Media in Poland and Public Discourse

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Public discourse is a process of creating, strengthening and disseminating the system of social meanings. Their recognition occurs mainly through the analysis of its elements which refer to texts or their social background, for example discourse participants/institutions. Ideological, political and institutional backgrounds influence the public discourse, for example the socially created system of communicational representations; the coherent system of meanings in different domains.

Public discourse is related to how the mass media function. In modern societies, people mainly derive their knowledge about issues crucial for the community from the media, the most important source of cognitive models of reality. So the media create the systems of representation that have developed socially in order to make and circulate a coherent set of meanings regarding an important topic area. In this sense, the public discourses that are present in the media are the platforms to disseminate opinions, attitudes and values (van Dijk 1995: 107–26).

Universally available and properly functioning media – media which fulfil their social responsibilities – play a crucial role as pillars of liberal democracy. Independent mass media which represent the society remain an important element of the public sphere. This article is devoted to particular segments of the Polish media system – the printed press, the private and public broadcasting and the journalists – as institutions of public discourse.

A few years after the collapse of Communism, the *press readership model* in Poland changed completely. In the People's Republic of Poland the readership was mainly focused on the daily press, especially regional dailies,[1] while in the mid 1990s it was focused on periodical reading: especially newly-launched weeklies and monthlies, which were more and more colourful, in accordance with the modernization of the printing industry, and which were introduced to the press market by major western publishers (especially German ones: Bauer, G+J, Axel Springer and to a smaller extent Burda and Swiss Marquard, and later Edipresse). This fact meant – in general – that the frequency of contact with the printed press as a medium decreased.[2]

Moreover, during this period, more and more Polish-language TV channels appeared on the market, as well as radio stations: commercial, Church, academic and even local-governmental. The latter was especially found in big cities, where the abundant advertising market allowed the broadcasters to maintain a few local TV channels simultaneously.[3] This meant that media other than printed press started to play a crucial role in the public debate.

This does not mean, however, that dailies (mainly paid regional and national information dailies), socio-political weeklies (opinion weeklies) and – to a certain extent, at a micro regional and small communities level – local (in particular county) and sub-local press do not play a critical role in the public debate. This part of the press market will be analysed first.

Print media in Poland

The prevailing majority of nation-wide information newspapers in Poland are *opinion dailies* which fulfil the standards of western so-called *quality papers* (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Dziennik*, *Rzeczpospolita* and *Polska*). Other titles – published with very modest[4] lay-out and content – represent the values of certain political or ideological milieus (*Nasz Dziennik*, *Trybuna*). On the nation-wide press market, almost the entire press offer are titles which were not in any way entangled in the communist regime. Numerous popular press titles in the People's Republic of Poland vanished from the market in the mid 1990s, despite the fact that they had been in the area of interest of commercial entrepreneurs or political forces[5] at the beginning of the 1990s.[6] So the present configuration of the press market was shaped only at the turn of the century. It is

Table 1: The hierarchy of national general-information dailies in 2001, 2004 and 2007 (according to average paid-distribution, data in thousand copies).

	2001		*2004*		*2007*	
Rank	*Title*	*Thous copies*	*Title*	*%*	*Title*	*Thous copies*
1.	Gazeta Wyborcza	459	Fakt	536	Fakt	515
2.	Super Express	335	Gazeta Wyborcza	436	Gazeta Wyborcza	448
3.	Rzeczpospolita	199	Super Express	231	Polska***	374
4.	Nasz Dziennik*	130	Rzeczpospolita	183	Super Express	198
5.	Trybuna	46	Nasz Dziennik*	110	Dziennik. Polska Europa Świat	190
6.	Życie	40	Życie**	20	Rzeczpospolita	164
7.			Trybuna	24	Nasz Dziennik*	90
8.					Trybuna**	18

Source: The data, based on the Press Circulation Audit Unit (ZKDP) except for * Nasz Dziennik (authors' estimation) and ** Życie (2004) and Trybuna in 2007 (publisher's information). *** Polska (launched on 15 Oct 2007) formally consists of 18 regional dailies which cover the whole country and which have the common central editorial office. The presented data (for a 2.5-month period of publishing) are just rough estimations.

