

FROM CENSORSHIP TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION:
A DECADE OF TRANSITION
IN THE POLISH PRESS

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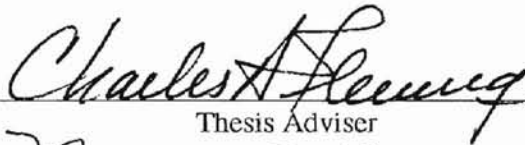
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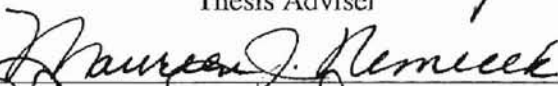
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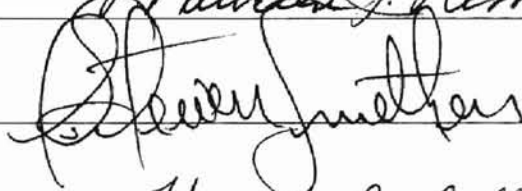
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General

After 45 years of the “communist experiment” in Central Europe (and over 70 in the Soviet Union), suddenly this political system fell apart in 1989-1990. Citizen resistance and government mistakes led to a non-violent democratic revolution. This political turmoil began in Poland due to the Solidarity movement’s actions and spread throughout all of the countries in the region. The uneasy transformation process that had begun in that part of the world after 1989 has no comparison throughout world history. Structural changes that occurred in the newly-democratic states involved all possible areas of social and political life. An important part in these processes was played by the institutions of mass communication.

Background

Historical Perspective

Poland is well on the way to achieving the standards Western democracies have established over decades or even centuries of peaceful development. This Central European country, strategically located between the great powers of Germany and Russia, did not have a chance to fully develop democratic structures until very recently.

Over the last two centuries, Poland suffered severely during several wars, uprisings, and political turnovers. Surprisingly, it was Poland, only a few years after the United States, that introduced a very progressive democratic constitution [Konstytucja Trzeciego Maja] in 1793.

Shortly after that, however, Poland lost its independence for 123 years to appear again in 1918 as a democratic republic. The country was invaded in 1939 by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. After six years of German occupation, Poland was “freed” by the Soviet Red Army and forced to accept communism as the country’s only ideology. The country remained in the Soviet Union’s zone of influence until 1989.

That year, after several years of insubordinate actions and clashes with the communist authorities, the citizens “Solidarity” movement [NSZZ Solidarnosc] came to power. This turnover was a direct result of the peaceful so-called Round Table Talks [Obrady Okraglego Stolu] with the government followed by free parliamentary elections. From that time, rapid change and development in all spheres of social, economic, and political life occurred in Poland. This transition has been so dramatic that it even exceeded the anticipation of many Western historians and political analysts (Weber 1995).

This complex process has been reflected in many ways. It can be seen through changes in social and political life, changes of infrastructure, the structure of the society, the economy, and the people’s mentality. This change should be also visible in the news coverage of the Polish press.

Poland has had a long tradition of an independent press. The first newspaper published in Polish was *Merkuryusz Polski Ordynaryjny* in 1667. There were independent newspapers before 1795 when Polish territory was grabbed by powerful neighbors. Also, during a brief period between the two world wars, freedom of expression in Poland was guaranteed by the constitution. Even in communist Poland, although all publications were censored by the authorities, freedom of expression found its way through an underground press.

In spite of that, after the collapse of communism Poland's media institutions had to learn from the very beginning how to operate in a new reality. We can assume that the press has been both influenced by real life phenomena, and played a vital role in initiating these changes. The objective of this study was to examine these assumptions.

Related Research

Despite the fact that the topic seems to be fascinating for mass communication practitioners, few studies have been done in the field. Although a number of studies have been devoted to the social and political implications of the Polish transition, only a few have tried to explore how the print media reflected this process in their content. What is interesting is that foreign researchers were more active here than Polish ones.

Many foreign scholars, such as Robert Weiner (1994), point out that the tradition of a free press existed in Poland even under communism in the form of underground press and that communism itself in Poland was less restrictive than elsewhere.¹

Mark Fitzgerald (1991), emphasized the difficulties that new publishers in Poland had to face: lack of money, increasing foreign competition, and pressure of some political parties.² In an International Media Fund report cited by Debra Gersh (1991), its authors, Marks and Stone pointed out that "virtually every important newspaper in Poland is controlled by political parties, the state, or the church." However, they also noted that "most Polish media reflect a broad and representative segment of responsible opinion, regardless of ownership."³

Several studies focused on the difficult task of privatizing the media. Now, over 80% of Polish newspapers have private owners. Privatization was seen as being "synonymous with media freedom"⁴ (Slavko Spihal -- 1994).

Some researchers paid attention to the educational role of the media to promote democratic principles, and inspire social activity. As Karol Jakubowicz (1994), claimed, this

approach consisted of “commercially driven media, but with great emphasis being placed by reformers on designing a media system serving primarily the civil society.”⁵

Available literature in the field most often analyzes particular approaches concerning political and socio-economical changes in the country, media coverage, evolution of the press market, or changes in ownership structure. Only a few studies have attempted to analyze change in newspaper content over that period of time. The main attempt was by Alina Slomkowska (1994), from the University of Warsaw, who did a case study on changes in print media content. She concluded that as a kind of reaction against the times of the communist regime, there was a topical bent toward the other extreme: pro-Soviet publications were replaced by anti-Soviet ones; instead of criticism of German or American politics, there appeared uncritical articles glorifying the West.⁶

Slomkowska analyzed print media content as a whole rather than focusing on particular newspapers. Her study was qualitative research, and was not backed by definite numbers that would describe the change more precisely.

There were also several studies devoted to the phenomenon of Gazeta Wyborcza that emerged in 1989 and is now the biggest newspaper in Poland (K. Jakubowicz, 1995). There was, however, no attempt to analyze and compare content change of newspapers that were the main players in the Polish press market over the last ten years.⁷

Statement of the Problem

Focus of this study was on the content of selected Polish newspapers. The author intended to answer the following questions:

1. What type of content was characteristic of the main Polish newspapers during the decline of the communist era in Poland?

2. How did the content of the main Polish newspapers change after the democratic “Solidarity” movement came to power in 1989?
3. What are characteristics of the main Polish newspapers today, after a decade of intensive changes?
4. How have the newspapers reflected the transition from communism to democracy over a decade of Polish reforms?

Purpose

The present study was an attempt to describe a unique change in media structure and character that was witnessed in Eastern and Central Europe after the collapse of communism. In particular, the author tried to find or deny the relationship between the social and political change in Poland and the change in newspaper content. Poland was chosen as an example, because it initiated the processes that led to communism’s failure and the changes there were the most significant.

Methodology

General

The purpose of this study was to describe change in newspaper content. The most appropriate procedure to do this is content analysis. The disadvantage of a content analysis is the difficulty in extending the findings to other newspapers and generalizing the results for describing the whole transition process.

Population and Sample

The main source of information needed for this study was provided by selected issues of certain newspapers. The sample of 48 total issues of three newspapers was analyzed: Trybuna Ludu (after 1990 Trybuna), Zycie Warszawy, Gazeta Wyborcza (since 1989). Issues of these newspapers from three time periods were compared. They were selected from the following time frames:

- Year 1986 (before the changes) -- Communist rule

Samples from Trybuna Ludu and Zycie Warszawy (six issues of each) selected by randomly picking one day from each of the following months: January, March, May, July, September, November.

- Year 1991 (after the main turnover) -- Democratic rule by Solidarity movement

Samples from Trybuna, Zycie Warszawy, and Gazeta Wyborcza (six issues of each) selected by randomly picking one day from each of the following months: January, March, May, July, September, November.

- Year 1997 (well established democracy) -- Democratic rule by post-communists* (leftists)

Samples from Trybuna, Zycie Warszawy, and Gazeta Wyborcza (six issues of each) selected by randomly picking one day from each of the following months: January, March, May, July, September, November.

The newspapers listed above were, and some of them still are, the most influential print media in Poland. They were selected because each represents different characteristics and different political opinions.

* As in part of the literature from this field, the term "post-communists" used in this study refers to the political formation of people, who were involved in the communist governing before 1989, then -- after communism collapsed -- were still politically active and returned to power as a result of 1993 parliamentary elections. This term is synonymous to "leftists," or "social-democrats." The term "post-communist" may refer to a post-communists person as well as to the country as a whole, or to the processes that have occurred in Poland after 1989.

The newspaper issues for randomly selected days of every second month of 1986, 1991, and 1996 were chosen as a sample for analysis because all three periods of time were of relative stability, but represented an essential difference in the political and social order in Poland. In 1986, communism seemed to be strong and irreversible. Year 1991 saw rapid democratization under the “Solidarity”-rooted government. Finally, 1996 was a time when the power in the country was back in post-communist hands, who now are devoted to democracy.

Content Categories and Coding

The unit of analysis was a single article with heading, or a picture with caption when it does not accompany an article. Every item that was found in the analyzed sample was counted and assigned to one of 14 content categories. The categories were domestic politics / government / military, domestic non-politics, international news from former communist countries, international news from the rest of the world, features, opinions / editorials / commentary, economics, science and education, culture and entertainment, religion and ethics, sports, letters to the editor, and news briefs.

A separate category was devoted to advertisements and announcements, but they were not counted. The percentage of space accounted for by ads and announcements in the entire newspaper issue was estimated.

The second step was to look at the direction of stories under the first category (domestic politics / government / military). These stories were classified as either favorable, when they positively depicted the government; neutral, when they did not take decisive stand; or unfavorable towards the government, when the government was presented negatively.

The frequency counts, and percentages were then compared for different time frames, and different newspapers to look for differences and relationships; that is, if there was a change in newspaper content over time.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is backed by, and its findings are related to, various theories of mass communication. First of all, the findings were reviewed from the point of view of four main theories of the press formulated by Fred S. Siebert: Soviet Theory, Authoritarian, Libertarian, and Social Responsibility. Also the newspaper content was viewed through three press systems. The characteristics of the analyzed newspapers in different time periods were judged as either more Survival-, Ideology-, or Market-motivated. The change was expected to be visible in the motivation of the press system among all three periods.

Among many mass communication theories, Gatekeeping and Agenda-setting theories seem the most appropriate to help in describing changes in the Polish press during its transition from communism to democracy.

Since, in the course of structural transformation of the press, the editors faced major ethical challenges and doubts accompanying their decision-making process, newspaper content was also evaluated within the context of ethics. The content was discussed with the use of the main media responsibility theories that were applicable.

Significance of the Study

Several studies have been done on the Polish democratic revolution and on general aspects of the transformation of the Polish press. There is however, a lack of detailed studies that focused on the content change in Polish newspapers as a reflection of social and political transformation. The author found this topic worth writing about, simply because there is a need to summarize from the mass media perspective what happened in Poland over the last 10 years.

Being a journalist himself, the author hopes his study will be helpful to researchers of Poland's most recent history, as well as to his colleagues in the journalism profession.

Assumptions and Limitations

From direct observation of changes that occurred in Poland, and his practical experience as a journalist, the author of this study assumed that there was a change in the content of Poland's opinion dailies over the last decade. The change was expected to be significant in both distribution of content and in the direction of political stories.

Conducting research on Polish media while being away from Poland was not an easy task. The Edmon Low Library at Oklahoma State University does not carry any Polish newspapers or journals. Also, there are few books directly related to the topic available there. Most materials were borrowed from other universities' libraries. The availability of materials was the main obstacle to this study. However, this obstacle was overcome by loans of the archived issues of newspapers in the form of microfilm from other American universities and from the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Content of 1996 newspapers (January, March, May, July, September and November 1996) was analyzed during a research trip to the University of Indiana in Bloomington, Indiana.

Since no one else was available who could read Polish, no other people were involved in the content analysis process except for the author and his wife, Joanna. This can be viewed as a limitation because usually at least three coders are needed for a content analysis. Wimmer and Dominick (1994), stated however, that in cases of newspaper coding, two is an acceptable number of coders.⁸

One of the limitations to this study is that the results of content analysis of the three newspapers are not necessarily valid for the entire Polish press, and thus, cannot be generalized.

However, the available literature indicates that serious opinion newspapers in Poland behaved alike. Therefore, the author strongly believes that the findings of this research can be extended to other Polish opinion newspapers.

Another limitation is that this research cannot be compared with previous studies because there has been no similar research on Polish media. This underlines a need for such a study, and sets the stage for future research.

Organization of the Study

The present study consists of the following chapters:

Chapter II reviews in detail available literature related to the topic of this thesis.

Chapter III discusses in detail the research design.

Chapter IV presents the research findings and analysis of the data.

Chapter V presents the conclusions of the study and makes recommendations for further research.

ENDNOTES

- ¹Robert Weiner, Change in Eastern Europe (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1994): 35.
- ²Mark Fitzgerald, "Walesa and the Polish Press," Editor & Publisher, Vol 124 No 25 (22 June 1991): 29
- ³Debra Gersh, "The Press in Eastern and Central Europe," Editor & Publisher, Vol 124 No 36 (7 September 1991): 31.
- ⁴Slavko Splihal, Media Beyond Socialism. Theory and Practice in East-Central Europe (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1994): 39.
- ⁵Karol Jakubowicz, "Changing Perspectives in Social Communication in Poland," Media, Culture & Society, Vol 16 No 2 (April 1994): 280.
- ⁶Alina Słomkowska, Transformacja Mediów w Polsce [Transformation of Polish Media], (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1995): 95.
- ⁷Karol Jakubowicz, The Media in Poland. (Warsaw: Institute of Journalism, 1996): 2.
- ⁸Roger D. Wimmer and Joseph R. Dominick, Mass Media Research. An Introduction. (Belmont, CA. Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994): 170.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Where are media, there is always a kind of manipulation going on.

Arthur Asa Berger

General

The literature from the field of this study is reviewed in this chapter. First, the interactions between the media and society are briefly discussed. Then, selected mass communication theories are presented along with their applications to the Polish media. The author found *Four Theories of the Press*, formulated by Fred S. Siebert et al., as an useful tool for explaining the complexity of processes that governed the Polish press. Another concept discussed here is Schillinger's world press systems, formulated based on motivations of the media. Also, agenda setting and gatekeeping theories provide a valuable instrument to examine the media content.

The second part of this chapter is devoted to the Polish media itself. Based on the available literature, the author explains processes that accompanied the press transformation from the 1980s to the present. The main transformation process of the early 1990s is discussed as consisting of three characteristic phases observed in the press market development. Also the present condition of the media is presented.

Finally, the reviewed literature is evaluated in terms of its compatibility and usefulness to the present study. While the social and political aspects of the Polish transformation from communism to democracy have been well explored, a large gap was found in the research concerning the press market, and -- especially -- the content change of the newspapers. This study will fill this gap.

Media and the Society

In the contemporary world the social interactions are so bound together that neither mass communication nor modern, democratic society is conceivable without the other, and each is necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for the other.¹

Therefore, it may be said, that the media may influence or mirror society and social change. This is true for every country. The degree of influencing and mirroring varies, however, from society to society. This study assumes that in highly developed countries with a well established press system, the media emphasis is more on mirroring society than influencing it. In developing countries, the opposite may be true. The Polish press may be somewhere in between. In the beginning of the systematic transformation of Poland, the media's role as a mold of the society's views and interests was crucial to the development of democracy.

There can be little doubt that the media, whether molders or mirrors of society, are the main messengers *about* society.² This means that the media pictures the society in its coverage. Therefore, by studying media content, society will be depicted as it is, and how it has changed over time.

The media not only provide information about society but also fulfill the need society has for receiving certain content in news coverage. Inevitably, the media reflect public opinion

about what should be reported and how it should be reported. The media, especially in a free market condition, must be sensitive to its public perception.

It is worthwhile to examine the change in Polish media and content of press coverage within the context of various media theories.

Four Theories of the Press

In the book, *Four Theories of the Press*, Frederick S. Siebert, Theodore Paterson, and Wilbur Schramm suggested that media systems around the world could be classified according to four main theories: Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet-Totalitarian.⁴

Authoritarian Theory

Authoritarian theory can justify advance censorship and punishment for deviation from rules laid down by political authorities. Aside from historic examples, this pattern has been observed in dictatorial regimes, under military rule or foreign occupation and even during states of extreme emergency in democratic societies.

This is the oldest theory. It came into being in the authoritarian climate of the late Renaissance, soon after the invention of printing. The European rulers of the time used the press to inform people of what the rulers thought they should know and the policies the rulers thought they should support.⁵ The press therefore functioned *from the top down*. Private ownership was permitted only by special permission by the ruler, and this permission could be withdrawn any time the obligation to support the royal policies was considered to have been dishonored.

A relationship existed between the ruler and publisher in which the former granted a monopoly right to set the “right” policy, license and even censor media, and the latter received resources to operate the press and gave support to the ruler. Under such conditions, the press was

unable to do what today has come to be one of the most common press functions: to check on government.

Authoritarian Press in Poland. As for all of Europe in the late 16th and through the 17th and 18th centuries this press model existed in Poland. The Polish king had the absolute authority to publish and control the press. The first newspapers such as *Merkuryusz Polski Ordynaryjny* (1667) were owned directly by the king. Later, in the mid-1700s, the Catholic Church established some newspapers written in Latin that were targeted at the small group of clergy and well-educated people. But this was not an exception to the authoritarian “rules of the game,” because Catholicism was a state religion in Poland at that time and control over the media was maintained by the king or the Church hierarchy, but the final authority belonged to the king.⁶

In the case of books, there was more freedom since these publications were concentrated in the academic institutions of that time, mainly at Jagiellonian University in Krakow (established in 1363). But, yet the publications could not criticize the ruler and his deeds.⁷

At the time of the decline of the Kingdom of Poland in the late XVII century, the state’s control over the media became weaker, due to the spread of democratic ideas among the Polish gentry. This movement led to establishing the first democratic constitution in Europe in 1793 [Konstytucja Trzeciego Maja]. During that time private newspapers appeared that were published by magnates or nobles. Although they were independent of the censorship of the king they were under constant control of the owner, namely a magnate.⁸ In spite of that, this kind of press was more libertarian than authoritarian.

