis*. Routledge.
- UNESCO. (2018, June 7). *Investigative Journalism*. <https://en.unesco.org/investigative-journalism>
- Universitet, G. (2022, February 23). *Final Report Summary - CORDIS | European Commission*. CORDIS EU Research Results. <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/290529/reporting>.
- Van Belle, D. A. (1997). Press freedom and the democratic peace. *Journal of Peace Research*, 34(4), 405–414. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343397034004003>

- Verseck, K. (2018, March 12). *Slowakei: "Die Regierung hat das korrupte System erst ermöglicht."* DER SPIEGEL. <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/slowakei-journalistenmord-interview-mit-arpad-soltesz-a-1197148.html>
- Wasserman, H., Chuma, W., & Bosch, T. (2018). Print media coverage of service delivery protests in South Africa: A content analysis. *African Studies*, 77(1), 145–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00020184.2018.1426312>
- Weaver, D. H. (1977). The press and government restriction: A cross-national study over time. *Gazette*, 23(3), 152–169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001654927702300301>
- Weinberg, S. (1996). *The Reporter's Handbook: An Investigator's Guide To Documents and Techniques*. St. Martin's Press.
- Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2013). *Mass media research*. Cengage learning. 3
-

Abstract

La corruzione rappresenta un fenomeno complesso per il quale manca una definizione universalmente accettata e concordata. Tale mancanza deriva, almeno in parte, dalle differenze culturali, metodologiche, disciplinari e normative che esistono tra i vari paesi. La definizione che ha cercato di ridurre questa distanza tra le diverse concezioni di corruzione è quella fornita dalla Banca Mondiale (World Bank, 2020), la corruzione è ampiamente descritta come l'abuso di potere pubblico per beneficio privato. Tuttavia, alcuni studiosi argomentano che questa definizione possa essere considerata una semplificazione eccessiva, in quanto la corruzione è un fenomeno estremamente complesso e multiforme che va oltre le dimensioni economiche, che influisce negativamente e in modo costante sul buon funzionamento delle istituzioni e sulla vita dei singoli cittadini, danneggiando il sistema nel suo complesso e portandolo al degrado e

all'indebolimento della società. Di conseguenza, il presente lavoro di ricerca si propone di esaminare attentamente le varie definizioni di corruzione al fine di acquisire una comprensione esaustiva della sua complessità. Successivamente, si intende approfondire il ruolo dei media nella denuncia della corruzione politica, concentrandosi in particolare sulle implicazioni per la governance democratica e lo sviluppo della società. Attraverso una dettagliata analisi di questo fenomeno e delle sue implicazioni, si cercherà di acquisire una maggiore comprensione del modo in cui i media possono contribuire all'affronto e alla prevenzione della corruzione.

La tesi si struttura in tre capitoli. Il primo capitolo approfondisce l'impatto dei media sulla corruzione, analizzando il ruolo che svolgono nel denunciare e sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica su pratiche corrotte. Il secondo capitolo si concentra sulla rilevanza della libertà dei media nell'implementazione di efficaci misure di contrasto alla corruzione. In particolare, si esamina anche l'analisi delle implicazioni legate alla proprietà dei media e al suo impatto, sulla capacità dei media di svolgere efficacemente tale ruolo di controllo e monitoraggio. Infine, il terzo capitolo approfondisce il ruolo chiave del giornalismo investigativo nella lotta contro la corruzione, analizzando le sue metodologie e il suo potenziale impatto nel rivelare e punire attività illecite. Si cercherà di evidenziare come il giornalismo possa rappresentare una soluzione significativa per contrastare la corruzione e promuovere un sistema più integro e giusto.

Nel primo capitolo della tesi si affronta l'importanza di comprendere le diverse caratteristiche e forme della corruzione, soffermandosi su cosa si intende per corruzione bianca, nera e grigia, nonché la distinzione tra corruzione di piccola e grande entità e corruzione con o senza furto. Inoltre, si approfondisce il ruolo dei media nella denuncia alla corruzione, specificando che i Media possono essere definiti come qualsiasi canale di comunicazione utilizzato per raggiungere contemporaneamente un gran numero di persone. Questi canali includono forme tradizionali come stampa, televisione e radio, nonché forme più recenti come Internet e dispositivi intelligenti come smartphone, smart TV e tablet. Soffermandosi sui media si specifica e si sottolinea come essendo essi fonte primaria di informazione per i cittadini riescano a promuovere il buon governo e controllare la corruzione, e si evidenzia il loro ruolo cruciale nel ridurre la corruzione, denunciando le pratiche corrotte, informando ed educando il pubblico sugli effetti dannosi della corruzione e migliorando la consapevolezza critica della società civile. Il loro ruolo fondamentale è favorire lo sviluppo economico e sociale della società, monitorare e promuovere valori civici e nel coinvolgere attivamente il cittadino. Nel complesso, la promozione dell'integrità attraverso i media può essere un potente strumento nella lotta contro la corruzione, in quanto contribuisce a sensibilizzare e incoraggiare cambiamenti positivi, fornendo al pubblico una capacità critica, consentendo loro di comprendere meglio l'importanza della trasparenza, della responsabilità e del buon governo. Allo stesso tempo i media fungono da controllo chiave sulla corruzione, aumentando il rischio politico di coloro che sono esposti per le loro pratiche illecite.