worth adding that in 1996–2002 the right-wing daily *Życie* was an important element of the mentioned configuration because of its role in the process of integration of post-Solidarity and the AWS party, which was successful in the 1997 election.[7]

During the last two years (2006–7) some *opinion newspapers* evolved, in strength and polarized in terms of political sympathies. After the election of 2005, a national-Catholic newspaper published by Father Tadeusz Rydzyk – *Nasz Dziennik* – unexpectedly and, at first, one of a kind, became a propaganda instrument in the hands of the coalition government of 'Solidarity Poland' formed by Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS (as the opposition to 'Liberal Poland', the term describing centre-right wing Platforma Obywatelska, PO). Later, for several months from the autumn of 2006 until the election in September of 2007, the pro-PiS sympathies (not including the PiS coalition partners, Samoobrona and LPR) were represented by the conservative *Dziennik Polska Europa Świat*, constructed on the model of German *Die Welt* as a conservative national quality newspaper, as well as by *Rzeczpospolita*, so far functioning as an independent and relatively neutral though conservative-liberal daily (Kowalczyk 2007a). The critics of *Rzeczpospolita* point out the fact that the newspaper is owned by the government.[8] Moreover, the new major shareholder, the Mecom group, came to an agreement with the PiS government in mid-2006 regarding the change of the newspaper's programme line and the appointments of *Rzeczpospolita* management. The new editor-in-chief, Paweł Lisicki, consequently implemented those provisions.[9] Conservative *Dziennik* had unexpectedly changed the orientation before the election in 2007:[10] The pro-PiS sympathy had been replaced by support for the election-winning party, conservative-liberal Platforma Obywatelska (PO).

These *political meanders* (Kowalczyk 2007b) were rather harmful to these two rivalry titles, especially because *Rzeczpospolita* and *Dziennik* competed for the favours of readers similar in terms of political sympathies and values. One can observe the effects of 'political cannibalism' on both newspapers. This can be seen in the decreasing sales results of both dailies. Moreover, the turn in the editorial line of *Dziennik* did not improve its reputation. The market position of *Rzeczpospolita* did not improve either, despite the implementation of the completely new, more handy and legible layout in October 2007.

Both titles, *Rzeczpospolita* and *Dziennik*, definitely try to combat the common enemy *Gazeta Wyborcza*. *GW*, a daily newspaper is criticized for its liberal left-wing orientation associated with the name of the long-term *GW's* editor-in-chief, Adam Michnik,[11] and also for the distance from the idea of the so-called Fourth Republic (IV Rzeczpospolita) and for general investigation and decommunisation.[12] Moreover, *Gazeta Wyborcza* is criticized for know-it-all elitism and willingness to overtake 'the rule of Poles' hearts and minds' (Bierzyński 2007). *Gazeta Wyborcza* has been present on the Polish press market for nineteen years. The daily was the fruit of the round table negotiations. Its *GW's* debut took place one month before the elections, which resulted in the appointment of Tadeusz Mazowiecki as the Prime Minister of the first non-communist government and the beginning of the Third Republic of Poland. *Gazeta Wyborcza* competently took advantage of its primacy over the free press market, shaped the idea of a modern daily on both national and regional scales (*GW* presently has 21 regional editions), used the 'opposition roots' of its management and gathered together famous journalists.[13] The publisher of *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Agora SA) had already developed into a big stock-exchange company by the end of the 1990s, investing in many segments of the Polish media market.[14] Until the end of 2003, *GW* had been the leader in the dailies market. Today *Gazeta Wyborcza* has lost the competition with *Fakt,* but still remains the leader in the quality papers sub-segment, keeping its sales at the same level (420–60 thousand copies) for years. Moreover, the niche post-communist[15] *Trybuna* has been fighting alone to survive on the national press market. Since the end of the 1990s the sales of *Trybuna* have decreased from 50 thousand to 18 thousand copies.

Until the autumn of 2003, the tabloid daily *Super Express (SE)* was placed at the forefront of the rank of sales results, second behind *Gazeta Wyborcza* among the quality information dailies (mentioned in Table 1). During this period, *SE* was politically neutral and since 1991 provided its readers mainly with entertainment and practical advice.