The libertarian concept of the press did not develop in Poland due to the loss of independence in 1795. Prussia, Austria and Russia partitioned Poland and moved its press back to the authoritarian stage until 1918 when Poland became an independent, democratic state.

There was another period of authoritarian press in Poland during World War II. Nazi Germany occupied the country from 1939 to 1945, restricting, censoring, and fully controlling the media.

Libertarian Theory

Libertarian theory was drawn from the ideas of classical liberalism and referred to the notion that the press should be a “free marketplace of ideas” in which the best will be recognized and the worst will fail. The theory had its early seventeenth century origins in the writing of Milton (*Aeropagitica*) but was developed in the North American colonies and in the new nation of the United States.⁹

According to libertarian theory, man is no longer conceived of as a dependent being to be led and directed (as in authoritarian theory), but rather as a rational being able to distinguish between truth and falsehood or between better and worse alternatives. Describing the libertarian theory, Siebert (1956) stated that “truth is no longer conceived of as property of power. Rather, the right to search for truth is one of the inalienable natural rights of man. And where does the press fit into the scheme? The press is conceived of as *a partner in the search for truth.*”¹⁰

The foundation of libertarian theory is the idea that the press is not an instrument of government, but rather a device of presenting evidence so that readers can make up their minds as to the policy of the government. Therefore, it is imperative that the press be free from government control and influence.

The United States, Great Britain, and some other Western European countries maintained this model of the press for two hundred years. In the twentieth century, however, libertarian theory had to be modified and a new theory was found to be more applicable to the media, social responsibility theory.

Libertarian Press in Poland. The libertarian model of the press did not exist in Poland except for the 21-year period of independence and democracy between the two world wars of the twentieth century. Although the press during that time was not free of government's attempts to interfere with news content, the press was diverse and offered a variety of opinions, and part of its effort was checking on government.¹¹

Social Responsibility Theory

In 1947, the Commission on the Freedom of the Press in the United States issued a report that not only reaffirmed the principle of freedom but added to it a notion of social responsibility that the press was called upon to accept.¹² According to the Commission the press should provide a "full, truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning,"

The press was asked to serve as a "forum for the exchange of comment and criticism" and to be "common carriers of the public expression." The press should give a "representative picture of constituent groups in society" and also present and clarify the "goals and values of society."¹³

According to Siebert (1956) "the power and near monopoly position of the media impose on them an obligation to be socially responsible, to see that all sides are fairly presented and that the public has enough information to decide; and that if the media do not take on themselves such responsibility it may be necessary for some other agency of the public to enforce it."¹⁴

Socially Responsible Press in Poland. Before 1989 "social responsibility" was a new term for Polish media in the meaning the Western World would understand. Communist authorities had long used the same expression to emphasize the duty of the press to be responsible to communist society. According to the communist point of view, the media should

comply with the will of society and serve its good. Since society had chosen communism, the media should be supportive in reaching and maintaining this goal. If the press raised doubts about the government's actions, it would be called socially irresponsible by the authorities. The authorities' position was that the government worked for the good of society, and by raising doubts the press would only obstruct this process.

This notion had nothing to do with what Fred Siebert and others understood as social responsibility of the media. It was truly a totalitarian model of the press masked by words that had positive meaning.

Even under communism, however, Polish journalists tried to be responsible to the extent they could. They were pressing government and Communist Party officials for the right to act without censorship and to determine for themselves what should be printed. As Jane Leftwich Curry (1990) points out, Polish journalists were not just tools of government's propaganda, as in most communist countries, but they tried to follow journalistic principles and to be honest with their audiences. She wrote:

[Polish] journalists did not change, they worked in the open as they had worked behind the scenes before. They were not chameleons. (...) For, ultimately, created as they were by their work experiences and the professional community in which they live and in which they work, journalists were professionals in the fullest sense of the definition given for the professionals of the West.¹⁵

After the collapse of communism in 1989 the words "social responsibility" slowly regained their proper meaning. However, due to the political devaluation of the word "social," there is talk of only "responsible" press without pointing out to whom the press has to be responsible. It is assumed that the journalists have to be honest and accountable to all possible audiences and be objective about government and all subjects of their coverage.

Soviet Theory

The Soviet theory assigned the media a role as collective agitator, propagandist, and educator in the building of communism. The principles of the theory were established by Lenin after the Communist Revolution of 1917 and the Soviet concept was extended to most of Eastern and Central Europe after the Second World War. The main principle was the subordination of the media to the Communist Party -- the only legitimate voice and agent of the working class.¹⁶ Not surprisingly, the theory did not favor free expression, but it did propose a positive role for the media in communist society. The media were expected to be responsible and serious and to reflect the diversity of social structure and culture.

In his *Four Theories of the Press* Fred Siebert described Soviet model this way:

The Soviet press operates as a tool of the ruling power just as clearly as did the older authoritarianism. Unlike the older pattern, it is state rather than privately owned. The profit motive has been removed, and a concept of positive liberty has been substituted for a concept of negative liberty. Perhaps no press in the history of the world has ever been so tightly controlled, and yet the Soviet spokesmen think of the press as free because it is free to speak the "truth" as the Party sees the truth.¹⁷

Siebert wrote this in 1956, at the time when the Cold War was in its peak and the press in communist countries was strongly suppressed. During the next decades the Soviet system gradually relaxed to a different extent in different countries, but the basic principles remained unchanged until 1989

Soviet-type Press in Poland. If, in our analysis, we stick only to the Communist (or Soviet) press theory, it reveals nothing about how the mass media in Poland changed under socialism. To fill this gap, Goban-Klass (1994) uses the concept of civil society to describe citizens' independent and spontaneous activity. He writes that development of "civil society" was adopted as an ultimate goal by Polish dissidents in the 1970s, when strict communist rule eased, but the system remained totalitarian in structure. The underground press was to help and accelerate this process.¹⁸

Although the Polish press was less suppressed by communist authorities than elsewhere in the communist world, it was censored by the government, and authors of unfavorable articles were punished by loss of a job and, sometimes, imprisonment. The Polish model of the theory was slightly different than its Soviet original. There have been several interpretations and applications of the model in postwar Polish history including Stalinism (1946-1956), de-Stalinization (1957-1968), re-Stalinization (1969-1979), and resistance and martial law (1980-1983).¹⁹

According to Olson (1995), what unifies media models of Central and Eastern Europe is a general belief that the media were to be used for shaping pro-socialist public attitudes. Frequently this meant that alternative points of view were unwanted because they were unnecessary, destructive and contrary to the political line of the Communist Party.²⁰

Jakubowicz (1995) stated that the media's role in communist Poland was in part to create in their content an alternative, better reality, and to imprint that image on the minds of the audience in the hope that it would replace and improve the representation of reality gained from direct observation and firsthand experience. He argued that:

There could be no doubt as to the cyclical nature of the media's role in social change and their being unable to function as an independent social agent. (...) Whatever success they had achieving the state's goals also sowed the seeds of later disaster. The contrast between the fantasy they presented as reality itself was so obvious, and the propaganda so crude, that it could be successful only with a totally uncritical audience.²¹

And the audience, mostly well-educated young men and women, was becoming more and more critical and began openly questioning what the press was delivering to them as "reality."

Other Theories

Each of the four theories of the press contributes to understanding the Polish press throughout its history. These theories fail, however, to fully explain the processes that accompanied the media transition from communism to democracy in recent years. As stated by eight authors in the book *Last Rights: Revisiting Four Theories of the Press*, published by the same publisher 40 years after Siebert and his colleagues' book appeared, the original theories "stand at the end of the road."²² This is because over the years the world has changed.

John C. Nerone and his colleagues point out that with a few exceptions, the Soviet model of the press does not exist anymore in its pure sense. The authors attempted to correct the *Four Theories* simplistic identification of Marxism with Stalinism by outlining a Marxist critique of the capitalist press and by describing examples of alternatives that would make it more democratic, communitarian, and morally responsible.

The authors pointed out that "libertarian" means more than early modern English philosophy, and it is full of conflicts ignored in *Four Theories*. Also libertarian is not a straw-figure of the liberal tradition, but a set of social practices not limited to states and found in all types of societies. According to the critics, "concerned with determining the proper limits to freedom of expression, *Four Theories* did little to prepare journalism for a world in which media concentration and the singularity of the marketplace call for creative means of expanding the diversity of information and opinion."²³

To understand the press after the fall of communism it is necessary to mention at least one more concept that is present in the literature of the field, the developmental theory of the press (or advancing theory) introduced by J. Herbert Altschull.

This theory works for societies undergoing a transition from underdevelopment and colonialism to independence and better material conditions. Such societies often lack the

infrastructure, the money, the traditions, the professional skills and even the audiences needed to sustain media institutions comparable to those of the western world.

Under such circumstances, the main goals of the press are the national development task (economic, social, cultural, and political); the pursuit of cultural and informational autonomy; support for democracy; and solidarity with other developing countries. Because of the priority given to these ends, limited resources are available for media, and journalistic freedom may also be restricted. The responsibilities of the media are emphasized above their rights and freedoms.²⁴

This model was appropriate for Poland in the first few years of transition from communism to democracy. The media that previously had served as builders of communism were expected to support a new, democratic order and a free market economy. It took time for the media to recognize the principles they should follow.

Some media institutions adopted democratic principles sooner than others. By late 1992, however, there was no single media institution in Poland that opposed democratization and privatization of the country, though they expressed different opinions about how to achieve those goals. A current example of how the press can work together for the good of the country is its total commitment to promote Poland's inclusion in NATO and the European Union.

Denis McQuail (1994) wrote that "in most countries, in any case, the media do not constitute any single [media] system, with a single purpose or philosophy, but are composed of many separate, overlapping, often inconsistent elements. with appropriate differences of normative expectation and actual regulation."²⁵

This is very true for contemporary Poland. The Polish media institutions, either private or state-owned, and the relations between them, the government and society, display a mixture of several elements: libertarian, "responsible," and also, to a very limited extent, authoritarian (Soviet).

A Dynamic Theory of the World Press

Siebert's division of the world press systems was derived based on political and cultural differences that existed among countries. This division was valuable and reasonable at the time it was announced -- in the mid 20th century. Now, its value is diminished by the sudden disappearance of the communist political systems. The contemporary world is different from what Siebert observed. Today, except for North Korea, Cuba, and to certain extent China, the Soviet model of the press rarely can be found. It is likely that its validation will expire soon, as those remaining communist countries move to democracy. Also, the authoritarian theory can be used to describe fewer countries now than in the 1950s. Thus, though still useful to describe the history of the world's media, Siebert's *Four Theories of the Press* is a little too simple to explain the complexities of contemporary press systems.

A concept was needed that would be temporally neutral, politically neutral, and culturally neutral, and thus universal. Such a concept was formulated in the early 1990s by Elisabeth Hupp Schillinger, a doctoral researcher in the Department of Sociology at Oklahoma State University. She formulated a Dynamic Theory of World Press based on the motivation by which different media systems are driven. This concept is applicable to the present study, since the central element of this theory is to incorporate and identify change. It has proven to be useful in examining dramatic change, as shown in the Soviet analysis of Gorbachev's reform press.²⁶ It is likely also to provide a foundation for understanding the transition of the Polish press.

The Schillinger theory can be visualized by a triangle of motives. The three primary motives of the press are (1) survival, (2) ideology or ideas, and (3) market or instrument. The following figure shows this concept graphically.

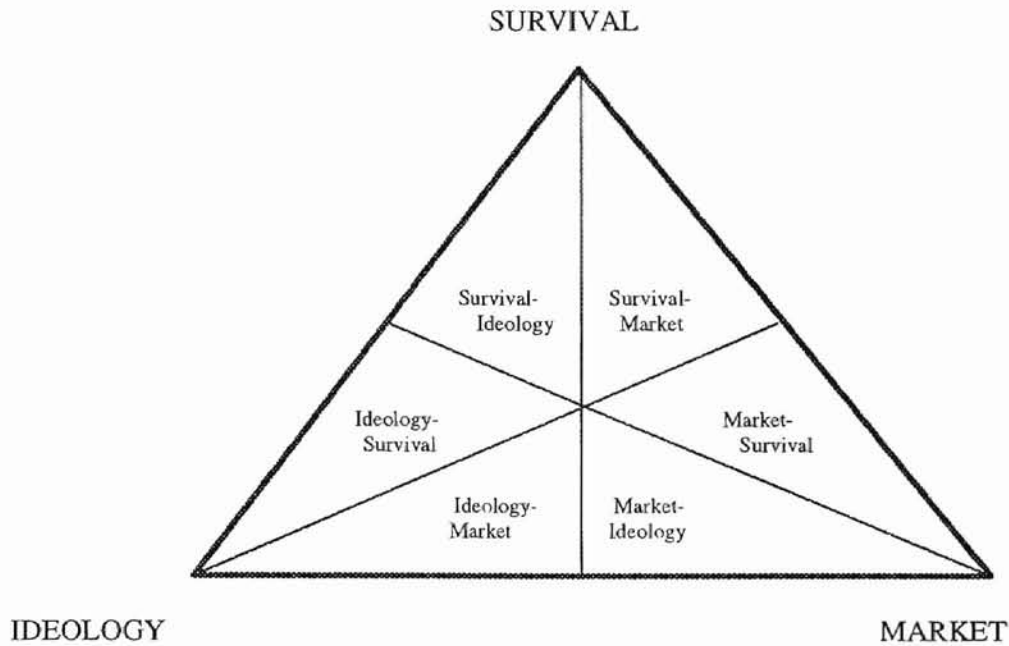


Figure 1: Schillinger's Triangle of Motives.

According to Schillinger, any national press system occupies a certain area within the triangle, closer to one of the three vortexes, depending on whether it is more survival-, ideology-, or market-motivated. As she points out, the triangle of motives demonstrates that “no two national media systems align perfectly within its perimeters, and that indeed no single system or organ within that system occupies the identical position on two consecutive days.”²⁷

The following is a brief description of the three main motives of the press.

Survival-Motivated Media

Pre- and post-censorship may be exercised by the state, accompanied by self-censorship by the media. Much press content is prepared and provided by the government. The state may also close down media institutions and punish their providers, i.e., journalists, editors, publishers, etc. The content that is not crucial to press, and government survival, such as culture,

entertainment, sports, etc., is not subject to government scrutiny. The flow of foreign capital into the media, and access by foreign journalists to the national systems of information are limited and controlled by the government. The examples of such a model include the Singaporean and Nigerian press systems from the 1960s to the early 1990s.

Ideology-Motivated Media

The media is oriented to promoting certain political or religious ideas to the society. The motive of the media is to build, preserve, and defend the nation and government. The press is charged with popularizing the ideology, demonstrating its applications to every day life, and supporting ideological leaders and their political agents. The government supports the media as long as the media promote ideology the government accepts. Dissenting views are not allowed. Media providers are controlled and can be punished for not supporting the ideology or/and spreading “wrong” ideas. Examples include the Iranian press under the dictatorship of the Shah in late 1970s, and the Soviet press under Brezniev (1964-82).

Market-Motivated Media

The press is profit-oriented. Therefore, all that is highly marketable, such as sensational, gossip, unusual, exceptional, etc., is disproportionately represented in media content. There is a high volume of “yellow journalism” newspapers that provide catching and entertaining stories in order to sell more copies and attract advertisers. Advertising contributes the major revenues and profits, supplemented by direct sales of the media product. The market and media owners control media content in response to advertisers’ demands and audiences’ preference. All media are viewed as a product to be sold. They compete to gain the best position in the market. Government control of the press is limited to the provision of legal protection against libel. Examples include contemporary American and most Western media systems.

Applicable Mass Communication Theories

Various mass communication theories may prove helpful to provide a theoretical background for the description of the transformation of the Polish press. Magic Bullet, Gratification, Adoption of Innovation, Two Step-Flow, Propaganda and Mass Persuasion, Social Expectations, The Meaning, Cultivation, Spiral of Silence, and Cognitive Dissonance theories are all applicable to the media in Poland. Each could explain the media changing over time, the inter-relations between media and society and media and government, and finally, the interactions within the media themselves.

Two of these concepts provide an understanding of what happened in Poland's mass media over the last decade.

Agenda-Setting Theory

Human minds need information to act. Advertisers argue that people cannot buy products they have never seen or heard of; in the same light agenda theorists suggest that people can become concerned only about topics that have been brought to their attention.²⁸ It is the media that is naturally inclined to be a setter of the agendas for the public. From this notion, the agenda-setting theory of the media was derived.

The foundation of the theory is an idea that those who control the news media make decisions about what should be reported to the public. This becomes the agenda of the media at any given time. The press do not tell people *what* they should think but rather what they should think *about* and what issues are important.²⁹ It has to be remembered that problems emphasized in the media may not be the ones that are dominant in reality.

As McCombs and Shaw (1972), two prominent agenda-setting theorists, wrote, “audiences not only learn about public issues and other matters from the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the media put on it.”³⁰

There are several examples of agendas that Poland’s media brought to the attention of Polish society and promoted during the first years after the fall of communism. In 1989-1991, right after the “Solidarity” movement came to power, the primary agenda voiced mostly by the new and private anti-communist media, was de-communization of the state apparatus and public administration. Later the press created and strongly supported a positive image of small business activities, economic reforms and privatization.