In questo capitolo viene presentato un esempio significativo che illustra quanto appena menzionato, la primavera Araba, dove i social media, hanno avuto un ruolo chiave per far pressioni ai vari Governi coinvolti e sulle varie organizzazioni politiche, diffondendo notizie e informazioni credibili ai sostenitori della protesta, permettendo ai popoli della regione di unirsi nella loro ricerca della democrazia e del cambiamento politico attraverso la condivisione di informazioni e immagini di oppressione politica. Simultaneamente nel primo capitolo si inizia ad esaminare come tali funzioni, essenziali, che i media svolgono, possano essere attenuate notevolmente dal controllo governativo o possano essere denigrate tramite la diffusione di “fake news” che confondono il cittadino, determinando l'impossibilità per gli stessi di capire la fondatezza e veridicità dell'informazione fornita. Questo fenomeno si è sviluppato con la digitalizzazione, la quale seppure abbia reso le informazioni più accessibili, ha anche portato alla dispersione del pubblico, che è attualmente più disperso che mai.

Al tempo stesso viene specificato come l'eccessiva presenza e rappresentazione di casi di corruzione da parte dei media può portare però a indebolirne l'effetto; infatti, se i cittadini vedono la corruzione come endemica e diffusa, possono pensare che il sistema sia irrimediabilmente rotto e che non ci sia speranza di cambiamento. Ciò può portare a una diminuzione della partecipazione politica e a una perdita di fiducia nella capacità dei governi di rispondere alle esigenze dei cittadini. Inoltre, la perdita di fiducia può alimentare il dissenso e la polarizzazione politica, creando divisioni ancora più profonde nella società. Il potere dell'informazione nel plasmare la percezione pubblica e influenzare le iniziative anticorruzione non può essere sopravvalutato. Imperativo notare che l'affidabilità e l'accuratezza delle informazioni, in particolare relative ad argomenti sensibili come la corruzione, possono essere facilmente manipolate per soddisfare differenti interessi. Pertanto, in questo capitolo si introduce l'argomento della libertà dei Media, che verrà successivamente approfondito nel secondo. Questo argomento viene affrontato poiché, garantire l'accuratezza nel giornalismo, è un aspetto vitale della professione, forse l'elemento più cruciale è l'indipendenza. Un giornalista deve essere in grado di riferire senza paura o fervore, libero dall'influenza di pressioni esterne.

Nel secondo capitolo, viene affrontata la questione del possesso dei media, evidenziando come la concentrazione del potere mediatico nelle mani di un ristretto numero di individui o società possa determinare una uniformità di idee e valori, riducendo le opportunità di ascoltare voci dissidenti e punti di vista alternativi. Viene chiaramente sottolineato che coloro che detengono il potere sui mezzi di comunicazione sono in grado di controllare la narrazione, rivelando così la fallacia dell'idea di una pluralità dell'informazione e mettendo in luce la funzione innegabile di tali mezzi come strumenti propagandistici e fonti di profitto per le oligarchie finanziarie. L'impatto della proprietà dei media sulla copertura delle notizie è profondo e influisce sia sul volume, che sul contenuto delle informazioni presentate al pubblico, dato che le preferenze aziendali, gli incentivi di mercato e i vincoli dell'ambiente politico ed economico possono

influenzare la copertura degli eventi, potenzialmente distorcendo i fatti e influenzando l'opinione pubblica. Pertanto, è di cruciale importanza riconoscere i potenziali pericoli della concentrazione della proprietà dei media, adoperandosi per garantire che i media rimangano indipendenti e rappresentativi di prospettive diverse. Nonostante ciò, viene anche evidenziato che la concentrazione del controllo dei media rimane uno dei problemi meno regolamentati degli ultimi tre decenni, al punto che gli studiosi sembrano perdere la speranza che la politica europea sarà mai in grado di armonizzare adeguate regole di proprietà e andare oltre la semplice discussione del problema.