On 20 October 2003, Axel Springer Polska launched on the market a *new tabloid*, *Fakt,* (one used to say at that time it was the Polish *Bild Zeitung* after the only national tabloid in Germany, published by Axel Springer Verlag), which resulted in a fundamental change in the arrangement of forces on the press market in Poland. The tabloid, *Super Express* was also changed. After only three months, *Fakt* was successful: its average sales reached half a million copies, and *Fakt* gained the first position on the ranking list of dailies, gaining readers not only from *Super Express* but also from regional dailies and even sports publications (Filas 2005: 25–9).

Apart from tabloid content (for example covering the story of a whale that, allegedly, swam up the Vistula River, or getting involved in lawsuits with many show-business stars) *Fakt* turned out not to be a typical tabloid, but rather a noble version of the tabloid daily. Having a wide range of readers, *Fakt* successfully entered the public debate: with its everyday socio-political comments on pages 2–3, written by well-known experts, as well as its weekly supplement *Europa* (published until mid-2006) composed of articles by world-famous publicists and scientists.

Probably due to its populist publications, *Fakt* supported the election campaign of the winning parties in 2005 and it still remains the newspaper of considerable influence among the less-wealthy and less-educated social classes. Having such a dangerous rival, *Super Express* changed itself into a sharp, sensational, and to some extent erotic, tabloid for a few years, according to the rule: *if it bleeds, it leads*. On the other hand, *Super Express* did not avoid commenting current political events, doing it in a typically tabloid manner: from the perspective of an average man, distrustful of political elites, hunting for power abuse (or even provoking it) (Nalewajk 2003). Since the end of 2007, *Super Express* – empowered by a group of former employees of *Fakt* (for example the new editor-in-chief) – has become similar to *Fakt,* not only in terms of layout but also in terms of content (Światłowska 2008).

Generally speaking, the structure of the daily press market in Poland has been changing for the last few years. The total data on the sales results and free-of-charge distribution shows the strengthening of paid-for national dailies, which constitute over half of the total number of distributed copies of dailies. Free-of-charge dailies remained strong on the market until 2006. In contrast, regional dailies lost their position: the market-share of regional dailies decreased from 46.8 per cent in 2001 to 28.6 per cent in 2007. This process seems to be – to some extent – the effect of wrong policy on part of the publishers.

Since the middle of the 1990s, after the initial (1990–1) and so-called secondary (1992–4) privatization of newspapers which had been owned by the RSW concern, one can observe the continuing duopolization of the regional dailies market. Two western publishing groups divided the area of influences not by competing against each other but rather by co-operating on the

Table 2: The shares of different types of sold/distributed dailies in 2001–7

Total sales/distribution…	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*
… of national paid-for dailies	48.1	46.6	48.0	56.2	51.7	48.9	55.0
… of regional and local paid-for dailies	46.8	47.4	44.8	35.5	31.4	28.5	28.6
… free dailies	5.1	6.0	7.2	8.3	16.9	22.6	16.4
TOTAL distribution/sales (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
TOTAL distribution/sales (in mio. copies).	846.6	802.7	795.5	920.5	971.0	1050.6	1007.1

Source: Authors' estimations based on 'The rank list of publishers'. The special supplement to Press monthly, September 2006, p. 9 (data from the graph). Data for 2006 and 2007 based on Polish Chamber of Press Publishers' prepared for World Press Trends 2007 and 2006.

advertising market (due to a joint broker company Mediatak, until the end of 2007). Norwegian Orkla Media, which operated in Poland 1993–6, dominated the local market in eight regions (for example new provinces), whereas Polskapresse,[16] which is still in operation, has dominated the market in six regions.

Orkla's property was taken over in the middle of 2006 by the British group Mecom, along with the acquisition of controlling shares of the national daily *Rzeczpospolita,* and, in 2007, the regional *Życie Warszawy* as well. Each group had the rights to publish several titles, but as a result of many mergers since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Polskapresse has owned only seven titles before the launching of the *Polska* project. Media Regionalne (Mecom) has only ten titles in nine regions. At the beginning of this century, 32 regional dailies were published with the total single circulation of 1,315 million copies, whereas in autumn 2007 only 24 were left on the market (circulation: 892 thousand copies). At the same time, the number of so-called independent titles not possessed by either Polskapresse or Orkla/Mecom, decreased from twelve to eight and is, at present, seven. Dailies from this third group of independent publishers which survived in the market have a relatively strong position on their regional markets and – as a rule – they are the only titles which widen the information and opinion pluralism on the regional market. These titles more courageously express their attitude towards important social and political issues in the public debate.