Recently, Poland’s attempt to join NATO and the European Union has become a very important agenda. It is the media who is responsible for total acceptance of the westward turn of Polish political and economical interests. Recent polls show that as many as 90 percent of Poles want their country to join with the West, a percentage far greater than in any other post-communist country.³¹

Gatekeeping Theory

The individuals in media organizations who decide what will be broadcast or written are often referred to as **gatekeepers**.³² They determine what the important news is on a given day (or other period of time) and what prominence the various stories will receive. Berger (1995) asserted that “various factors affect the decision making of gatekeepers, such as the organizations they work for, the media [type] in which they work, and their own economic status.”³³

In the Polish reality, where most of the media, especially right after the fall of communism, were highly political, the first of these factors was to play a major role in the decision making process of the news gatekeepers.

Obviously, there is a link between gatekeeping and agenda-setting. The information that gatekeepers let through their gates becomes the material that is the agenda.

According to Berger (1995), the news we get is always someone's view of what is important news (or news that will attract and keep the attention of readers or audiences -- not necessarily what is important news). Thus, where there are media, there is always a kind of manipulation going on.³⁴

Polish Press Under Communism

Although after the Second World War all the media in Poland belonged to the state and were governed by communist authorities, this control was not as totalitarian as it was under Soviet rule. Poles remembered the tradition of a free, democratic press, which existed before 1939. During communist rule, there was a widely circulated underground press. A particularly rich variety of mimeographed newspapers appeared at the end of the 1970s and during the 1980s and played a significant role in the anti-communist struggle.³⁵

Liana Giorgi (1995) cites studies by Kaminska (1988) and Sawisz (1990) who estimated the number of *samizdat* press during the period of "Solidarity" rise in 1980-1981 to 3,200. Of that number only 32 managed to survive after the imposition of martial law in December of 1981, but by the end of 1982, some 734 "new" *samizdat* publications entered the underground market.³⁶

This quantity of underground newspapers was exceptional for communist countries. Jane Leftwich Curry points out that "Polish leadership had been forced to compromise full communist rule and recognize the Catholic Church's right to function and the right of the peasantry to private farming, as well as to show greater tolerance of independent opinion than had existed elsewhere in the Soviet bloc."³⁷

Editors of many illegal publications continued the tradition of the independent press that thrived in Poland between the two world wars. Johnson (1995) sees the roots of existence of the underground press even further back in time. He wrote:

The nineteenth-century Polish press became an important national institution during the partitions of Polish territory among the empires of Austria, Russia, and Prussia. (...) Only the [Catholic] church was more important than the press in preserving Polish identity. The Polish press could serve as a preserver of language and a source of employment for members of the elite. The Polish press, in contrast to Czech [and other Eastern European countries], developed a greater sense of opposition to the regime.³⁸

This opposition was developed not only by the press, but also -- and partially thanks to the press' influence -- by members of Polish society. Over time, this distrust of the authorities become an important characteristic of Poles, and it continued during the communist era. As a consequence, this sentiment led to the anti-communist demonstrations and clashes of 1956, 1970, 1976, 1980-81, and 1988.

Whereas, elsewhere in the Soviet bloc any critique of communist authorities was literally unthinkable, in Poland members of the legally operated press could criticize government, but in a "friendly" manner and by depicting Party officials as men who work hard for the common good, but circumstances sometimes arose that made them fail.

Therefore, as Curry points out, "Poland had, since the Stalinist period, been a 'quasi-pluralistic authoritarian' state rather than a representative of the more authoritarian Soviet model."³⁹

This doesn't mean, though, that Polish writers freely could exercise objective journalism. Curry observes that:

The experience of Polish journalists was an atypical case for Soviet bloc states. But, although the boundaries of tolerance have normally been broader in Poland than in other Soviet bloc states, the state ideology, the [Communist] Party and state institutions, and the "rules of the game" were the same as those in the other systems Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. (...) Journalists' ability to maintain and protect themselves is based not simply on greater freedom in Poland but on their professionalization.⁴⁰

This is a highly positive note in favor of Polish press professionals. Also, other Western scholars, such as Weiner (1994) and Webb (1994) tend to see high standards of work by journalists in Poland (compared with other communist countries). In contrast, some domestic media researchers are more critical. They point out that there were different people in the profession representing different personal skills. Most of journalists entered the profession without any special training. Instead of being objective, some of them were eager to flatter the communist officials or/and represent in their work the interests of various groups.

The fact is that before 1989 journalists in Poland were very involved in politics (in a negative, as well as, a positive sense) and very divided as a group in their political orientations.

Poland's Democratic Revolution and the Media

By the mid-1980s, the gap between popular expectations and official promises concerning living standards and reality proved too large to bridge. Around 1987, Communist authorities realized that the strategies they pursued after 1981 had been a failure. The imposition of martial law had not yielded the desired results, and no structural problems of the system had been solved.⁴¹

According to a study done by Pisarek in 1988 and cited by Jakubowicz (1995), at that time only 40% of Poles found their own views reflected in the content of legally existing newspapers and periodicals, and only 21.6% could name specific radio or television programs that they accepted as expressing their own views.⁴²

The media were highly unpopular because the authorities had lost the public's trust. The media professionals realized they were losing ground and they would fail completely if they were going to continue to be passive.

In the summer of 1988, a new wave of strikes and demonstrations exploded around the country that forced the government to open unconditional negotiations with the reemerging, and more powerful than ever, "Solidarity" workers' union led by Lech Walesa.

For the first time, the media were allowed to report more or less freely on the talks. According to Jakubowicz (1995), at that time the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) understood that it must develop a new model of propaganda, taking into account the irreversible development of a pluralistic ideological landscape.⁴³ Jakubowicz claimed that even though "changes on the political scene occurred first, changes in the media followed and spurred further changes on the political scene."⁴⁴

As a consequence, in the spring of 1989, a series of consultations were held between the government and the opposition that resulted in the first parliamentary national elections partially open for opposition parties. This historical meeting is known as the Round Table Agreements and it set the foundation for a new, democratic Poland.⁴⁵

During the Round Table talks, Solidarity demanded, among other things, legal liberalization of censorship, opposition group access to radio and television, and legalization of underground publications.⁴⁶

Elections were held in June 1989 and the Solidarity movement formed the first non-communist government, led by Walesa's political advisor, Tadeusz Mazowiecki. Walesa himself was elected President of Poland in December 1990.

Ironically, the speed with which the communist system collapsed once the process started, caught the new leaders unprepared in terms of media policy. This was a problem for media people in every country that faced the sudden breakdown of communism, even more than in Poland.

Therefore, some of the new policymaking in mass communications happened by default after the fall of communism. Jakubowicz (1995) observed that in the case of Poland the more

democratic new governments were reluctant to strictly regulate the media for fear of repeating the mistakes of the past. After dismantling the old system of controls, the new governments were unable and unwilling to develop any policy stance on what shape the press should take, and what rules should govern it.⁴⁷

Social and Economic Transformation

The political and economic changes in Poland have been well explored by a number of researchers. Connor and Ploszajski (1992) assembled in their book essays and reports written by several political experts. The essays are devoted to the different aspects of Poland's transformation such as economics, foreign trade, capital allocation, and systemic adjustment to a competitive market economy. The authors themselves concluded that "the polarized anti-Communist system / pro-Solidarity dichotomies of the 1980s were being replaced by the normal play of competitive party politics within the framework of a democratic polity, civil society and marked economy and a wider Europe."⁴⁸

Despite this polarization, many politicians and sociologists sought the so-called "Third Way," something that would include positive aspects from both capitalism and socialism to create a new, better order. As Edmund Mokrzycki (1992) argued, they did not succeed. Mokrzycki saw potential danger in that fact: "Social groups dispossessed by the post-1989 transformation would, given the impossibility of a Third Way, endeavor to reconstruct a 'new post-socialist popular utopia.'"⁴⁹ The next years showed clearly that this "utopia" did not happen.

Jack Bielasiak's study concluded that the political spectrum in post-communist Poland was relatively weak because of the lack of groups that would be able "to articulate clearly their interests and engage in bargaining over uncertain outcomes."⁵⁰ This issue was further explored by Andrzej Rycharz (1992), who examined the causes of the breakdown of the Solidarity

movement, and the erosion of its value system based on the worker-intelligentsia, anti-communist alliance.⁵¹

That was a prediction of what was to happen the next year. Similar to other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, after years of anti-communist government, the power in Poland was democratically transferred back to the ex-communists. The Solidarity governments had made mistakes in social reforms, so in the 1993 parliamentary elections most of the people voted for the leftist Social-Democratic Party.

Richard Staar (1993) tried to interpret this electoral victory as a reaction against the social cost of rapid transformation from a central- to a free-market economy. But he also noted that the left's victory was not a fundamental challenge to democracy. It was a more protectionist and a more socially-defined form of building democracy.⁵²

The initial fruits of the economic reforms dubbed "shock therapy," imposed by Solidarity-backed economist Leszek Balcerowicz, brought hardships to many Polish families. Robert Weiner wrote in 1994 that this reform "turned out to be very painful for society, since it mostly involved 'shock' and very little 'therapy.'"⁵³

This assessment proved later to be unjust, because Balcerowicz's reforms brought very positive effects in the long run.

A less critical point of view on the development of the situation in Poland was presented by George Weigel. He saw the post-communist victory as a natural consequence of democratization. He saw two main reasons why this happened: serious mistakes by the "Solidarity" governments (especially in social care policy) and tasteless disruption of the "Solidarity" conglomerate in which a great role played President Walesa who fueled internal fights between different factions. The destructive role of Walesa was explained in detail by Jaroslaw Kurski (1993) a journalist and in 1991-1992 Walesa's spokesperson.⁵⁴

All this brought about social insecurity and “fear of freedom,” especially among the elderly, the peasants, and laborers of heavy industries.⁵⁵ In spite of that Weigel was really impressed by the Polish achievements:

... But this is Poland, the test-bed of post-Communist economic “shock therapy,” that continues to amaze. Poland had the highest rate of growth in gross national product [5%] in Europe in 1993 -- not in Central Europe, but in Europe (and this despite the protectionism that prevents Polish goods from getting into West European markets).⁵⁶

Since then this growth has continued and has stabilized at 5% to 7% yearly. Estimates for the year 1997 predict 5.5% GDP growth.⁵⁷

The Polish Press After 1989

There are a number of studies devoted to the Polish media itself. Jerome Aumente, an American journalism professor who traveled around Poland consulting journalists only six months after the Round Table Talks, wrote in 1990:

Every segment of [Poland's] society is undergoing major economic transformations, and prime attention is focused on an entire restructuring of the mass media from once heavily subsidized, party-controlled and government-censored endeavors to free and independent print and electronic news media.⁵⁸

He also observed, that journalists, who were often accustomed to “interviewing on their knees” in the past, were plunging full force into investigative and enterprise reporting.⁵⁹

This phenomenon was also reported by Polish media researchers. Alina Slomkowska (1994) from the University of Warsaw described the main changes in the Polish media content as a topical jump from one extreme to another. She wrote:

Maybe as a kind of reaction against the times of the communist regime, there was a topical bent to the other extreme: pro-Soviet publications were substituted by anti-Soviet ones; instead of criticism of the German or American politics, there appeared uncritical articles glorifying the West. What was taboo so far, became a special interest for journalists: the activity of the security service, the Stalinist crimes, the presence of Russian troops in Poland. The political changes were also accompanied by the appearance of Catholic subject matter with a national tinge.⁶⁰

Three Phases of Media Transformation

The groundwork for the transformation of the Polish media was initiated in mid-1989 when the procedure for licensing newspapers was replaced by the simple system of registration. From this point on any individual or institution that wanted to start a newspaper merely needed to notify the authorities.⁶¹

Then other changes in media law followed. The most important pieces of legislation include the March 1990 law on dismantling RSW Prasa-Książka-Ruch, a huge publishing conglomerate controlled by the Communist Party; the April 1990 law abolishing censorship; amendments to the 1984 Press Law passed in 1989 and 1990; and the Telecommunications Law of 1990.⁶²

Summarizing five years of the Polish media transformation (1989-94), Ryszard Filas (1995) distinguished three main phases of change:

- I. Spontaneous and exerted changes -- May 1989 to mid-1991;
- II. Apparent stabilization and “subcutaneous” changes -- mid-1991 to end of 1992;
- III. Open battle for the market -- from the beginning of 1993 to August 1994.⁶³

Phase I : Spontaneous and exerted changes -- May 1989 to mid-1991. During this period, changes in media were associated with rapid changes of the political landscape in Poland. Two main factors of the press market development at that time were dismantling of the old media order and appearance and expansion of new newspapers.

By the late 1980s, RSW, government’s media conglomerate, controlled 87% of the total circulation of dailies and 76 percent of weeklies (the remaining press was also restrained by the authorities). In 1990 and 1991 this monopoly was broken, and some 150 print media were sold; among them the main newspapers, Trybuna, Rzeczpospolita, Sztandar Młodych, Express

Wieczorny were purchased by Polish or a combination of Polish and foreign buyers, and Zycie Warszawy was bought by an Italian.⁶⁴

The main problem with privatizing the media was the lack of private capital. The first democratic governments faced the question, how to sell the media to the people who do not have money to buy it. After 45 years of communism, very few people in Poland could afford to publish their own newspaper or to start up a private television or radio station. So, joint-stock companies prevailed in the structure of media ownership.

The underground press that flourished despite the totalitarian regime suddenly disappeared. What the communist authorities had not managed to do, the abolition of censorship had done. Maria Dunin-Wasowicz (1991) reported that paradoxically it was an expansion of free press that destroyed the underground press:

Of the 300 different "samizdat" magazines and newspapers, which in 1989 supported the Solidarity union and its challenge to capitalism, only a few, such as Solidarity Weekly, are still alive and kicking. The same problem also faces the church press: newspapers must contend with the lack of money among their customary readers. The circulation of most of the official newspapers, primarily the local ones, has shrunk dramatically.⁶⁵

Indeed, the first year after the political turnover was discouraging for some newly emerging media, and that despite the fact that Poles have historically been avid newspaper readers. James M. Cox (1993) reports statistical data that show in the early 1990s, the combined circulation of Poland's major daily newspapers was roughly eight million out of a population of 38 million. That means that one daily newspaper was sold for every 4.75 people. Cox compared this number with the United States where daily newspapers sell at a rate of 1 for each 7.5 persons.⁶⁶

In spite of that, media providers concluded that the Polish press market is not saturated yet, and launched a battle for readers. According to Liana Giorgi (1995), in the period between June 1990 and December 1992 there was an average of 100 new newspaper titles being

registered each month. In early 1993 the total number of registered newspapers and periodicals was 7,000.⁶⁷

Of these, many never hit the market and many others were short-lived ventures. Some of them, however, became popular, forcing old papers out of the market. Exceptionally impressive is the success of Gazeta Wyborcza, about which more will be presented later in this chapter.

Phase II. Apparent stabilization and “subcutaneous” changes -- mid-1991 to the end of 1992. During this period, the market started to show the first symptoms of stabilization. Old press titles that underwent privatization and modernization had begun to regain their positions. Some of them, however, continued to topple, such as Trybuna, and Gromada Rolnik-Polski, a newspaper for peasantry.

Many new titles emerged such as the dailies Nowy Swiat, Glob 24, Obserwator Codzienny, Dziennik Krajowy, and the economic newspaper Nowa Europa. Of these only the last survived until 1996. Due to financial problems in March 1997, it merged with another struggling newspaper, and to survive changed its name and layout.⁶⁸

Many scholars emphasize the economical difficulties the Polish press faced during this time. Mark Fitzgerald (1991) pointed out that publishers had to deal with a constant lack of money, increasing competition, and pressure of political parties.⁶⁹

This political influence could endanger media freedom in the initial stage of transformation. In an International Media Fund report cited by Debra Gersh (1991), authors Marks and Stone claimed that “virtually every important paper in Poland is controlled by political parties, the state, or the [Catholic] Church.” At the same time, they noted, “most Polish media reflect a broad and representative segment of responsible opinion, regardless of

ownership. Finally, they concluded that media in Poland was already “doing a better job than could have been predicted in 1989.”⁷⁰

Phase III. Open battle for the market -- from the beginning of 1993 to August 1994.

The third phase of the transformation, according to Filas, was crucial to the development of new broadcasting media. First, concessions were granted for private Polish radio and television stations that had begun to broadcast without licenses as early as 1989.

The print media evolved toward specialization in media coverage. The local markets were still rapidly expanding, but the situation of national dailies was stabilizing. Due to increased competition and impoverishment of a part of the society, most national newspapers lost some audiences. Some newspaper readers went over to color weekly and monthly magazines that were mostly sensational and light in content. Many weeklies were carbon copies of German and other foreign papers and targeted women.

The most important task to ensure a variety of media institutions was privatization, which for print media was almost completed, and in the case of electronic media was accelerated, during the second phase of media transformation. As Slavko Splihal (1994), media theorist from Slovenia remarked, privatization is always synonymous with media freedom.⁷¹

Splihal disregarded the usual dichotomy between the state and commercial sectors and stressed a third sector, which he sees as vital to media freedom -- civil society. It includes a wide range of religious, educational, cultural -- as well as journalism -- activities. Splihal prefers to describe the present situation as a merely a transition “from anti-capitalism to anti-socialism.”⁷²

Goban Klass (1994), stated that economic obstacles constitute a barrier to a free and independent press. “Printing and newsprint are extremely expensive in Poland, and their prices skyrocketed after the economic reform program in 1990. Because zloty [Polish currency] inflates rapidly, it is actually cheaper to print color magazines abroad, in Austria or Finland,” he wrote.⁷³

Another concern, frequently expressed by Polish politicians and media people is an invasion of foreign capital into the Polish media market. During a parliamentary debate on foreign take-overs of the Polish press in February 1995, it became apparent that according to 1994 data, foreign interests had a stake in 56 percent of all national publications and 50% of regional ones (representing in both cases about 70 percent of total print runs in either category).⁷⁴

Expansion of German capital is symptomatic, especially in western Poland, the region that belonged to Germany prior to 1945. A decided majority of local dailies and weeklies there, are, entirely or in great part, owned by German press syndicates. The most active are Bauer Verlag, Bertelsman and Springer. Each of them has color magazines, well established in Poland's national market.