Approfondendo l'argomento della proprietà dei media, è rilevante notare che, il panorama dei media in molti paesi è caratterizzato da una proprietà altamente concentrata, una questione di lunga data e controversa. Questo problema è aggravato dal fatto che le imprese altamente concentrate possono trarre vantaggio dalle economie di scala, distribuendo i costi di produzione su mercati geograficamente più sviluppati e di prodotti più ampi per generare maggiori profitti. In questo capitolo viene anche fatto notare come, seppure Internet inizialmente offrisse grandi speranze per il pluralismo dei media ha tuttavia dimostrato di essere parte del problema. In effetti, mai prima d'ora la proprietà dei media ha generato così tanta ricchezza. Un ulteriore problema correlato allo sviluppo delle nuove modalità di comunicazioni è la verifica delle fonti di informazioni e l'affidabilità delle stesse. Gli utenti si trovano bombardati da tantissime informazioni, molte volte contrastanti tra di loro, e non riescono a individuare la fonte attendibile o l'informazione imparziale. Nella conclusione del capitolo, si pone particolare enfasi sul ruolo fondamentale della libertà dei media nel supportare gli sforzi di contrasto alla corruzione, con particolare attenzione alla promozione del giornalismo investigativo.

Nel terzo capitolo, viene dedicata un'analisi approfondita al giornalismo investigativo e al suo contributo nel rivelare e denunciare pratiche corrotte. Il giornalismo investigativo comporta un livello molto più profondo di ricerca e analisi rispetto a quello tipicamente richiesto per coprire altri eventi di notizie, scavando in profondità per scoprire storie che sono di vitale importanza per il pubblico. L'intento del giornalismo investigativo è quello di accertare i fatti e rispondere a domande come: Come sono andate le cose? Cos'è successo? Infatti, la funzione del giornalismo investigativo è quella di verificare e controllare.

Attraverso un approccio attento e coinvolgente, il giornalista si pone come narratore di una "storia poliziesca", coinvolgendo il lettore nella scoperta e nella comprensione dei fatti legati alla corruzione. L'efficacia di questa funzione viene enfatizzata attraverso l'analisi di un caso emblematico nella presente tesi: il Watergate. Si fa riferimento all'importante indagine condotta dal Washington Post, la quale ha rivelato le attività illegali dell'amministrazione del ex presidente degli Stati Uniti, Richard Nixon, nel 1970. L'impatto significativo di questa investigazione è evidente poiché ha portato all'impeachment del presidente stesso. Tuttavia, è importante riconoscere che la libertà dei media da sola non rappresenta una soluzione completa per garantire efficaci misure di contrasto alla corruzione. Anche altri fattori, come la forza delle

istituzioni giudiziarie, lo Stato di diritto e la volontà politica dei funzionari governativi, svolgono un ruolo importante. Come precedentemente evidenziato, la libertà dei media può essere limitata da varie forme di censura, molestie e intimidazioni, che possono limitare la capacità dei giornalisti di svolgere efficacemente il loro lavoro. Ma, nonostante le sfide che il giornalismo investigativo deve affrontare, ha ancora il potenziale per dare un prezioso contributo alla società esponendo i fallimenti all'interno dei sistemi normativi ed evidenziando i modi in cui i ricchi, i potenti e i corrotti possono aggirare questi sistemi.

In conclusione, mediante questa tesi si è cercato di dimostrare che i media svolgono un ruolo di fondamentale importanza nel rivelare la corruzione politica e promuovere la trasparenza e la responsabilità nel contesto della vita pubblica. Si è sottolineato come l'efficacia di tale ruolo mediatore dipenda da una serie di fattori, tra cui l'accesso alle informazioni, l'indipendenza e l'adempimento di principi etici nella diffusione delle notizie. Tuttavia, nella conclusione si riconosce che i media non costituiscono una soluzione definitiva per la corruzione e che altri attori, come la società civile e il sistema giudiziario, svolgono un ruolo cruciale nella lotta contro questo fenomeno. Pertanto, si sottolinea l'importanza di continuare a esplorare nuove e innovative modalità per promuovere la trasparenza e la responsabilità nella sfera pubblica. Ciò potrebbe comprendere il rafforzamento delle protezioni legali per le fonti informative e i giornalisti investigativi, il potenziamento della diversità e dell'indipendenza dei mezzi di comunicazione e l'attribuzione di responsabilità alla società civile nel rendere conto di coloro che detengono il potere. Solo attraverso tali sforzi si potrà realizzare una società immune dalla corruzione, in cui tutti i cittadini possano prosperare e trarre beneficio