This situation is completely different in comparison to the situation at the beginning of the 1990s – before the capital concentration – when three to five independent titles were published in a given region. At present, more than one regional daily is published in only six regions (voivodships) out of sixteen altogether, whereas in 1988 there were twelve such regions (out of seventeen).

The editorial policy of regional newspapers connected with Polskapresse and Orkla for over a decade was generally very careful. It was especially noticeable in the case of Polskapresse, caused by the Poles' (especially the political elites) oversensitivity to possible effects of German capital shares in the Polish media. In this duopolistic situation,[17] publishers try to realize a business model and not to get involved in political arguments at national or local levels. For a few years, Polskapresse and Orkla developed the model of a newspaper too much oriented towards regional and local matters. Since 2007 they have been limiting the number of local editions and supplements. Such a model would work well if their readers read, in addition, one more newspaper: a national one. Yet, such a situation is rather rare because of decreasing readership of the press. This explains why a regional daily should rather be a 'complete' newspaper.

Polskapresse has been trying to change this situation, for example by launching the project *Polska* in co-operation with *The Times* London on 15 October 2007. This project resulted in the appearance of a complicated newspaper construction: It is, in fact, a nationwide daily, but is registered as eighteen regional dailies, mostly edited centrally, and owned by one proprietor.[18] This project is responsible for the pages of Polish and world international news in common with the regional dailies. This explains why regional dailies seem to be complete in terms of content and are able to be more competitive in the confrontation with nationwide dailies, which have been developing their regional supplements, the best example being *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

Free-of-charge newspapers with their short, simple, and heavily illustrated texts, addressed to readers with a low level of communicative competence, are less valued. Moreover, the number of such newspapers significantly decreased after 2006 to one daily *Metro*, published five times per week, and one bi-daily *Echo Miasta*. These titles are supported by the logistic infrastructure of major media groups such as Agora SA or Polskapresse. The powerful international publisher Metro International (publishing daily *Metropol*) withdrew from Poland. At present, the publishers, especially if they own paid-for dailies in certain regions, launch free-of-charge weeklies distributed in bigger cities (for example Szczecin, Bydgoszcz, Toruń, Olsztyn) or they attach local county-level inserts to some editions of dailies.

Table 3: The hierarchy of opinion weeklies in 2001–7 according to average single paid distribution (data by ZKDP in thousand copies).

	2001		*2004*		*2007*	
Rank	*Title*	*Thous copies*	*Title*	*Thous copies*	*Title*	*Thous copies*
1.	Newsweek Polska	325	Angora	256	Angora	292
2.	Angora	270	Polityka	190	Polityka	165
3.	Nie	267	Newsweek Polska	185	Wprost	144
4.	Polityka	251	Wprost	168	Newsweek Polska	138
5.	Wprost	222	Nie	114	Gość Niedzielny	132
6.	Gość Niedzielny	126	Gość Niedzielny	113	Nie	91
7.	Przegląd	59	Przekrój	103	Przekrój	66
8.	Przekrój*	46	Przegląd	39	Przegląd	28

**Przekrój* is an opinion weekly since 2003.

Opinion weeklies have a large potential for participation in the public debate. They represent a range of sub-types: general interest socio-political magazines, socio-Catholic re-print magazines, and humorous magazines. Their total single sales (excluding niche, low-circulation titles of narrow political orientation, not audited by ZKDP) were about 1.1 million copies in 2007 (five years earlier – 1.4 million copies).