However, the greatest press empire in Poland has been Robert Hersant's press concern, the publisher of French Le Figaro. It owns nine popular dailies throughout Poland, and it also has a 49 percent share of interest in the governmental daily Rzeczpospolita. According to Dr. Bajka (cited by Webb, 1994) of Jagiellonian University's Press Center (Cracow), Hersant's Socpresse Group alone controlled 20-25 percent of Polish daily papers in 1994. "What we know about the share of foreign capital in Polish media is surely just the tip of the iceberg," suggested Dr. Bajka.⁷³

American capital seems not to be interested in investing significant money in the Polish media market. One of the few, the Cox Company of Atlanta, has a 12 percent share of Gazeta Wyborcza.

Some of the beneficiaries of this transition were journalists themselves. Jerzy Baczynski, editor-in-chief of the Polish opinion weekly Polityka, cited by W.L. Webb (1994), said: "Journalists, for the first time, weren't just part of the relatively status privileged 'service intelligentsia' but now themselves belonged to the economic elite, and had the most practical of reasons to see and share its point of view."⁷⁶

Present State of the Polish Print Media

Today, the Polish press is completely different from what it was 10 years ago. More than half of the total number of print media in 1996 appeared after 1989.

One newspaper that has had great success is Gazeta Wyborcza [The Elections Paper]. This was the first newspaper permitted to publish independently of communist authorities. As a result of The Round Table Agreement, the newspaper appeared in May of 1989 to support the Solidarity candidates in the first free elections, quickly reaching a circulation of several hundred thousand copies, and with 20 local supplements. Today, "Gazeta" is both Poland's best-selling, and the most politically influential national daily. Weekday circulation is about 460,000 copies, and on weekends it reaches 700,000.⁷⁷

Another national daily, which is also doing a great business, is Super Express. This popular tabloid established in 1992, stresses the sensational and reaches less sophisticated readers. Part of its success is good marketing and brief, easy to read, non-political news. Super Express reached 400,000 copies of daily circulation and outnumbered all national newspapers, except for Gazeta Wyborcza.⁷⁸

Apart from these two, there is no other widely read newspaper that was established after 1989. Generally, dailies, with exception of the two mentioned above, have not done well. In 1980, the circulation of all newspapers in Poland was slightly above 10 million copies daily. The data for 1989 say about eight million copies were published everyday. By 1991, the total circulation fell to 5.1 million copies and since then has continued to fluctuate from four to five million copies per day.⁷⁹ This would suggest that readership has dropped, which is not a surprise, considering the huge competition dailies have faced from popular weeklies, and significant increases in newspaper prices.

Among losers are about 200 low-circulation papers tied to the Roman Catholic Church. Goban-Klass (1994), pointed out that "the religious segment of the press market does not exceed

3 to 4 percent of the total Polish press run and even this number is decreasing.”⁸⁰ It is hard to believe that these numbers are true for the country where 90% of people call themselves Roman Catholics. The crisis of the church press can be explained by the fact that after the failure of communism and abolition of censorship, the church publications were not the only oases of opposition views, as they used to be during the 1980s. Once combating the communist system, the editors of the religious publications were unable to adjust the papers to compete in the free market.

Any estimation concerning the number of Polish print media always carries a burden of some error. Liana Giorgi (1995) says that the instability of the Polish press is so great that close estimations are impossible. According to her, the total number of the press titles in the Polish market lies anywhere between 1,000 to 4,000 at different points of time.⁸¹

Jakubowicz (1996), cited a yearly catalogue of the Polish media that in 1994 estimated the total number of print media at 2,800, including 85 dailies. He also noted that every year some 600 new titles appeared in Poland, but many of them soon disappeared.⁸²

The catalogue for 1996 listed a total of 1829 print media. Of that number, 67 were dailies (including 21 nationwide dailies), 347 weeklies and biweeklies, 920 monthlies and bimonthlies. The remaining 474 were published irregularly.⁸³ The list was based on questionnaires sent by the catalogue’s editors to the media institutions.

Therefore, the authors noted, this catalog may be not complete. Moreover, due to the constant move in the market, the data (gathered before November of 1995) were already not accurate at the time of publication. Also, the catalog did not include many of sub-local press. Thus, more realistic number of the newspaper in Poland would be around 2500.

Table I compares the circulation of the most popular Polish national newspapers in 1992 and 1995.

TABLE I

CIRCULATION OF TOP POPULAR POLISH DAILY NEWSPAPERS IN 1992 AND 1995

Year 1992*		Year 1995**	
Title	Circulation	Title	Circulation
1. Gazeta Wyborcza	580,000	1. Gazeta Wyborcza	460,000
2. Rzeczpospolita	230,000	2. Super Ekspres	400,000
3. Zycie Warszawy	185,000	3. Sztandar Młodych	300,000
4. Express Wieczorny	120,000	4. Rzeczpospolita	275,000
5. Trybuna	125,000	5. Express Wieczorny	140,000
6. Sztandar Młodych	(n. a.)	6. Trybuna	120,000
7. Gromada-Rolnik Polski	(n. a.)	7. Zycie Warszawy	75,000

*Data from Liana Giorgi, *The Post-Socialist Media: What Power the West?* Brookfield: Avebury, 1995, p. 75.

**Data from *Prasa, Radio, Telewizja* [Press, Radio, Television]. Warsaw: Polska Agencja Informacyjna. Wydawnictwo Interpress. 1996.

Related Studies

There are several studies related to this one in terms of their general approach and methodology, but they did not concern a transition from communism to democracy. They deal mostly with press systems in Third World countries.

Essa Hassen Al-Tamimi (1995) examined the relationship between mass media and national development in the State of Qatar. His study investigated the current role of the mass media as an element of change and progress in that country. Based on the analysis of the questionnaires sent to Qatar media professionals, the author concluded that "while the country is still undergoing a transition into a dynamic modern state, it has also moved to establish a contemporary mass media."⁸⁴ The author points out many weaknesses of the Qatar media. Due to very different media system, method of gathering data, and overall differences in country development, the findings of this study cannot be compared with the results of the present

research, even if they deal with the same topic.

The change overtime in newspaper content was sought at by Xu Yu (1991). He investigated the role of the Shanghai-based World Economic Herald in the nation's political democratization, and analyzed its relationship with the nature of social change. To do so, the author used case study methodology with an emphasis on content analysis. Results suggested that the Herald throughout its 10-year existence, became more and more politically-oriented and outspoken in its coverage of key political issues. Escalating oppositionist views, the paper made a "suicidal move as an agent of political change in China," and it was forced by the communist government to shut down.⁸⁵ Obviously, unlike the situation in Poland, there was not enough support in the society for opposition views, and the Herald did not receive support from other media institutions in promoting democratization in China.

Similar to the present study, the relationship between social and political changes and changes in the media content, was investigated by Diingbao Jung (1991). Using critical and structural analysis, he explored how political-economic and cultural forces interacted with Taiwan's mass communication. The study showed that Taiwan's media system, policy, and practice, as well as the roles media play in the society, have been greatly affected by these forces. The author concluded that because of the restrictions of freedom of the press and media's operation, major media content has reflected the values and ideologies of the status quo.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, in the light of socioeconomic advancement, he found over time signs of media reforms parallel to society's ongoing structural change and democratization.

Another study related to the present research, and similar in the method of analysis was done by American scholars Charles Mayo and Yorgo Pasadeos (1991). The authors analyzed content of Business Week, Forbes, and Fortune from three time periods, 1964-68, 1974-1978, and 1984-1988, looking for stories devoted to international news. The authors found that there were more stories in the later than earlier periods, but the stories were shorter so the amount of

total space devoted to international stories remained constant.⁸⁷ Half of the international stories mentioned a U.S. connection. The findings indicated an increase in coverage of Japan, mostly at the expense of Western Europe.

The following are three studies worth mentioning done at the Oklahoma State University that are indirectly related to this research.

Tahir Javed Malik (1991), compared the content of two Pakistani dailies' coverage of 1978 and 1989. He found that both Musraq and Nawa-i-Wagt newspapers significantly differed in their coverage of government-related news under Zia's military rule (1978), compared with coverage under the Bhutto regime (1989). The author found that under Bhutto democratic regime the newspapers were more critical of the government compared to Zia's dictatorship.

Consequently, under Zia's rule the papers published more favorable and neutral stories about the government. This led the author to the logical conclusion that the Pakistani press was freer to criticize the government under democratic rule.⁸⁸

In 1989, a comparative analysis of mass versus quality newspapers in Thailand was conducted. Its author, Chintana Chavavivattanachai, compared the content of two newspapers in 1976 with their content in 1989. The results of this study showed that there were at least two types of newspapers in Thailand, one that provided hard news, and one that provided soft news. The author found that the distribution of news had changed over time and this change could be associated with change in the governmental system, that also occurred during that period of time. Mass newspapers in 1989 compared to 1976 contained more hard news, and quality newspapers contained more human interest items.⁸⁹

Similar to the present study, but focused on a completely different press market, was a research study by Pu Chih Hsieh (1992). He compared the content of two Taiwanese newspapers before and after the political reforms of 1987-1988. Before the reforms, the Taiwanese press operated under martial law, and was mainly survival-, and ideology-motivated. The change in

media content was observed after the lifting of martial law and the press "ban." There were more political stories, and stories on Taiwan-China relations published after the reforms. The author observed also that after the press "ban" was lifted, the number of negative stories as well as neutral stories about the government increased. Hsieh concluded that after the reforms the Taiwanese press moved closer to the Western press model.⁹⁰

Evaluation

Searching for related literature, the author of the present study not only did not encounter any comparative content analysis of Polish newspapers, but he also did not find any similar study of the press from other former communist countries. Although a number of studies were devoted to the social and political implications of the Poland's transition, only a few attempted to investigate the change in newspaper content.

The studies most similar to the present one were by Goban-Klass, Filas, Slomkowska, Giorgi, and Jakubowicz. All these studies found significant changes in media content. Unlike the present study, these studies were qualitative descriptions of the topical switch in the content of the press and were not supported by any statistical analysis. Not one of them examined the content change of particular newspapers; instead they attempted to describe media content change in general.

This led to the conclusion that a large gap in Poland's mass communication research exists, especially regarding the works on press content. Thus, there is a need for a quantitative comparative content analysis of the Polish newspapers.

This study undertakes the challenge, and provides a look into this unexplored area. The author of the present study examined content change of three nationwide opinion newspapers that played first-rate roles in Poland's transition from communism to democracy.

ENDNOTES

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⁹McQuail,128.

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¹²R. Hutchins, Commission on Freedom of the Press. A Free Responsible Press (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947): 28.

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¹⁵Jane Leftwich Curry, Poland's Journalists Professionalism and Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 241.

¹⁶McQuail, 128.

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²⁹Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw. "The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press," Public Opinion Quarterly, No. 36, (1972): 177.

³⁰Ibid, 176.

³¹Chcemy do NATO [We Want to Join NATO], Zycie Warszawy, (Warsaw) 12 March 1997, p.1.

³²Berger, 64.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid, 65.

³⁵Oven V. Johnson in Global Journalism. A Survey of International Communication edited by John C. Merrill (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1995): 160.

³⁶Liana Giorgi, The Post-Socialist Media: What Power the West? (Brookfield: Avebury, 1995): 75.

³⁷Curry, 33.

³⁸Johnson, 157.

³⁹Curry, 32.

⁴⁰Ibid, 33.

⁴¹Jakubowicz, 133.

⁴²Ibid, 134. The Pisarek's study did not include underground periodicals and was conducted before Solidarity newspapers began to appear openly.

⁴³Ibid, 34.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵For more information about the political implications of the so-called Round Table Agreements see Tomasz Goban-Klass, The Orchestration of the Media, p. 206-207.

⁴⁶Ibid, p. 208.

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⁵⁷"Dalszy Wzrost" [Still Growing], Zycie Warszawy (13 January 1997), p. 3.

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⁶⁶James M. Cox, Revolutions for Freedom: The Mass Media in Eastern and Central Europe (Athens, GA: Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1993): 89.

⁶⁷Liana Giorgi, p. 89

⁶⁸"Nowa Nowa Europa" [New New Europe], Zycie Warszawy (12 March 1997), p. 8.

⁶⁹Mark Fitzgerald, "Walesa and the Polish Press," Editor & Publisher, Vol 124 No 25 (22 June 1991): 29.

⁷⁰Debra Gersh, "The Press in Eastern and Central Europe," Editor & Publisher, Vol 124 No 36 (7 September 1991): 31.

⁷¹Slavko Splihal, Media Beyond Socialism. Theory and Practice in East-Central Europe (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1994): 39.

⁷²*Ibid*

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⁷⁴Karol Jakubowicz, The Media in Poland, a report for the Institute of Journalism, (Warsaw University, 1996): 4

⁷⁵W.L. Webb, "Media, Market, and Democracy," Index of Censorship, Vol 23, No 6 (November-December 1994): 86.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

General

This chapter explains the methods used to gather data, and the goals of the researcher. First, the purpose of the study is discussed. Then the research method used to gather data is discussed. Next are the research questions, hypotheses, and research objectives. Sampling procedures, unit of analysis, and categories of analysis are discussed. The chapter concludes with the sample newspapers' profiles.

Purpose of the Study

The present study is an attempt to describe a unique change in media structure and character that occurred in Poland after the collapse of communism. In particular, it examined the relationship between social and political change in Poland and the change in newspaper content.

Research Approach

Since the study examines change in media content, the most appropriate communication research technique is content analysis. Many definitions of content analysis exist in the literature, but the first and one of the most useful definitions was issued in 1952 by Berelson:

Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.¹

And according to George V. Zito (1975):

Content analysis may be defined as a methodology by which the researcher seeks to determine the manifest content of written, spoken, or published communication by systematic, objective, and quantitative analysis.²

In recent years there has been a tendency to drop the word “manifest” from the definitions of content analysis. Scholars write that analysis must not be limited to the surface meaning of the text (*manifest* content), but may be also used to investigate deeper “layers” of meanings embedded in the analyzed text. This is particularly true for the present study, where after assigning stories to different categories, the author also analyzed bias in political news (see Chapter IV). The search for stories either “favorable” or “unfavorable” to the government may be called in this context “investigating a second layer of meaning.”

This approach was adopted by Holsti (1969) who formulated a broad definition of content analysis:

Content analysis is any technique for making inference by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.³

A more practical explanation of content analysis was presented by Kerlinger (1986). His definition is as simple as this:

Content analysis is a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.⁴

Putting this last definition simply, we may say that *content analysis is a systematic and objective method of asking questions in such a way as to produce countable (quantitative) results*. This is the working definition of content analysis adopted for the present study.

The majority of the cited definitions stress concepts that content analysis must be systematic, objective, and quantitative. All three concepts are reflected in this study. The content analysis conducted here is *systematic*, because the study uses explicit and consistently applied rules, as in regard to sample selection, coding procedures, and data analysis. The evaluation process is also systematic: all content of all analyzed newspapers receive the same consideration.

The researcher always attempts to be *objective*. The author of this study is not free from personal idiosyncrasies and biases, but they do not enter into the findings. Classification of variables, specification of sample, content categories, and unit of analysis have clearly stated criteria that eliminate an area of any bias. It has to be noted, however, that “content analysis does not ensure absolute objectivity, though relatively it is far more objective than impressionistic approaches.”⁵

The present study is *quantitative*, which means that it brings precise results represented in a form of definite numbers. All body messages (articles) from the analyzed sample are accurately represented in the study. Frequency count allows the researcher to compare data from one time period with another. With some precautions the results might be summarized, and generalized to draw broader conclusions.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

A research problem addressed in this study can be summarized in a single question: Is a change in the print media content related to the political and social changes that occurred in Poland over the last 10 years? From this broad approach, more specific research questions can be formulated.

1. What type of content was characteristic of the main Polish newspapers during the communist era in Poland?
2. How did the content of the main Polish newspapers change after the democratic “Solidarity” movement came to power?
3. What is the characteristic of the main Polish newspapers after a decade of intensive changes?
4. What approach toward the governments’ actions and performance did the newspapers take while reporting political-related news in different periods of time?

Two null hypotheses are needed to sufficiently answer the research questions:

H1: There is no real difference in content among the three newspapers based on any combination of newspaper type and time frame.

H2: There is no real difference in political bias toward the governments' actions and performances among the three newspapers based on any combination of newspaper type and time frame.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study was to prove or deny that the changes of the social and political situation in Poland over the last decade were reflected in the press content. On the other hand, an analysis of newspaper content in different periods of time should provide results that would contribute to better understanding of the Polish transition.

An important element of this study is analysis of the direction of political news towards the government. Domestic political news is the most sensitive part of newspaper coverage. Therefore, its analysis should yield valuable results.

The present study should provide an in-depth look into the Polish transition as viewed through the press coverage. Change of newspaper content in particular, and changes of the press system in general, should also tell the researcher about the condition of the country itself. Interpretations of the findings based on various press theories should yield a consistent picture of the Polish transition from communism towards democracy.

Sampling Plan

As Holsti (1969) stated, content analysis may be helpful when there are technical disadvantages such as huge data volume, that make the research population impossible to study as a whole. One solution is to analyze only a carefully selected random sample. Findings from the sample of documents selected for the study can then be extended to describe the larger universe from which the sample was selected.⁶

Sample Universe

The present study deals with issues of three newspapers: Trybuna Ludu, Zycie Warszawy, and Gazeta Wyborcza over three one-year periods (with the exception of Gazeta Wyborcza: two one-year periods). These newspapers were chosen because they were and still are the most influential and opinionated print media in Poland. They were selected also because each of them represents different characteristics and different political opinions. Due to their dissimilar character, weekend editions were excluded from the total population of newspaper issues.