This segment of the press market is diminishing from year to year (Filas 2007a: 36–7). In particular, the segment of 'general interest' magazines (creating opinions on a broad scope of issues – from politics, economy, social affairs to high culture and pop culture, media, arts and science) is diminishing. The weeklies *Polityka*, *Wprost* and *Newsweek Polska* are included in this group. Left-wing oriented *Przegląd* is a sort of outsider in this category.[19] Since 2002, several magazines that revealed their ambition to compete with these three titles have been present in this group: the best example is *Przekrój*.[20] In contrast, the episode with publishing *Ozon* turned out to be a failure.[21]

Apart from the mainstream of opinion weeklies, it is worth pointing to the stable position of Catholic opinion titles: *Gość Niedzielny* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*. At present, the latter is an example of a niche magazine with great traditions and is still perceived as valuable in intellectual milieus, especially owing to its vivid input in the discussion on culture, politics, religion and social life. In contrast to *Tygodnik Powszechny*, there is the publication *Nie*. This is a satirical weekly of tabloid character: provoking, shocking, with strong left-wing and anti-clerical orientation that has almost come to the end of its good times. The 'golden years' of success and popularity of weekly *Nie* were in the middle of the 1990s. The title of present success is, however, the weekly *Angora*. It is worth adding that its sales are increasing while the whole segment of opinion weeklies remains in crisis. Formally, *Angora* is a magazine which re-prints articles from the Polish and foreign press, but the weekly also includes many exclusive, editorial columns.

In the public debate, a significant role is played by *low-circulation socio-political titles*, varied in terms of political orientation. *Gazeta Polska,* an influential right-wing-oriented weekly, has the strongest market position. It offers a good representation of the sympathies of PiS supporters. In terms of sales (about 10 thousand copies each), the *Tygodnik Solidarność*, an honoured title of NSZZ Solidarność trade union, as well as the liberal-conservative *Najwyższy Czas* are in a worse situation. Several other titles which are valued in their milieus have a significantly smaller circulation, for example the leftist monthly *Dziś*. *Przegląd Społeczny*, the leftist-liberal *Krytyka Polityczna*, the 'common sense' centre-oriented magazine *Obywatel*, *Debata*, liberal quarterly *Przegląd Polityczny* and conservative right-wing oriented titles such as *Nowe Państwo*, *Opcja na Prawo*, *Fronda* and others. It is worth pointing out that there are two commonly valued, elitist Catholic monthlies which are 'beyond political divisions', *Znak* (published since 1946) and *Więź* (since 1958), and there is also the quarterly *ResPublika Nowa* (the title with an anti-Communist opposition and conspiracy origin) (Mielczarek 2007: 160–3).

The local and sub-local press[22] play an important role in local democracy. In general, despite fairly considerable fluidity of particular titles, their number has remained at 2.5 thousand.[23] However, their structure is changing. The number of local titles at the county or sub-regional level is increasing (about 1200 titles), while the number of sub-local ones is decreasing (1300 remaining). Three fifths of local magazines belong to the sector of the so-called independent press. More than half of them are published at least once per week and provide information at a local level with circulation of 2–3 thousand copies (the largest weeklies of that kind have sales of several thousand copies and five of them of 20 thousand copies). More than half of the sub-local papers represent local governments (Chorązki 2007: 87–91). There have been a number of publicized conflicts between both groups of papers. The editors of free-market papers have questioned the foundations of paid-for local government press – its credibility, the value of its information, funding from local government – although it operates in areas where there is no independent paper at all. The latter have great potential, based on the condition that they are fully professional. A few years ago the number of such titles was estimated at 100 (Chorązki 2007). These titles are published mainly in a single or with a few neighbouring counties.

A difficult situation in the media market has forced editors to carry out a number of cost-cutting actions, which have highly influenced the role of press in the public debate. One such action is re-allocation of their assets to the Internet and an attempt to gain higher income from network projects. That is why a number of social services, authors' blogs constructed among their editors, have appeared. A good example here is the re-construction of Agora – the publisher of *Gazeta Wyborcza* – portal. Another example of a rigid and visible cost-cutting policy is the redundancy of their employees. This affects not only the administrative and technical staff but often well-known journalists as well. Also noticeable, mainly in the regional press, is the idea of employing cheap trainees instead of professional, but expensive, journalists. Still another element of the cost-cutting policy is foregoing foreign correspondents or – on a local scale – not to send journalists to scenes, not to cover the expenses of their visits, limit the costs of phone calls at work, and so on.

The Polish radio system

In 1994, the fundament of the new order in the Polish radio system was established, a result of implementing the broadcasting law in Poland. However, since then its current shape has been formed in several phases.

Since the beginning – on the national level – the system of four public[24] and three private licensed[25] radio broadcasters has been established. Two stations of Polskie Radio (PR) are niche radios: Program II with a literature and art programme profile, and Radio Bis (Program IV), an educational programme addressed to the youth. Two other channels of public radio in Poland are quite strong in the national radio-listening market: Program I, a general interest programme with commentary and information profile, and Program III with commentary and entertainment. Both channels are losing more and more listeners, compared to the commercial stations: RMF FM (owned by the German Bauer group since the end of 2006) and Radio Zet (owned by the French Lagardere group). Both commercial market leaders play formatted music (*Adult Contemporary* format) and offer fast and reliable news services. Their several commentary broadcasts which are praised by politicians, who willingly appear in these broadcasts, as well as by listeners; especially young ones.

Apart from these four broadcasters, there is also Radio Maryja, the Catholic station founded by an influential and controversial Redemptorist from Toruń, Father Tadeusz Rydzyk – nowadays, probably the most influential representative of the Polish Catholic Church. Radio Maryja has a 'social broadcaster' status, which means that it cannot broadcast advertisements, and is basically prayer radio. In fact, Radio Maryja gives the floor to publicists and listeners who openly present their nationalist, fundamentally-Catholic and definitely Euro-sceptical opinions.

Table 4: The number of listeners of the largest national radio stations and over-regional* Radio Tok FM in 1997, 2002, 2007.

	1997		*2002*		*2007*	
Rank	*Station*	*%*	*Station*	*%*	*Station*	*%*
1.	Polskie Radio Program 1	19.2	RMF FM	22.4	RMF FM	22.5
2.	RMF FM	18.1	Polskie Radio Program 1	17.9	Radio Zet	19.3
3.	Radio Zet	13.6	Radio Zet	17.5	Polskie Radio Program 1	13.2
4.	Radio Maryja	6.3	Polskie Radio Program 3	4.6	Polskie Radio Program 3	6.1
5.	Polskie Radio Program 3	4.6	Radio Maryja	3.3	Radio Maryja	2.1
6.	–		Radio Tok FM	0.3	Radio Tok FM	1.0

*Such stations are the typical network. They broadcasted – using the low-powered radio transmitters – uniform programme in several of the biggest cities.
Source: Badania Radio Track Instytutu SMG/KRC.

Despite its decreasing number of listeners, Radio Maryja still has great power to influence millions of listeners, especially those gathered in the social movement 'The Family of Radio Maryja'. Father Rydzyk's radio is effective in organizing different kinds of actions, not only religious in character (for instance, annual pilgrimages with many thousand participants), but also social actions (mass protest actions) or even politically-oriented actions (more or less influencing election results since 1997).

The cross-regional level of Polish radio broadcasting has been shaped since 1998. Among three commercial stations – music Radiostacja, general interest and entertainment Wawa and news & talk formatted Radio Talk FM – the last plays an important role in public debate. Radio Talk FM offers many social and political commentaries which are prepared by well-known publicists of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Polityka*.

There are seventeen stations of public Polskie Radio operating at the *regional* level. Even though these public stations offer varied and valuable content, widely devoted to regional and local as well as ethnic themes, for many years they have been experiencing a decrease in the number of listeners and deep financial crisis.

At present, there are local radio broadcasters in Poland with about 25 – mostly commercial – licensed stations which operate on FM waves, and about twenty communal/municipal stations which broadcast about two hours per day on MW waves, rarely[26] used in Poland. Most of the twenty stations broadcasting on FM waves belong to the so-called networked radio stations, which means that they operate in one of four groups of stations (ZPR/Time, Agora, Eurozet and Broker FM). These are connected by capital (franchised), and co-operate in advertising, programme formatting, playing mostly music and limiting the talk on the radio (for example, news services). The number of so-called independent stations is still decreasing. There are about 40 at present, which are, to some extent, dependent on the Eurozet group owing to the advertising agreement 'Pakiet Niezależnych'. Other independent radio stations are non-networked Catholic (about 24), academic and so-called self-government[27] stations.