The total universe of the newspapers for analysis included:

$$U = (8 \times 365) - (8 \times 104) = 2088 \text{ daily issues.}$$

where:

U = sample universe or population

8 = number of total one-year periods for all three analyzed newspapers.

365 = number of days during a one-year period.

104 = number of weekend days during a one-year period.

Sample Frame

It would be impossible and even unnecessary to analyze all 2088 issues of the three newspapers. Instead, one can pick randomly a sample of 48 issues, that is six issues of each of the three newspapers from every one-year period of time. Issues of Trybuna Ludu (after 1990 Trybuna), Zycie Warszawy, and Gazeta Wyborcza (exist since 1989) were selected from the following time frames:

- Year 1986 (before the changes) -- Communist rule

Samples from Trybuna Ludu and Zycie Warszawy (six issues of each) selected by randomly picking one day from each of the following months: January, March, May, July, September, November.

- Year 1991 (after the main turnover) -- Democratic rule by Solidarity movement

Samples from Trybuna, Zycie Warszawy, and Gazeta Wyborcza (six issues of each) selected by randomly picking one day from each of the following months: January, March, May, July, September, November.

- Year 1996 (well established democracy) -- Democratic rule by post-communists (leftists)

Samples from Trybuna, Zycie Warszawy, and Gazeta Wyborcza (six issues of each) selected by randomly picking one day from each of the following months: January, March, May, July, September, November.

Exact dates of issues picked for analysis were determined using a table of random numbers. Due to their very nature, Saturdays and Sundays were excluded, because weekend newspapers have different content than do weekday newspapers. Inclusion of weekend editions would only obscure the outcome of the study since the author was interested in looking at every

day news coverage. After drawing the numbers, the author came up with the following issues of the three newspapers:

TABLE II
RANDOMLY SELECTED SAMPLE

Year 1986	Year 1991	Year 1996
January 24, Friday	January 9, Wednesday	January 15, Monday
March 8, Thursday	March 20, Wednesday	March 4, Monday
May 9, Friday	May 14, Tuesday	May 22, Wednesday
July 3, Thursday	July 8, Monday	July 23, Tuesday
September 23, Tuesday	September 25, Wednesday	September 3, Tuesday
November 26, Wednesday	November 11, Friday	November 7, Thursday

The rationale for this sample size comes from Guido Stemple's study conducted in 1952. The results of his study on content analysis of newspapers indicate that a sample size of five does an adequate job and that increasing the sample size beyond 12 does not produce significant differences in the results.⁷ Choosing six issues of each newspaper, from each analyzed year, allowed the researcher to have the sample issues come from every second month of the year. That ensured the adequate distribution of the sample issues within each one-year period.

Time Frame

The issues from randomly selected days of every second month of 1986, 1991, and 1996 were chosen as a sample for analysis because all three periods of times were of relative social and political stability in Poland. There were no dramatic turnovers during those years that would

influence the outcome of the analysis. There was, however, an essential difference in the political and social situation in Poland among those time frames.

In 1986, Communism seemed to be strong and irreversible. The Communist Party controlled virtually all media and restricted them by censoring their content prior to publication. Year 1991 was a time of rapid democratization, and social and political changes under a democratic government rooted in the “Solidarity” movement. The censorship had been abolished in the spring of 1990, and media institutions were experiencing rapid growth and increased competition. Many new publications were short-lived owing to the meager resources of their publishers as well as limited reader interest in a purely political press.⁸

Finally, 1996 was a time when the power in the country was back in the hands of post-communists, who now were devoted to democracy and a free market economy. The mass communication market stabilized. Many media institutions, after initial prosperity, were wiped out of the market. Others had grown stronger, achieving a solid position in the Polish market. Economically the country was growing with one of the fastest rates in Europe, and as a consequence was admitted to OECD, an organization that consists of the 28 richest countries in the world.⁹

Unit of Analysis

The smallest element of content analysis is the unit of analysis. This is an item that is actually counted for analysis. In written content, the unit of analysis might be a single word or symbol, a theme or an entire article or story.¹⁰ The last is most suitable for the purposes of the present study.

Therefore, the unit of analysis in this research was a single article (text with headline) or photograph with caption, when the photo does not accompany an article. An article consisting of

several subheadlines that contained different stories was counted as several different items. On the other hand, when the subheadlines referred to the same issue, the whole article was counted as one.

The researcher did not consider the length of articles. That means that each article, regardless of its length, is counted as one. As a consequence, the frequency count could not be extrapolated to determine the share of newspaper space devoted to any particular category of articles.

Due to their different character, display advertisements and classified advertisements were not counted. The percentage of the space they occupy in entire issue of a particular newspaper was measured. The proportions of advertisements in each newspaper were compared.

Content Categories

To be useful, all category systems should be *mutually exclusive*, *exhaustive*, and *reliable*.¹¹ A category system is *mutually exclusive* if an unit of analysis can be placed in one and only one category. The sense of *exhaustivity* is that all sample units must fit into one category or another. The categorization system should also be *reliable*; that is, different coders should agree in the great majority of instances about the proper category for each unit of analysis. The agreement is usually quantified in content analysis and is called *intercoder reliability* (see Chapter IV).

The researcher pretested several issues of Trybuna Ludu of 1986, and Gazeta Wyborcza of 1996, to identify content categories. The very character of the Polish press was taken into account when the categories were drawn. The author came up with the following content categories:

1) Domestic Politics / Government / Military

This category includes news stories on internal Polish politics. The stories that fall into this category consist of news about the activities, decisions, proposals, and ceremonies of the parliament, central and local governments, political parties, politicians and public officials. It also includes information concerning internal conflicts or crisis, such as strikes, street demonstrations, etc.; elections, political campaigns, government changes, legislation, and diplomacy. In this category there are also domestic stories and photographs related to military organizations, war threats, arms deals, weapons, or military activities.

2) Domestic Non-Politics

This category includes all other news from around the country that is not related to politics, and does not fall into any other category. This category is suitable for information about crimes and disasters, metropolitan news, public service (transportation, sanitation and garbage removal, water and food supplies), community matters, and social problems.

3) International News from Communist (1986) and Former Communist (1991, 1996) Countries (the East).

This category contains all news except for sports news originated in or connected with foreign countries that before 1990 belonged to the Soviet Bloc or remained in the Soviet sphere of political domination. This list includes countries: Albania, Bulgaria, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Mongolia, North Korea, Romania, the former Soviet Union, and the former Yugoslavia. Every item of information -- regardless of its type -- coming from these countries was counted under this category. Also the reports about foreign visits of Polish politicians were included here, as well as international analyses produced by journalists in Poland. If a story was about Polish-foreign relations it was also counted as international.

4) International News from Other Countries (the West)

All news or pictures from foreign countries not listed in the third category above were included here. The rules for previous category apply to this category as well.

5) Features

This category includes stories that are not pure news but in-depth reports featuring events or existing phenomena concerning social life in Poland. This category is easily distinguishable in Polish newspapers as Publicystyka [Publicism] or Reportaz [Reportage] and does not exactly match American sense of "Features." They are better match with the character of Western European feature reporting.

6) Opinions / Editorials / Commentary

Any item reflecting personal opinion of the author or authors, such as editorials, commentary, and polemics were tabulated as opinions. They might concern any possible issue of political, economic, social, or cultural life.

7) Economics

This category covered all the stories dealing with business, economic development, investment, planning, finance, trade, tariffs and taxes, industry, agriculture, cost of living, industrial labor relations, banking, inflation, wages, and monetary matters.

8) Science and Education

Information on scientific discoveries, improvements, and inventions fall into this category, as well as pictures and stories about education policies, students, teachers, school administration, and educational system in general. Also included is information about health and fitness, healthcare providers, medicines and cures, and cosmetics.

9) Culture and Entertainment

This category includes stories or pictures concerning secular customs and traditions, cultural events, such as concerts, exhibitions, theater performances, movies, radio and television programs, novels, fiction, cartoons, talkshows, etc.

10) Religion / Ethics

All information on religion, church celebrations, customs, and traditions, as well as the moral and ethical side of human nature were counted in this category.

11) Sports

Stories and photos about sporting events, regardless of whether they occurred at home or abroad fall into this category.

12) Letters to the Editor

This category is similar to "Opinions" with the exception that the author of a published letter, commentary, or opinion is a guest writer and is not a part of the staff of the newspaper that published his or her opinion. Most frequently this category would contain letters from the readers, but also articles by politicians in the form of letters.

13) Briefs

All one-paragraph news items that were provided under the same headline, but that concerned different issues, were treated as briefs. The briefs could appear as domestic, international, cultural, or sports news, but were not included in those categories because of their mutable character.

14) Advertisements and Announcements.

This was the only category in which items were not counted. Instead, their share of total space of the newspapers was measured and given in the form of percentages. In this category were advertisements and classifieds promoting products or services, and announcements of upcoming activities for any organization or for business purposes. Also, obituaries fall into this category.

Overlapping areas, especially between domestic politics, economy, opinions, and features might exist, because in one way or another the government could be involved in the stories about different matters. Features, for example, may deal with any possible topic that normally falls into a different category. What makes feature stories different is their form of in-depth analysis. Also it has to be noted that, especially in the case of 1986 newspapers, opinion was not always clearly separated from the news. Furthermore, in almost every story, ideological or political involvement was common.

When in doubt, the coders had to consider prominence and the main actor of the story. According to Stevenson and Shaw (1984), main actors are subjects of the story. They can be individuals, groups or other entities doing things or affected by events and they must be essential to the story in a sense that if the “actor” were omitted, the substance of the story would change.¹²

Coding

No other people were involved in the content categories' coding except for the author and his wife Joanna due to the lack of persons in the Stillwater area who could understand Polish. Every article from all 48 randomly picked issues of the three newspapers was coded according to the 14 primary categories. In addition, items that fell into the first category (domestic politics / government / military) were coded one more time for the direction of the article: positive, negative, or neutral. Coders were looking for specific evaluative references to the government. Stories in the first category were coded as favorable when they showed a positive image of the government, such as its efforts to help Gdansk shipyard with financial guarantees. Stories that negatively pictured governmental performance, such as accusing it of suppressing the independence of the television coverage of “Solidarity” protests were tabulated as unfavorable. When there was doubt about whether an item was favorable or unfavorable

toward government, or where both sides' arguments were presented equally without any visible bias, the story was classified as neutral.

Statistical Analysis

The randomly selected issues of the newspapers were analyzed, and all news stories they contained were counted and assigned to different news categories. The news categories were coded and then compared by using complex chi-square. The changes in content were compared among combinations of time period, newspaper, and category. If the difference found was within the "critical value," that means that the difference was genuine and not due to chance. The character of the differences/relationships was then examined using the contingency coefficient and coefficient of determination, where appropriate.

Variables

There were three primary independent variables in this study: newspaper, time period, and news content category. The dependent variable was the number of stories counted.

The paradigm for the study looks as follows:

		Content Categories													
Time frame		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Newspaper 1	1986														
	1991														
	1996														
Newspaper 2	1986														
	1991														
	1996														
Newspaper 3	1986														
	1991														
	1996														

Cells contain frequency count of articles

Figure 2. The overall paradigm for distribution of newspaper content

The researcher also looked at politics/government stories to see how many were favorable and unfavorable to the government and to the political system (whether it was communism or democracy). A story was counted as favorable if there were at least several words in it that would associate the government's action with a positive meaning. Unfavorable stories would take a negative stand against what the government was doing. When there was no evidence to decide whether a particular story was favorable or unfavorable to the government it was classified as neutral. The paradigm for this part of analysis is as follows:

		Domestic Politics / Government / Military		
	Time frame	Favorable Stories	Neutral Stories	Unfavorable Stories
Newspaper 1	1986			
	1991			
	1996			
Newspaper 2	1986			
	1991			
	1996			
Newspaper 3	1986			
	1991			
	1996			

Cells contain frequency count of articles

Figure 3. The overall paradigm for direction of political news

Newspaper Profiles

Trybuna Ludu [The People's Tribune] was the newspaper of the Communist Party apparatus, that before 1989 had a circulation of nearly 2 million copies. After the collapse of communism, the paper lost readers and nearly went bankrupt. To survive, it has changed its name, dropping the word that symbolized its communist ties. After that, it has been closely tied to the Social Democratic Party that arose from the remains of the Communist Party. After its political mentor came back to power in 1993, the newspaper gained more left-oriented readers and improved its position in the market. Competitive newspapers claim that Trybuna is biased. Now it is privately owned by Polish businessmen. In 1996 its daily circulation was about 120,000 copies.¹³

Established in 1994, Zycie Warszawy [The Life of Warsaw] is the oldest of the existing daily newspapers in Poland. It was considered more open-minded and objective than Trybuna, even during the communist era. After the political changes occurred, it tried to be neutral. In 1991, the paper became the property of a newly established company of Sociate Televisiana Italiana, some Polish Companies, and Varsovia Press -- whose shareholders were Zycie Warszawy's editor-in-chief and 45 staff journalists.¹⁴ In fact the majority share (90%) belonged to a foreign (Italian) entrepreneur who in 1995 went in conflict with the journalist staff, and soon sold the newspaper. This conflict caused a significant drop in circulation of the paper. Data for the year 1996 indicate about 75,000 copies of Zycie were sold on weekdays.¹⁵ There was evidence, however, that by the mid-1996 this number fell below 50,000 copies. This could explain why the paper lost half of its advertisers. Now it is owned by Polish private capital, politically affiliated with the post-communists.

Gazeta Wyborcza [The Elections' Gazette] emerged in 1989 to help "Solidarity" win the first democratic elections. The newspaper quickly acquired readers by riding on the country's anti-communism enthusiasm during the first months of the Polish revolution. By 1991 Wyborcza was already in disagreement with the "Solidarity" movement, and was trying to take a more centrist stand. Today, this is the largest Polish newspaper (not counting popular yellow press papers) with circulation roughly around half a million copies and a huge advertisement section. The Polish press catalogue in 1996 listed Gazeta in first place among the national dailies with a daily circulation of 460,000 copies.¹⁶

Today, Gazeta is in opposition to the post-communist government, but also it stands against the radical right movement associated with the Catholic Church and rooted in "Solidarity." It is considered objective and ethical in its journalistic conduct. Its political enemies claim, however, that it is biased on certain issues. It has Polish private ownership and Cox Company of Atlanta holds 12% of shares.

ENDNOTES

¹B.R. Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research (Free Press, 1952):18.

²G.V. Zito, Methodology and Meaning: Varieties of Sociological Inquiry (New York: Praeger, 1975): 27.

³Ole R. Holsti, Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities (Reading, MA; London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969): 14.

⁴F.N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1986).

⁵Thomas, F. Carney, Content Analysis. A Technique for Systematic Inference from Communications (Winnipeg, Canada: University of Manitoba Press, 1972): 15.

⁶Holsti, 17-18.

⁷Guido H. Stemple, "Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies." Journalism Quarterly No. 29 (1952), pp. 333-334.

⁸Karol Jakubowicz, The Media in Poland (Warsaw: Institute of Journalism, 1996): 2.

⁹Roger Evans, "The New European Tiger?" The Wall Street Journal (16 October 1996): A10

¹⁰Roger D. Wimmer and Joseph R. Dominick, Mass Media Research. An Introduction (Belmont, CA. Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994): 170.

¹¹Ibid, p. 171.

¹²Robert L. Stevenson and Donald Lewis Shaw. Foreign News and the New World Information Order (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1984).

¹³Prasa, Radio, Telewizja [Press, Radio, Television] (Warsaw: Polska Agencja Informacyjna. Wydawnictwo Interpress, 1996).

¹⁴Tomasz Goban-Klas, The Orchestration of the Media. The Politics of Mass Communications in Communist Poland and the Aftermath (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994): 222.

¹⁵Prasa, Radio, Telewizja, 18.

¹⁶Ibid, 8.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Intercoder Reliability

If the research is to satisfy the requirement of objectivity, measures and procedures must be reliable; i. e., repeated measure with the same instrument on a given sample of data should yield similar results.¹

Holsti's intercoder reliability test was administered to the two coders with the following results.

TABLE III
COEFFICIENTS OF INTER-CODER RELIABILITY

Newspaper Content	Coder 1 vs Coder 2
Trybuna Ludu / Trybuna	0.90
Zycie Warszawy	0.92
Gazeta Wyborcza	0.96
Direction of Stories	Coder 1 vs Coder 2
Trybuna Ludu / Trybuna	0.84
Zycie Warszawy	0.90
Gazeta Wyborcza	0.94

Reliability coefficients are on a 0.0 to 1.0 scale where 1.0 is complete agreement. Coefficients of 0.85 and above are sought.

In this study, the only questionable coefficient is the 0.84 for direction of stories in Trybuna Ludu / Trybuna. This may be due to the newspaper mixing news with commentary (frequent in 1986), and the use of nuances instead of clearly positive or negative words to describe the government's performance (mainly in 1991 and 1996). In the absence of clearly positive or negative words, interpretations by coders can differ.

Overall, the correlations, ranging from 0.84 to 0.96, are high enough to ensure that the differences in decisions are not major enough to affect the conclusions.

Findings

During the coding process a total of 4618 items were recorded. Of this number 1762 was published by Trybuna Ludu / Trybuna, 1683 by Zycie Warszawy, and 1173 by Gazeta Wyborcza. Table IV shows the distribution of items.

TABLE IV
DISTRIBUTION OF CODED ITEMS

Newspaper	Year			Total
	1986	1991	1996	
Trybuna Ludu / Trybuna	559	643	560	1762
Zycie Warszawy	543	542	598	1683
Gazeta Wyborcza	---	512	661	1173
Total	1102	1697	1819	4618

For this research, the level of significance was set at the 0.05 level for two-tail tests. The following tables, VI - XX, show the frequency count and the percentages of the content distribution and direction of political stories for Trybuna Ludu / Trybuna, Zycie Warszawy, and Gazeta Wyborcza in 1986, 1991, and 1996.

Year 1986 -- Distribution of All Items

Table V presents frequency count and percentage of items assigned to each of 14 categories as a result of analyzing content of Trybuna Ludu in 1986.

TABLE V
1986 TRYBUNA LUDU'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN
14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Number of Items	Percentage
1. Domestic Politics, Government, Military	139	24.87
2. Domestic Non-Politics	66	11.80
3. International News from the East	60	10.73
4. International News from the West	60	11.80
5. Features	9	1.61
6. Opinions, Editorials, Commentary	15	2.68
7. Economics	15	2.68
8. Science and Education	8	1.43
9. Culture and Entertainment	28	5.01
10. Religion and Ethics	1	0.18
11. Sports	57	10.20
12. Letters to the Editor	18	3.22
13. Briefs	77	13.77
Total	559	100.04
14. Advertisements and Announcements	---	1.5

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
- Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

In 1986, domestic political news was by far the main content of Trybuna Ludu. One fourth of the total number of articles belonged to this category. Domestic non-political news, international news from communist countries and from other countries, and sports all were almost equally exposed in the paper, with the proportion slightly above 10% for each. The proportion of briefs was also high : 13.77% of the total number of stories.

The least interest shown by the newspaper's editors was in religion (one story or 0.18%), science and education (8 stories or 1.43%) and features (9 stories or 1.61%). Advertisements, except for obituaries, almost did not exist in Trybuna Ludu at that time.

Table that follows brings the same type of data for Zycie Warszawy.

TABLE VI
1986 ZYCIE WARSZAWY'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN
14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Number of Items	Percentage
1. Domestic Politics, Government, Military	49	9.02
2. Domestic Non-Politics	120	22.10
3. International News from the East	24	4.42
4. International News from the West	64	11.79
5. Features	9	1.67
6. Opinions, Editorials, Commentary	19	3.50
7. Economics	16	2.95
8. Science and Education	18	3.31
9. Culture and Entertainment	63	11.60
10. Religion and Ethics	2	0.37
11. Sports	39	7.18
12. Letters to the Editor	18	3.31
13. Briefs	105	19.04
Total	543	100.26
14. Advertisements and Announcements	---	43.7

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
- Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

In 1986 Zycie Warszawy was focusing primarily on domestic non-political news (22.1% -- mainly city news), international news from the West (11.79), and culture and entertainment (11.60%). Briefs were published frequently and made nearly one-fifth of the total number of stories. The advertisements covered almost half of the newspaper space. The least frequently

published stories concerned religion, features, science and education, and letters from the readers.

Table VII shows comparison of both newspapers' content in 1986.

TABLE VII
COMPARATIVE CONTENT DISTRIBUTION FOR TRYBUNA LUDU
AND ZYCIE WARSZAWY IN 1986

Content Categories	Trybuna Ludu	Zycie Warszawy
1. Domestic Politics, Government, Military	24.87%	9.02*
2. Domestic Non-Politics	11.80	22.10*
3. International News from the East	10.73	4.42*
4. International News from the West	11.80	11.79
5. Features	1.61	1.67
6. Opinions, Editorials, Commentary	2.68	3.50
7. Economics	2.68	2.95
8. Science and Education	1.43	3.37*
9. Culture and Entertainment	5.01	11.60*
10. Religion and Ethics	0.18	0.31
11. Sports	10.20	7.18*
12. Letters to the Editor	3.22	3.31
13. Briefs	13.77	19.04*
Total	100.04	100.26
14. Advertisements and Announcements	1.5%	43.7%*

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
- Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

Since the study deals with the frequency count, complex chi-square analysis will examine the relationship between newspaper and content categories.

Complex chi-square for the two newspapers in 1986 is $\chi^2 = 112.65$. Chi-square distribution table for probability $p < 0.05$ and degree of freedom $df = 13$ shows the figure = 22.362.

Since $22.362 < 112.65$, that there was a significant difference in content distribution in 1986 newspaper issues between Trybuna Ludu and Zycie Warszawy.

To find out where the difference occurred, a series of simple chi-squares were calculated within each category. The asterisks in Table VIII show where the differences were genuine.

Year 1986 -- Direction of Political News

Items from the category of "domestic politics, government, military" were analyzed here. The coders were looking for the direction of a particular story, i. e., was it favorable, neutral, or unfavorable toward government? The following table shows how the political stories of 1986 fit into these categories.

TABLE VIII

DIRECTION OF POLITICAL NEWS FOR TRYBUNA LUDU, ZYCIE WARSZAWY,
AND GAZETA WYBORCZA IN 1986

Direction Towards Government	Trybuna Ludu		Zycie Warszawy	
	Items	%	Items	%
Favorable	131	94.24	23	46.94 *
Neutral	8	5.76	26	53.06 *
Unfavorable	0	0	0	0
Total	139	100	49	100

The calculation of chi-square of the direction of political news in 1986 brought the result $\chi = 94.15$. Table of the chi-square distribution for $df = 2$, and $p < 0.05$ provides the number 5.991.

Since $5.991 < 94.15$, we are able to conclude that there was a significant difference in the direction of political stories in 1986 between Trybuna Ludu and Zycie Warszawy. The asterisks indicate where the difference was found.

In short, we can say that as many as 94% of political stories published by Trybuna Ludu were favorable toward the government. Zycie Warszawy produced almost as many favorable, as neutral stories. Neither newspaper, however, published a single unfavorable story.

Year 1991 -- Distribution of All Items

The data for the year 1991 gathered from all three newspapers are reported here. To begin with, the content distribution for Trybuna is shown in the following table.

TABLE IX
1991 TRYBUNA'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN
14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Number of Items	Percentage
1. Domestic Politics, Government, Military	68	10.58
2. Domestic Non-Politics	73	11.35
3. International News from the East	44	6.84
4. International News from the West	68	10.58
5. Features	2	0.31
6. Opinions, Editorials, Commentary	30	4.61
7. Economics	26	4.04
8. Science and Education	3	0.47
9. Culture and Entertainment	47	7.31
10. Religion and Ethics	1	0.16
11. Sports	64	9.95
12. Letters to the Editor	32	4.98
13. Briefs	185	28.77
Total	643	99.95
14. Advertisements and Announcements	---	6%

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
- Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

In Trybuna of 1991 the stories were distributed more equally than in 1986. No category of stories, except for briefs, exceeded 12% of the total number of stories. The majority of the newspapers was composed of political, non-political domestic, sports, and foreign news from the West. All of these topics had approximately a 10% share in the total number of articles. At the other extreme were religion, features, science and education, each below 1% of the items. Advertisements accounted for only 6% of the newspaper.

Table X shows content distribution for Zycie Warszawy in 1991.

TABLE X
1991 ZYCIE WARSZAWY'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN
14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Number of Items	Percentage
1. Domestic Politics, Government, Military	39	7.20
2. Domestic Non-Politics	93	17.16
3. International News from the East	40	7.38
4. International News from the West	51	9.41
5. Features	6	1.11
6. Opinions, Editorials, Commentary	22	4.06
7. Economics	37	6.83
8. Science and Education	20	3.70
9. Culture and Entertainment	63	11.62
10. Religion and Ethics	3	0.55
11. Sports	44	8.12
12. Letters to the Editor	22	4.06
13. Briefs	102	18.82
Total	542	100.02
14. Advertisements and Announcements	---	56 %

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

- Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

In its coverage Zycie Warszawy of 1991 put stress on domestic non-political news, which accounted for over 17% of the paper. Issues of culture, foreign news, and sports were also covered extensively. The newspaper's editors were least interested in publishing feature stories and stories about religion. The paper had a large share of advertisements. More than half of the paper was covered with ads.

Table XI shows how the content was distributed in the case of Gazeta Wyborcza.

TABLE XI

1991 GAZETA WYBORCZA'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN
14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Number of Items	Percentage
1. Domestic Politics, Government, Military	64	12.50
2. Domestic Non-Politics	65	12.70
3. International News from the East	42	8.20
4. International News from the West	54	10.55
5. Features	8	1.56
6. Opinions, Editorials, Commentary	29	5.66
7. Economics	49	9.57
8. Science and Education	13	2.54
9. Culture and Entertainment	45	8.79
10. Religion and Ethics	8	1.56
11. Sports	47	9.18
12. Letters to the Editor	22	4.30
13. Briefs	68	13.28
Total	512	100.39
14. Advertisements and Announcements	---	37.8%

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
- Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

Also for Gazeta Wyborcza the features and religion were not the main interest. The paper had many content categories to a similar extent. Among the top rated are domestic non-politics, domestic politics, foreign news from the West, economics, and sports. Advertisements were present in the paper, accounting for 37.8% of its space.

The table that follows brings a overall comparison of content distribution in three newspapers in 1991.

TABLE XII

COMPARATIVE CONTENT DISTRIBUTION FOR TRYBUNA LUDU,
ZYCIE WARSZAWY AND GAZETA WYBORCZA IN 1991 (PERCENTAGES)

Content Categories	Trybuna	Zycie Warszawy	Gazeta Wyborcza
1. Domestic Politics, Government, Military*	10.58	7.20	12.50
2. Domestic Non-Politics *	11.35	17.16	12.70
3. International News from the East	6.84	7.38	8.20
4. International News from the West	10.58	9.41	10.55
5. Features	0.31	1.11	1.56
6. Opinions, Editorials, Commentary	4.61	4.06	5.66
7. Economics *	4.04	6.83	9.57
8. Science and Education *	0.47	3.70	2.54
9. Culture and Entertainment *	7.31	11.62	8.79
10. Religion and Ethics *	0.16	0.55	1.56
11. Sports	9.95	8.12	9.18
12. Letters to the Editor	4.98	4.06	4.30
13. Briefs *	28.77	18.82	13.28
Total	99.95	100.02	100.39
14. Advertisements and Announcements	6	56	37.8

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
- Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

The complex chi-square analysis provided the value $\chi^2 = 574.07$. The degree of freedom in this situation equals, $df = (R-1)(C-1) = (14-1)(3-1) = 26$

Table of the chi-square distribution for $df = 26$, and $p < 0.05$ gives the number 38.993. This number is lower than 574.07, so we can conclude that there was a significant difference in content distribution in 1991 newspaper issues between Trybuna Ludu, Zycie Warszawy, and Gazeta Wyborcza.

To find out where the difference occurred, a series of simple chi-squares were conducted. The asterisks show in which row (category) the difference was found.

Year 1991 -- Direction of Political News

The following table shows the direction of the political stories in 1991.

TABLE XIII

DIRECTION OF POLITICAL NEWS FOR TRYBUNA, ZYCIE WARSZAWY, AND GAZETA WYBORCZA IN 1991

Direction Towards Government	Trybuna		Zycie Warszawy		Gazeta Wyborcza	
	Items	%	Items	%	Items	%
Favorable	3	4.41	4	10.26	4	6.25
Neutral	39	57.35	32	82.05	53	82.81
Unfavorable	26	38.24	3	7.69	7	10.94
Total	68	100	39	100	64	100

The result of the of chi-square calculation for the direction of political news in 1991 is: $\chi = 36.87$ with the degree of freedom, $df = (R-1)(C-1) = 4$

Table of the chi-square distribution for $df = 4$, and $p < 0.05$ provides the number 9.488 which is lower than 36.87. We are able to conclude that there was a significant difference in the

direction of political stories in 1991 between Trybuna, Zycie Warszawy, and Gazeta Wyborcza.

A difference was found:

- between all favorable, neutral, and unfavorable stories for Trybuna;
- between neutral stories and both favorable and unfavorable items for both Zycie and Gazeta;
- between Trybuna on one hand and both Gazeta and Zycie on the other in the share of neutral stories;
- between all of the three newspapers in category of unfavorable stories.

The obvious differences in political direction in the news in 1991 can be find between Trybuna and the two remaining newspapers. While Zycie Warszawy and Gazeta Wyborcza had taken a neutral stand, Trybuna was highly critical of the government. Of the two, Zycie published slightly more positive articles than negative, while Gazeta did the opposite.

Year 1996 -- Distribution of All Items

Table XIV shows distribution of items in Trybuna in 1996

TABLE XIV
1996 TRYBUNA'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN
14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Number of Items	Percentage
1. Domestic Politics, Government, Military	48	8.57
2. Domestic Non-Politics	57	10.18
3. International News from the East	15	2.68
4. International News from the West	26	4.64
5. Features	3	0.54
6. Opinions, Editorials, Commentary	21	3.75
7. Economics	89	15.89
8. Science and Education	8	1.43
9. Culture and Entertainment	48	8.57
10. Religion and Ethics	6	1.07
11. Sports	49	8.75
12. Letters to the Editor	12	2.14
13. Briefs	177	31.61
Total	560	99.82
14. Advertisements and Announcements	---	12.5%

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
- Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

It is apparent that in 1996 Trybuna published many brief items; almost a third of the total number of stories were briefs. Economics played an important role in the coverage (nearly 16%

of all items). Other categories popular in the paper included: domestic politics, domestic non-politics, culture and entertainment, and sports. Trybuna did not publish many long stories such as features, and was not interested in religious issues. The ads account for 12.5% of the newspaper content.

Table XV shows the distribution of stories in the case of Zycie Warszawy in 1996

TABLE XV
1996 ZYCIE WARSZAWY'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN
14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Number of Items	Percentage
1. Domestic Politics, Government, Military	28	4.68
2. Domestic Non-Politics	82	13.71
3. International News from the East	20	3.34
4. International News from the West	30	5.02
5. Features	9	1.51
6. Opinions, Editorials, Commentary	13	2.17
7. Economics	38	6.35
8. Science and Education	12	2.01
9. Culture and Entertainment	85	14.21
10. Religion and Ethics	4	0.67
11. Sports	61	10.20
12. Letters to the Editor	13	2.17
13. Briefs	203	33.95
Total	598	99.99
14. Advertisements and Announcements	---	31.5

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
- Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

Like Trybuna, Zycie Warszawy in 1996 also carried many short items; briefs accounted for one third of all the items published. Other important categories were culture and entertainment, domestic non-politics, and sports. Compared with the other papers, Zycie Warszawy avoided domestic and international politics.

Table XVI shows content distribution in Gazeta Wyborcza in 1996.

TABLE XVI
1996 GAZETA WYBORCZA'S CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN
14 CATEGORIES

Content Categories	Number of Items	Percentage
1. Domestic Politics, Government, Military	33	4.99
2. Domestic Non-Politics	33	4.99
3. International News from the East	31	4.69
4. International News from the West	51	7.72
5. Features	8	1.21
6. Opinions, Editorials, Commentary	18	2.72
7. Economics	115	17.40
8. Science and Education	19	2.87
9. Culture and Entertainment	37	5.60
10. Religion and Ethics	5	0.76
11. Sports	92	13.92
12. Letters to the Editor	24	3.63
13. Briefs	195	29.50
Total	661	100.00
14. Advertisements and Announcements	---	37%

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
- Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

Aside from a large number of briefs, Gazeta Wyborcza of 1996 emphasized economics (over 17%), and sports. It also had extensive coverage of news from the West. The remaining stories were more or less equally distributed among the other categories, with the exception of features and religion that were rated last.

Following table summarizes content distribution in 1996 for all three newspapers.

TABLE XVII

COMPARATIVE CONTENT DISTRIBUTION FOR TRYBUNA LUDU ,
ZYCIE WARSZAWY AND GAZETA WYBORCZA IN 1996

Content Categories	Trybuna	Zycie Warszawy	Gazeta Wyborcza
1. Domestic Politics, Government, Military*	8.57	4.68	4.99
2. Domestic Non-Politics *	10.18	13.71	4.99
3. International News from the East *	2.68	3.34	4.69
4. International News from the West *	4.64	5.02	7.72
5. Features	0.54	1.51	1.21
6. Opinions, Editorials, Commentary	3.75	2.17	2.72
7. Economics *	15.89	6.35	17.40
8. Science and Education	1.43	2.01	2.87
9. Culture and Entertainment *	8.57	14.21	5.60
10. Religion and Ethics	1.07	0.67	0.76
11. Sports *	8.75	10.20	13.92
12. Letters to the Editor	2.14	2.17	3.63
13. Briefs	31.61	33.95	29.50
Total	99.82	99.99	100.00
14. Advertisements and Announcements	12.5%	31.5%	37%

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

The complex chi-square value was 385.23. Chi-square distribution table for probability $p < 0.05$ and degree of freedom $df = 26$ shows the figure = 38.993, which is less than 385.23.

Therefore, we can say that in 1986 there was a significant difference in content distribution among Trybuna Ludu, Zycie Warszawy and Gazeta Wyborcza.

To find out where the difference was simple chi-squares were calculated. The asterisks show in the table above within which category the differences were genuine.

Year 1996 -- Direction of Political News

The following table shows the direction of the political stories for 1996.

TABLE XVIII

DIRECTION OF POLITICAL NEWS FOR TRYBUNA, ZYCIE WARSZAWY,
AND GAZETA WYBORCZA IN 1996

Direction Towards Government	Trybuna		Zycie Warszawy		Gazeta Wyborcza	
	Items	%	Items	%	Items	%
Favorable	14	29.17	2	7.14	2	6.06
Neutral	31	64.58	22	78.57	21	63.64
Unfavorable	3	6.25	4	14.29	10	30.30
Total	48	100	28	100	33	100

The calculation of chi-square of the direction of political news in 1996 brought the result of $\chi^2 = 79.13$. Table of the chi-square distribution for $df = 4$, and $p < 0.05$ provides the number 9.488.