Public media

The status of Polish public radio and television (for example state treasury companies) results in the situation that the public media in Poland are an area of continuous competition of interests and struggle for influences. Maciej Mrozowski (2007: 156–7) claims that if we order the interests of the main 'players' according to their power of influence on the public media programme policy, it will turn out that the most influential are political groups, especially parliamentary and governmental. Consequently, one can clearly see the *politicization* of the public media. In Poland, the 'transmission belt' for political appointments at all levels of public media authorities came into being:[28] 'Undeveloped civil society is not able to create non-political and non-party ways of promoting people to public stands' – says Karol Jakubowicz – for instance,

> the National Broadcasting Council was projected to be a pluralistic mini-parliament where the decisions are made as a political compromise. But this idea led to irretrievable politicization of the Council and its domination by party interests which wanted to influence the appointment of supervisory boards and managements in the public media. To make matters worse, the Council turned out not to be a professional regulatory institution. (Jakubowicz 2007: 224–5)

The process of politicization of the public media in Poland is one of the results of the wrong state policy on the public media (Jakubowicz 2007: 248). But the most important factor of politicization is most likely omnipresent partiocracy (la partitocratie) in Poland: 'Political parties rule everything and public media are not the exception' (Jakubowicz 2007: 227). Low political culture of political elites cannot be forgotten, just as their lack of respect as far as the rules of democracy are concerned, and their own role in free media. What is more, they do not respect the position and mission of the public broadcaster. Their cynical attitude is based on the expectation that if they win the elections, the control over public TV is granted to them (Pokorna-Ignatowicz 2007: 237). In December 2005, it turned out that the 'omnipresent rule of spoils system (as opposed to merit system) was systematically introduced without equivocation, which means that the "winner (of the political election) takes all", including the public media' (Jakubowicz 2007: 228).

If we agree with T. Kowalski (2007) that something that might indicate the maturity of certain markets is progress in the distribution of new forms of communication such as HDTV and interactive or mobile TV, then one must admit that Poland, in comparison with developed western countries, looks very unfavourable. Poland has just taken the first steps in this domain. Additionally, as far as the configuration of influences on the new communication technology market is concerned, Poland seems to be different compared to mature western markets.

What seems to be a huge threat, especially for the public media, is technological backwardness. Radio and television in public service are 'traditional broadcasters oriented towards the production and transmission of linear broadcasts' (Jakubowicz 2007: 256). Developing websites is not enough. Moreover, such undertakings are at the margin of public broadcasters' activity. Launching interactive TV in 2007 (http://www.itvp.pl/) made the situation a little better. However, it comes down to the programmes already broadcast being presented via a new channel of communication, while the essence of the matter is to project a completely new television form, independent from traditional TV broadcasting (Jakubowicz 2007: 256).

The problem also has a more general dimension. The Polish state has still not worked out the policy concerning the development of public broadcasters in the new technologies domain. The plans for conducting digital conversion of terrestrial radio and television do not expect any support for the public broadcasters from the state. Yet, 'digitalization will end the time of a convenient balance and oligopoly of three broadcasters (TVP, Polsat and TVN)' – says Jakubowicz (2007: 256). He adds: 'if technological modernization of the Polish public media does not take place, these media will soon be found in a completely different world than viewers and listeners (especially young ones) live in' (Jakubowicz 2007: 257).

Advertising shares in the television market

Similar to most European countries, there is a mixed television market structure in Poland. However, Poland stands out owing to extremely high shares of public broadcasters in the TV audience market. Three terrestrial channels of Telewizja Polska (TVP): TVP1, TVP2 and TVP Info[29] had all together in 2007 about 46 per cent of the TV audience market; although in 2003–5 it had been over 50 per cent.

Not accidentally, observers notice that the Polish TV market has so far been the market of *three big players*, for example public television and two commercial groups: Polsat and ITI/TVN. There are four most popular channels in Poland: two public and two commercial ones. The fact that public channels dominate in terms of audience is very annoying for commercial broadcasters. TVP1 and TVP2 are still the most popular, despite the fact that their joint audience-share decreased from 47.1 per cent (2002) to 41.2 per cent (2007).[30] These public channels, which are additionally supported by money from licence fees, compete with commercial stations in the TV advertising market: public channels have a 30 per cent share. The two biggest commercial stations (TVN and Polsat) remained strong at the turn of the century because of the good position of Polsat, the leading commercial broadcaster on the TV ranking list, ahead of TVP2. Since 2003, commercial broadcasters have been increasing their market-share (from 30.2 per cent to 33.3 per cent) but this time due to the growing popularity of TVN (from 6.4 per cent in 1998 to 13.8 per cent in 2002 and 16.5 per cent in 2007), which is perceived as the most innovative on the Polish market. TVN is the leader, in introducing the world-trendy TV formats (starting with *Big Brother* in 2001). For two years, the shares of these commercial broadcasters in the market have been very similar: 16–17 per cent for each of them. Moreover, in 2007 Polsat re-gained the third place on the TV ranking list, the position it had lost in 2006. Both commercial stations have a similar share (25–6 per cent) in the income from the advertising market.