Since $9.488 < 79.13$, we are able to say that there was a significant difference in the direction of political stories in 1996 among Trybuna Ludu, Zycie Warszawy and Gazeta Wyborcza. The difference was found between all of the possible combinations of newspaper and the direction of the political news, except for two pairs:

- favorable stories from Zycie Warszawy -- favorable stories from Gazeta Wyborcza;
- neutral stories from Trybuna -- neutral stories from Gazeta Wyborcza.

The differences in the attitude toward the government were easily visible in 1996 among the three newspapers. Trybuna tended to take more positive stand toward the government. Zycie Warszawy did not attempt to scrutinize government actions, and it stayed neutral in its coverage. Gazeta Wyborcza, although in most cases was neutral, criticized the government frequently.

Summary for Distribution of Items

The following two tables summarize all the data received as a result of this study. First the frequency count of content items is showed for all newspapers and all time frames:

TABLE XIX

COMPARATIVE ITEMS' DISTRIBUTION FOR TRYBUNA LUDU / TRYBUNA, ZYCIE WARSZAWY, AND GAZETA WYBORCZA IN 1986, 1991, AND 1996.
(FREQUENCY COUNT)

Category	Trybuna Ludu/Trybuna			Zycie Warszawy			Gazeta Wyborcza		
	1986	1991	1996	1986	1991	1996	1986	1991	1996
1. Domestic Politics	139	68	48	49	39	28	---	64	33
2. Dom. Non-Politics	66	73	57	120	93	82	---	65	33
3. Intl. News East	60	44	15	24	40	20	---	42	31
4. Intl. News West	60	68	26	64	51	30	---	54	51
5. Features	9	2	3	9	6	9	---	8	8
6. Opinions	15	30	21	19	22	13	---	29	18
7. Economics	15	26	89	16	37	38	---	49	115
8. Science & Educ.	8	3	8	18	20	12	---	13	19
9. Culture & Enter.	28	47	48	63	63	85	---	45	37
10. Religion & Ethics	1	1	6	2	3	4	---	8	5
11. Sports	57	64	49	39	44	61	---	47	92
12. Letters	18	32	12	18	22	13	---	22	24
13. Briefs	77	185	177	105	102	203	---	68	195
Total	559	643	560	543	542	598	---	512	661
14. Advertisements	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

There are differences among the content categories within each newspaper, and frequently there are differences among the newspapers within the category and time periods.

More reliable conclusions may be obtained by analyzing the percentages of the newspaper space the particular categories occupied instead of the number of items. The following table presents these data:

TABLE XX

COMPARATIVE PERCENTAGES' DISTRIBUTION OF ITEMS FOR TRYBUNA LUDU / TRYBUNA, ZYCIE WARSZAWY, AND GAZETA WYBORCZA IN 1986, 1991, AND 1996. (PERCENTAGES)

Category	Trybuna Ludu/Trybuna			Zycie Warszawy			Gazeta Wyborcza		
	1986	1991	1996	1986	1991	1996	1986	1991	1996
1. Domestic Politics	24.87	10.58	8.57	9.02	7.20	4.68	---	12.50	4.99
2. Dom. Non-Politics	11.80	11.35	10.18	22.10	17.16	13.71	---	12.70	4.99
3. Intl. News East	10.73	6.84	2.68	4.42	7.38	3.34	---	8.20	4.69
4. Intl. News West	11.80	10.58	4.64	11.79	9.41	5.02	---	10.55	7.72
5. Features	1.61	0.31	0.54	1.67	1.11	1.51	---	1.56	1.21
6. Opinions	2.68	4.61	3.75	3.50	4.06	2.17	---	5.66	2.72
7. Economics	2.68	4.04	15.89	2.95	6.83	6.35	---	9.57	17.40
8. Science & Educ.	1.43	0.47	1.43	3.31	3.70	2.01	---	2.54	2.87
9. Culture & Enter.	5.01	7.31	8.57	11.60	11.62	14.21	---	8.79	5.60
10. Religion & Ethics	0.18	0.16	1.07	0.37	0.55	0.67	---	1.56	0.76
11. Sports	10.20	9.95	8.75	7.18	8.12	10.20	---	9.18	13.92
12. Letters	3.22	4.98	2.14	3.31	4.06	2.17	---	4.30	3.63
13. Briefs	13.77	28.77	31.61	19.04	18.82	33.95	---	13.28	29.50
Total	100.04	99.95	99.82	100.26	100.02	99.99	---	100.39	100.00
14. Advertisements	1.5	6	12.5	43.7	56	31.5	---	37.8	37

- Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
- Advertisements and announcements were not counted, and are not included in the percentage of total number of stories. The percentages for each category include the items' share in the newspaper after the ads were taken away. The share of advertisements and announcements in the newspaper content was estimated and given in percentages that are not part of the articles' frequencies.

Summary for Direction of Political News

One task of the researcher was to look at the direction of the political news, whether it was favorable, neutral, or unfavorable towards the government. The following tables summarize the data on the political items' direction. The first table shows the frequency count.

TABLE XXI

COMPARISON OF THE DIRECTION OF POLITICAL NEWS FOR TRYBUNA,
ZYCIE WARSZAWY, AND GAZETA WYBORCZA
(FREQUENCY COUNT)

Direction Towards Government	Trybuna Ludu/Trybuna			Zycie Warszawy			Gazeta Wyborcza		
	1986	1991	1996	1986	1991	1996	1986	1991	1996
Favorable	131	3	14	23	4	2	---	4	2
Neutral	8	39	31	26	32	22	---	53	21
Unfavorable	0	26	3	0	3	4	---	7	10
Total	139	68	48	49	39	28	---	64	33

Table XXII provides the same data converted into percentages.

TABLE XXII

COMPARISON OF THE DIRECTION OF POLITICAL NEWS FOR TRYBUNA,
ZYCIE WARSZAWY, AND GAZETA WYBORCZA
 Percentages

Direction Towards Government	Trybuna Ludu/Trybuna			Zycie Warszawy			Gazeta Wyborcza		
	1986	1991	1996	1986	1991	1996	1986	1991	1996
Favorable	94.24	4.41	29.17	46.94	10.26	7.14	---	6.25	6.06
Neutral	5.76	57.35	64.58	53.06	82.05	78.57	---	82.81	63.64
Unfavorable	0	38.24	6.25	0	7.69	14.29	---	10.94	30.30
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	---	100	100

ENDNOTES

¹Ole R. Holsti, Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969): 135.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Poland has experienced major structural changes over the last decade. These changes have occurred in all spheres of social, economic, and political life. The transition from communism to democracy and to a free market economy has been very complex, and sometimes very difficult.

The press was simultaneously an object of the changes as well as the subject that initiated and modeled these changes. That is, the media adopted the ideas and models that were born elsewhere, but also it played an important role in influencing the changes that took place in the country's social and political life.

The present study described changes in Polish press content after the collapse of communism. The content of three nationwide opinion newspapers was analyzed: Trybuna Ludu (after 1990 Trybuna), Zycie Warszawy, and Gazeta Wyborcza. All items (articles) for the sample were drawn from the years 1986, 1991, and 1996 and were assigned to one of 14 categories according to their content and character. Then the articles were counted and the numbers compared. The share advertisements had in the newspapers was estimated separately.

Also, the researcher was looking for the relationship between the political change in Poland and the changes in newspaper content. Stories concerning domestic politics, government and military were looked at for the direction they took towards government. The political stories

were placed into one of three categories: favorable, neutral, and unfavorable, depending on the stand they took to what the government was doing. Then they were counted and compared.

Finally, the study examined the character of the Polish media based on the theoretical framework given by Siebert in *Four Theories of the Press*. That is, the Polish media were discussed in terms of the four concepts of the press: authoritarian, libertarian, Soviet, or social responsibility, and how this changed over time.

The author hoped to come up with a clear picture of what changes occurred over time in the content of the three Polish newspapers. The findings were projected to the actual situation in Poland, which allowed for conclusions broader than mere description of newspaper content.

The study addressed the general question: Is a change in print media content related to the political and social changes that occurred in Poland over the last 10 years? The following are research questions that have been answered by testing the null hypotheses:

Research Question 1. What type of content was characteristic of the main Polish newspapers during the communist era in Poland?

Research Question 2. How did the content of the main Polish newspapers change after the democratic "Solidarity" movement came to power?

Research Question 3. What are the characteristics of the main Polish newspapers after a decade of intensive changes?

Research Question 4. What direction toward the governments' actions and performance did the newspapers take while reporting political-related news in different periods of time?

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between newspaper content and time

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between direction of political news toward the government and time.

The results of this study show that both null hypotheses are rejected. The results indicate that there is a genuine difference in content among the three newspapers based on most combinations of newspaper and time frame.

The statistical analysis showed that there was a change of content distribution for all three newspapers among the years 1986, 1991, and 1996. Generally, all three papers reduced the share of domestic political news, non-political news (exception -- Trybuna), and international news from both the East and the West. An increase in economic news and briefs was seen.

The results also show that there was a significant difference in political bias toward the government's actions and performance among the three newspapers based on combinations of newspaper type and time frame.

The main findings are that the newspapers now are less favorable toward the government. The increase of neutral, objective stories that were rare in 1986 was also noticeable. The distribution of opinions varied not only from one time period to the next but also from one newspaper to another.

From the research, it appears that Trybuna Ludu / Trybuna has been the least objective in political coverage. We can say that because each time the government changed, the newspaper has also demonstrated significant changes in attitude towards it. When the government was communist, Trybuna Ludu was uncritically supportive of it. During the anti-communist "Solidarity's" governing, Trybuna criticized it strongly, and sometimes without any reason. When post-communists were elected to govern the country, in turn, the paper was favorable to the authorities.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that over time changes occurred in the topical emphasis by the three newspapers, as well as in the direction of the political news toward the government. Of course, these changes have been different for different newspapers, and their intensity has varied from time to time.

The following is a detailed discussion and interpretation of the main findings of this study.

Change in Content Distribution

Compared to communist times, the importance of the political coverage decreased sharply overall. Also, the international coverage, especially from former communist countries, was published less by the newspapers in 1996 than before (Trybuna, and Gazeta Wyborcza).

The decrease in the amount of political news could be associated with the fact that the public was tired of the constant political debate on every possible issue that accompanied the first few years of the Polish transition. Seemingly, life got back to normal, and what people wanted was more entertainment, business, and cultural news. This was confirmed by a market study done by Gazeta Wyborcza in 1994.

The smaller amount of international news, though still high, could be explained by the fact that now newspapers focus on domestic (but not political) matters that may affect readers more directly, in accordance with the popular Polish proverb: "near is my shirt, but nearer is my skin." This change was somehow reinforced by the reality of the free flow of information and strong competition among the print media and is also associated with changing readership patterns.

The biggest improvement in the share of total stories was business coverage. In the case of both Trybuna, and Gazeta Wyborcza, economic news increased from an insignificant proportion to the level of 16-18 percent of the total number of stories, and this category in 1996 rated first, except for briefs. This is the most significant change found by this study. Zycie Warszawy also increased the share of economic news between 1986 and 1991.

Rapid development of the banking sector, privatization of state property, speedy growth of the Warsaw Stock Market, changes in the monetary market, and the development of private business were all reflected in the newspapers. In this case, the press was not a molder, but rather a mirror of the changes. The three newspapers analyzed became a major providers of economic news due to the lack of specialized business papers. Today, they have to compete in this matter with professional economic papers such as Gazeta Bankowa, or Zycie Gospodarcze.

Another important change was the proportion of briefs in the total number of stories. For 1996, about one-third of the total number of stories in each of the newspapers was made up of short news items. This could be associated with the demand for more information presented in an easy to read, concise form.

The researcher noticed that the papers placed longer, more elaborate stories in 1986 compared with 1991, and especially with 1996. This was true for all content categories, except for features. Today, the newspaper's space has become too valuable to be wasted for empty talk.

Speaking about value, it is apparent that the newspapers in 1996 were seeking advertisements, which had become a main source of their income (to the lesser extent for Trybuna). The stand of each newspaper on advertising is, however, dramatically different.

Trybuna Ludu, in 1986 did not have a tradition of publishing any ads except for obituaries, and was highly subsidized by the government. It slowly but steadily built its position in the news market. In two-three years after the collapse of communism, the paper, associated with the Communist Party apparatus, was struggling to survive. Few people or institutions

advertised in this paper at that time. But in 1996 the situation changed, and Trybuna held a small but solid portion of the advertisement market.

The author of this study was surprised by the large proportion of advertisements in Zycie Warszawy, even during communist times. With as much as 43.7 percent of the total space covered by ads, the paper had a unique position in Poland, and probably in the entire Soviet bloc. Two factors contributed to this:

- a) Other national newspapers were not interested in publishing advertisements. It has to be remembered that the Soviet-type press was not profit-oriented;
- b) Although a nationwide newspaper, Zycie Warszawy was, first of all, the capital (metro) newspaper, and since many businesses were concentrated in Warsaw, it was beneficial for them to advertise in this paper.

Who placed ads in the newspaper under the communist regime? As mentioned earlier, communism in Poland was more relaxed than elsewhere in the Eastern bloc, and the government allowed small enterprises and businesses to exist. The small private sector sought clients through newspaper ads. Many ads were classified advertisements paid for by individuals who wanted to sell, buy, or exchange various goods. The automotive section was particularly important. The rest of the ads were from state enterprises seeking qualified workers and from non-profit governmental agencies. The ads consisted also of government announcements, cultural announcements, and obituaries.

As the results indicate, Zycie Warszawy reached its peak in the proportion of advertising in 1991 (56 percent of the newspaper space), and then dropped to 31.5 percent in 1996. This may have been caused by uncertainty about the paper's fate because it was owned by Italian entrepreneur Nicola Grauso, who sold the newspaper in May 1996 after two years of negotiating its price with potential buyers. The coders noticed a dramatic decrease in the proportion of advertising from 43 percent in March to 17.5 percent in November of 1996.

Zycie Warszawy's troubles were a benefit mainly to Gazeta Wyborcza. Although the study did not indicate any change in the proportion of ads in the newspaper between 1991 and 1996, the number of ads increased as the size of the paper itself increased. In November of 1996, the national edition of paper consisted of 40 pages, as compared to 16 pages in January of 1991. Moreover, today the paper has 23 local versions and a huge advertisement supplement called "Super Market," that were not a part of this study.

Change in the Direction of Political News

Significant changes occurred in the newspapers' attitude toward the authorities over time and from one newspaper to the other.

Each of the three newspapers presented different patterns of behavior towards the government, and certain common trends can be drawn from the study:

- Overall the newspapers tended to become more neutral in their judgment about the government over time.
- The number of the stories favorable to the government decreased between 1986 and 1991.
- At the same time, overall, the newspapers tended to become more critical in judging government actions and performance.

The greatest change in the direction of political news can be observed in the case of Trybuna Ludu / Trybuna between the years 1986 and 1991. The share of favorable items in the total number of political stories fell sharply from 94 percent in 1986 to 4.5 percent in 1991. Both neutral and unfavorable stories became more common, with the latter increasing from literally zero level.

Explaining this is easy. Trybuna Ludu in 1986, as a Communist Party newspaper could not criticize the communist authorities. On the contrary, it was a handy tool to "show society's

support” of the government. Therefore, the paper was highly politically biased, and far from being objective. It reported in length any Party or governmental meeting or debate using language as empty and dull as the debate itself. For example, on July 3, 1986, the paper devoted four pages out of 12 to present a plenary discussion during the Polish United Workers’ Party’s congress.¹ In addition, as far as international news goes, the newspapers of that time portrayed Western countries as evil in contrast to “civilized, modern, and reasonable” communist societies. A good example is a story on Sikh terrorists that were allegedly trained in the United States to kill with the knowledge of the White House (sic).²

In 1991 the newspaper was opposed to the Solidarity government, and rarely approved its actions. Instead, it criticized the reforms, privatization, *nouveau riche* behavior of political victors, and defended its own political philosophy as being no longer communist, but social democrat. Much space was also devoted to attacks on the Catholic Church, which at that time had been one of the country’s main rulers, along with Solidarity. One example is a strong critique of costly preparations that accompanied Pope John Paul II’s visit to Poland, which was published on page two of the July 8th edition.³

In 1996 Trybuna turned again because its political protector, Social Democracy of Poland, was back in power after the 1993 parliamentary election, and since December of 1995 the president’s seat was occupied by a former communist, Aleksander Kwasniewski. The newspaper was again favorable towards the authorities, but not as openly as in 1986. Almost two-thirds of the political stories were neutral and can be viewed as objective accounts, free from commentary. In some cases the paper criticized the government.

Two clear tendencies that can be seen in Zycie Warszawy’s coverage of the political issues are the decrease in the number of items favorable to the government and statistically significant increase of unfavorable items. The share of neutral stories in Zycie’s coverage of domestic politics increased to about 80 percent by 1991, and continued unchanged to 1996.

Generally, Zycie Warszawy stayed away from politics, devoting mere 4.5 percent of the total number of articles of 1996 issues to this topic. Of those four-fifths of the items were neutral, and mostly objective. This confirms the author's personal observations during the period 1993-1995 when he was a feature reporter and columnist for this newspaper.

Despite the small number of stories about governmental issues, the paper uncovered the government's mistakes and incompetence, as well as some politicians' unlawful and illegal activities that in three cases resulted in ministerial dismissals. This was the "the watch-dog" role of the press that has become important to Polish media institutions.

Gazeta Wyborcza also frequently checked on government to an even greater extent than did Zycie Warszawy. The analysis of political stories indicated that as many as one-third of them in 1996 were unfavorable towards government. This number increased by 20 percent since 1991 at the expense of neutral stories. This increase may be due to the return of the political formation that ruled the country before 1989. Gazeta Wyborcza, which had its roots in the anti-communist Solidarity movement, was closely watching the post-communist government's performance in 1996.

The main concern of this check on government was that people once involved in building communism had taken over some the governmental posts. Another concern was that some former communists had gained financial control over some state agencies.

Also, Gazeta was a guardian of people's privacy and personal freedoms. An example can be an article uncovering the fact that phone conversations of some politicians were wire-tapped by the government. The story was published July 23, 1996.⁴

Gazeta hardly can be judged as being politically biased because in both 1991 and 1996, it presented the same proportion of positive stories to politically different governments, which differentiates it from the fluctuating Trybuna. In 1996 Gazeta was more critical, but at the same time it did not hesitate to point out the successes of the post-communist government.

Four Theories of the Press -- Application to the Polish Press, 1986-1996

Four Theories of the Press are valuable concepts for describing the changes in the structure of the Polish media. As a part of this study, the author looked at the character of the coverage, the newspapers' loyalties, and the changes in the legal system concerning the press.

The conclusion is that all three periods of time from which the sample was drawn can be associated with different press theories or models. In 1986 the Polish press reflected the Soviet model of the press. The media was owned and controlled by the government, and newspaper editors had to be loyal to the Communist Party.

Not surprisingly, there was not a single story (at least in sample analyzed) that was unfavorable toward the government in the newspaper coverage. Trybuna Ludu broke the record for "boot-licking" the authorities because of all political stories it published in 1986, about 94 percent were favorable to the government. Zycie Warszawy had only 47% of its political stories that were favorable to the government.

The language used by the two newspapers in 1986 was far different from what journalists presented in 1996. The 1986 language was the numb language of Communist Party meetings, filled with empty talk instead of essential news. Most of the articles of that time, representing a majority of the 14 content categories considered in this study, contained easily visible ideological bias. The newspapers were a handy tool for the Party apparatus propaganda.

The year 1991 was a time of rapid transformation of the press, associated with and fueled by democratization of social and political life. At this time a model of the Polish media had not yet crystallized, and it incorporated elements of several theories: Soviet, libertarian, as well as social responsibility. The theory that would best describe the press of that time would be, however, neither of those.

Many factors indicate that the Advancing, or Developmental Theory, would be the closest to the reality of that time. This theory is characteristic of the societies in transition, and it expects the press to be supportive of the government in reaching certain common goals. In case of Poland in 1991, this goal was democratization and economic transformation, and both Zycie Warszawy, and Gazeta Wyborcza tended to give favorable credit to the authorities. Trybuna did not participate in this work. Also, Zycie and Gazeta imposed unofficial self-restraints, such as not to write negative articles about the Catholic Church and Solidarity. Trybuna, on the other hand, was exercising strong criticism of both of these institutions.

In 1996 Polish media institutions, especially the print media, were on the way to achieving Western standards for social responsibility and the Fourth Estate role although, the media could still be viewed as more libertarian than socially responsible.

Generally, the newspapers that are part of this study were in 1996 more critical of the government than before (with exception of Trybuna). At the same time, after the new Press Law that increased sanctions for label and slander, was passed in 1993, they were more responsible in their coverage, i. e., were objectively presenting all the sides involved in issues; double checking information prior to publication; avoiding sensational, untrue stories; and constantly checking on the government. According to the results of this study, Trybuna was again an exception due to its strong political bias in favor of the post-communist formation that ruled the country at that time.

The mechanisms of the free market economy were already at work, forcing the papers to deliver what the public wanted instead of what the media providers wished to say. Thus, the increase in the number of economic news stories, entertainment stories, cultural stories, and information briefs was apparent, and at the expense of political and international news. The newspapers also served as a forum for information directed at consumers, devoting more space to advertisements with the exception of Zycie Warszawy.

A Dynamic Theory of the World Press -- Applications to the Polish Press

As discussed in Chapter II, Schillinger's triangle of motives, despite its apparent weaknesses, may be a valuable tool to explain the change in Polish media performance in general, and change in its content in particular. The dynamic theory of the press proposes that all countries and their media systems subscribe to three primary concepts of survival, ideology, and market. One of these three predominates at any given time.⁵

Schillinger did not succeed in improving her theory to make it fully serviceable for explaining mass communications processes. For the purpose of the present study, Schillinger's concept was modified. The author understands word "survival" not as referring to the country or political system, but rather to the press itself. Therefore, where there is talk about survival-motivated media, it refers to its struggle to sustain in the press market, rather than to preserve the political or social status quo, as Schillinger proposed.

One of the serious weaknesses of Schillinger's theory is the possibility of overlapping "market" and "ideology" motivations. For Schillinger free market economy was an ideology, frequently referred to as "Western democracy." In this study, ideology is clearly separated from the market. In the author's opinion market-motivated press is oriented to gaining financial profits out of its publications. For ideology-motivated press, the primary objective is to spread to the audience certain political ideas or models of behavior.

Market-motivated press do not have an ambition to influence the public, but to make the public buy its product. Usually popular magazines and "junk papers" represent strong motivation towards the market. Ideology-motivated press wants to change or/and strengthen people's opinions (usually political opinions) on certain issues. Normally, these are independent opinion newspapers, or political parties' papers. Both ideology-, and market-motivated media might be

closer to the motivation of survival, depending on their financial status and position in the market.

In 1986, media in Poland were dependent on and controlled by the government. Their primary objective was to promote communist ideology. Both Trybuna Ludu and Zycie Warszawy incorporated a strong ideological theme to most published articles in most content categories. This bias was distinguishable in items dealing not only with political matters, but also with opinions, economics, and even culture.

At the same time, at least for Zycie Warszawy, the growing advertising market was an important motivation to operate. It was not, however, the primary objective of the newspaper, since it was (as were other media at that time) subsidized by the government.

The Polish press of 1986 should be placed in the triangle of motives close to the “Ideology” vortex, as shown in the Figure 4.

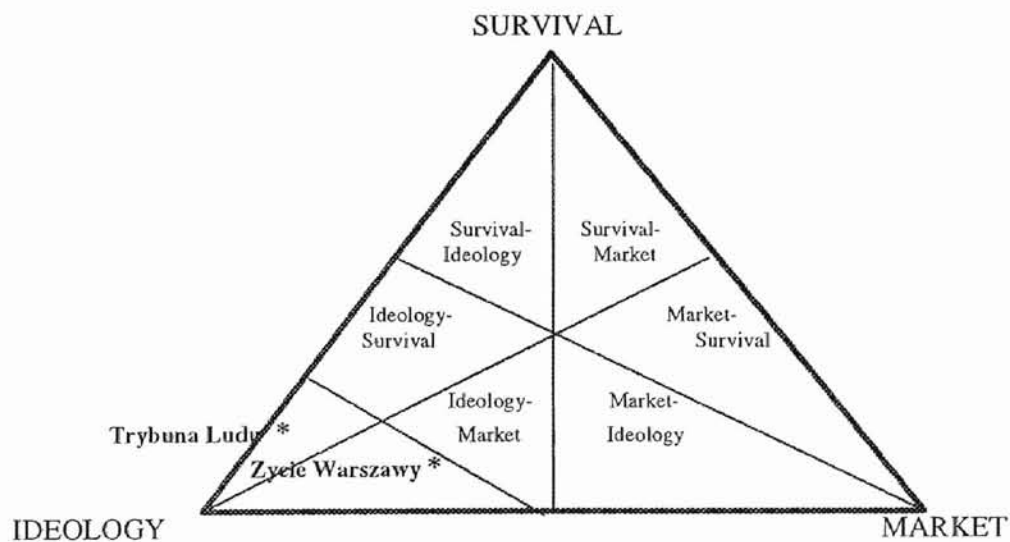


Figure 4: Schillinger's Triangle of Motives -- the Polish newspapers in 1986.

The year 1991 observed rapid changes in the Polish media, and constant movement in the press market. Many state newspapers were sold, and new media institutions appeared. Foreign capital started to flow into the Polish media, but this process was initially controlled and restricted by the government.

Ideology was not the primary objective of the media any longer, but it remained an important element. This time, however, most of the media promoted democratization and the free market, as opposed to communism and a state-controlled economy.

The survival motive played an important role because of the fragile domestic situation caused by a total change of ideology and social order. Also, the market motive became visible, since one of characteristics of this period was growing competition among a large number of new and old (but changed) media. Figure 5 shows that the press was driven by various motivations, dependent on the position in the market and character of a particular medium

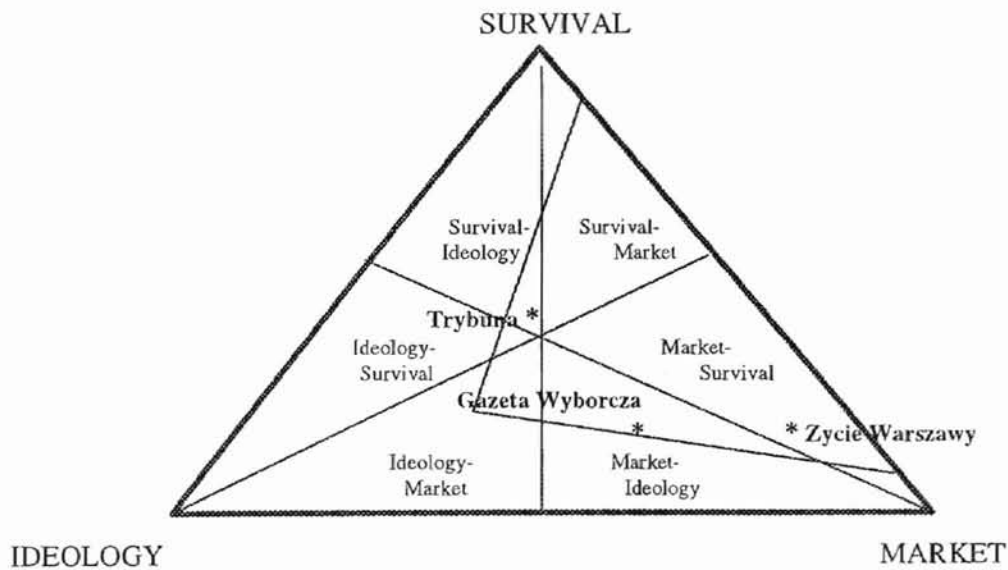


Figure 5: Schillinger's Triangle of Motives -- the Polish newspapers in 1991.

In 1996, the press market in Poland was more stable and solid than in 1991. Some media institutions were still struggling to survive in the rude press market. Others, safe in their being, had already established their position, and were battling for audience. Profit was the primary objective of the media. Most government restraints that still existed in 1991 were abolished, and media institutions were free to compete. Also, foreign media providers had easier access to the Polish market.

The ideology factor did not disappear, as might be expected, due to the variety of opinions and ideas that made their way through the media to society. Many newspapers made it clear which political option they continued to support, while others promoted certain new ideas of the least interest.

To sum up, in 1996 the Polish press experienced a variety of motives. All three motives were present in the Polish media, though the market option was dominant, as shown by Figure 6.

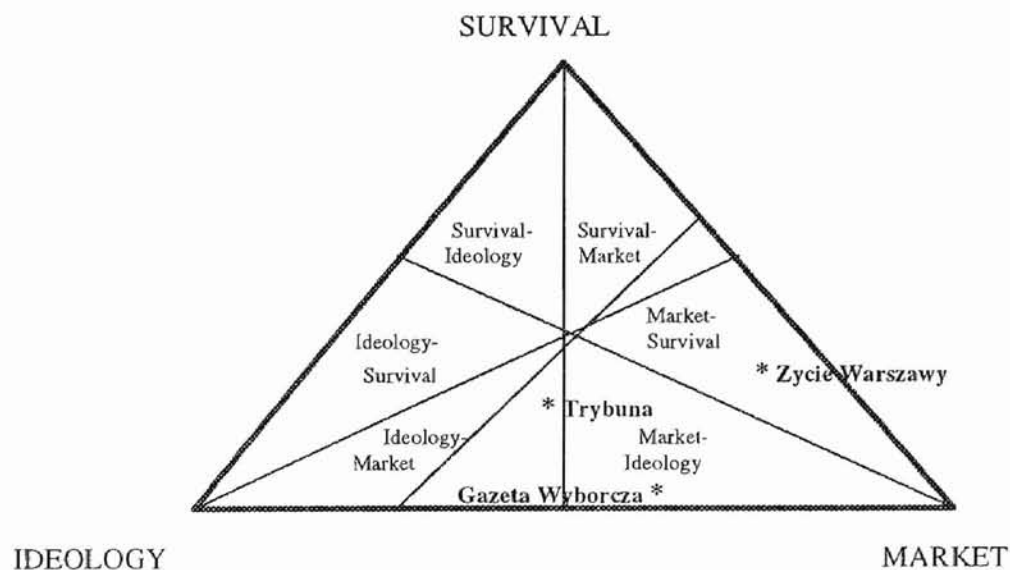


Figure 6: Schillinger's Triangle of Motives -- the Polish newspapers in 1996.

Recommendations for Further Research

The author found the topic of this thesis extremely worthwhile. Since there has been no other quantitative analysis done on Polish newspaper content, the results of study cannot be compared with the findings of other mass communication scholars.

This underlines the need for further exploration of the problem. Repetition of the present research would be valuable with a different sample of the same newspapers to either confirm or deny the results of this study.

Also, though the years of 1986, 1991, and 1996, were not chosen accidentally because they mark all three main stages of the Polish transition, studies of newspaper coverage in between these years could yield more data concerning content fluctuation.

One of the limitations of this study was that the author counted every story as “one,” regardless of its length and position in the newspaper. For example, because this research was concerned with the actual number of stories in each category, a two-sentence-long brief piece of information was counted the same as a page-long feature story. Therefore, further study that will count square inches of stories in each category might bring different results.

Another recommendation is to study the content of different Polish newspapers, or to add more newspapers to the three studied here. It is possible that the change in the content of newspapers of lighter character would vary from content of the opinion newspapers analyzed here.

There are also national opinion weeklies, such as Polityka and Wprost, and publications with a specific type of coverage, such as economics, religion, entertainment, or culture. All of them are open areas for scientific investigation.

The present study was concerned only with content change of the papers distributed nationally. The study of local and sub-local newspapers might provide interesting data about local media markets. Comparison with the national press would also be worthwhile.

Another area to investigate is how the language of the Polish press has changed over the last decade. Such linguistic studies could be accompanied by in-depth research on political bias in newspaper coverage other than the direction of political news toward the authorities that was a part of this study.

Finally, the scientific world of mass communication is lacking comparative analyses of the changes in press content among the post-communist countries. These would provide an understanding of how the media operate under various circumstances, and would help track the transformation from communism to democracy. Such studies would help explain the process that undoubtedly had a great impact on World history at the end of the 20th century, and might significantly affect the future.

Conclusions

The author was astonished by the extent of changes over the last decade that were observed by analyzing the content of Poland's three leading opinion newspapers. The propaganda-like language, ideological bias, and strong emphasis on political coverage were overwhelming in 1986, especially in the content of Trybuna Ludu. While reading articles from that time, both coders could hardly believe these items were written only just ten years ago. This made the author realize how much the Polish press has achieved since the fall of communism.

This study showed that the content of Poland's media's has changed in many ways. From being Communist Party organs in the 1980s, the media became independent in their coverage, at least they became free of government restraint. The example of Trybuna shows that some media

were and still are not free from being involved in promoting certain political viewpoints, but a variety of media institutions present in Poland ensures an adequate representation of different opinions, and places pressure on the government.

Today's opinion dailies take a "watch-dog" role by making sure that the authorities do not go wrong without public awareness. Zycie Warszawy was known for checking on both Solidarity-rooted and post-communist governments. Trybuna played an important role in 1991 as the main critic of the Solidarity government, while Gazeta Wyborcza scrutinized the leftist government in 1996.

The media in Poland have become more "socially responsible" in the Western sense of this phrase. Driven by pressures of the open market, they deliver what the readers want to read, rather than what the media agents or the government want people to read.

In most instances in 1996, the newspapers reported the news fairly and presented variety of opinions. Opinion papers sought sophisticated readers, but at the same time they attracted a variety of audiences tastes by delivering stories of diverse content.

Competition among the media, changes in readership, and general transformation of the society all contributed to newspaper content change as noted in this study. The most important changes in the newspaper content include:

- A sharp decline in the number of stories concerning domestic politics, government, and military matters.
- An overall decrease in the importance of international coverage, both from the West and the East.
- A significant increase in the number of articles covering business and economic issues.
- A greater representation of lighter subject-matter, such as entertainment and sports.
- A tendency to deliver shorter, more concise news.

- An overall development of the press advertising market.

The direction of the stories concerning the government and politics has also changed.

Political coverage is now:

- Less inclined to be both favorable and unfavorable towards the government.
- More focused on delivering balanced, neutral news.

The changes listed above may be genuine for all print media. It has to be remembered, however, that most of the newspapers in Poland have their own peculiar and distinguishable content character. This makes it difficult to validate the findings of the present study for the entire population of daily papers. In spite of that, the author strongly believes that the findings reported here are true for at least the national opinion dailies.

The transition of the Polish press has not ended. The newspapers are in a constant state of flux, some struggling to survive, others trying to strengthen their well-established positions. Before the media market will clearly crystallize, probably another decade will pass. Yet, Poland's press has done a better job of achieving the Western media standards than could have been predicted in 1986 or even in 1989.

ENDNOTES

¹Trybuna Ludu, (3 July, 1986), p. 1-4.

²Krystyna Szelestowska, "Wychowankowie Campera. Szkolenie Terrorystow w USA," [Camper's Pupils. Terrorists' Training in the U.S.] Trybuna Ludu (24 January, 1986), p. 6.

³"Krajobraz po..." [The Day After ...]. Trybuna Ludu (8 July, 1991), p. 2.

⁴Jerzy Jachowicz, "727 Osob Na Podsluchu" [727 People Wire-Taped], Gazeta Wyborcza (23 July, 1996), p. 1.

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