The 'big four' broadcasters treated en bloc are slowly losing market-share in favour of new competitors, which are appearing in great numbers: from 80 per cent (2001) to below

Table 5: The audience (shares in market) of information programmes in all-Poland and trans-regional terrestrial TV channels and satellite news TV channel TVN 24 in 1998, 2002, 2007.

	1998		*2002*		*2007*	
Rank	*Channel*	*%*	*Channel*	*%*	*Channel*	*%*
1.	TVP 1	30.0	TVP 1	26.5	TVP 1	23.2
2.	Polsat	25.2	TVP 2	20.6	TVP 2	18.0
3.	TVP 2	18.4	Polsat	18.5	Polsat	16.8
4.	TVN	6.4	TVN	13.8	TVN	16.5
5.	TVP 3*	5.0	TVP 3 Regionalna	4.4	TVP 3/TVP Info	4.9
6.	Nasza TV	1.7	TV 4	3.7	TVN 24	3.0
7.	–		TV Puls	0.5	TV 4	2.1
8.	–		TVN 24	?	TV Puls	0.5

*In 1998, total audience of programmes broadcast by twelve regional divisions of TVP
Source: AGB Polska (AGB Nielsen Media Research).

75 per cent (2007). Similarly, the shares of terrestrial stations are decreasing (from 88 per cent in 2002 to 82 per cent in 2007) for the benefit of satellite-cable channels, mostly special interest ones, their growth being from 11.6 per cent in 2001 to 17.8 per cent in 2007. It seems quite natural, however, that in comparison to developed media systems, like in Germany with 42 per cent or Great Britain with 25 per cent (see Kowalski 2007), one can notice a remarkable delay.

Nonetheless, overcoming this retardation is easier, due to an extremely fast development of satellite digital platforms even in comparison to other European countries: since 2005, the number of subscribers has increased from 1.4 million to 3.4 million in 2007. Since the end of 2006, two competing platforms, Cyfra+ (since 1998, at present with 1.1 million subscribers) and Cyfrowy Polsat (since 2002, 2.2 million subscribers), have had a third rival, for example N platform (300 thousand subscribers). The new platform has challenged its competitors in the area of technology: TV channels with HDTV, PVR, VoD standards.

According to the latest information (Gazeta Wyborcza, 21–2 May 2008: 28), 17 per cent of households in Poland are already connected to digital platforms. This is higher than the average for the five most advanced European markets, which is 12 per cent. In addition, at least 4.5 million Polish households are connected to cable networks. Several of the largest cable networks have been trying to introduce the digital TV service. The turning point is expected to happen by the end of 2008, because the biggest cable TV operator (UPC, 1 million subscribers) is planning to launch a digital TV service for its subscribers.[31]

The television audience in Poland

As far as the *TV offer* is concerned, Poland is significantly divided into two parts, these having been almost equal until 2005: the offer for privileged viewers, for example people having access to several dozens or hundreds of channels in cable or satellite television (at present these are about 8 million households) and the offer for underprivileged viewers (people having access to a maximum of seven, and usually four to five terrestrial broadcasting channels, about 5.5–6 million households). The acceleration of the development of digital platforms has significantly reduced the number of the underprivileged.[32]

The two biggest commercial broadcasters have been extending their main channels with additional entertainment channels: TV4, co-operating with Polsat (so-called pan-regional, a network of terrestrial transmitters in a few regions with 16 per cent of population) and satellite Polsat 2 International. TVN owns the satellite movie and entertainment channel TVN Siedem. Moreover, to broaden the TV offer, commercial broadcasters have developed numerous special interest satellite-cable channels. TVN has ten such channels and Polsat has six. Both broadcasters also have their own digital platforms. Polsat group owns Cyfrowy Polsat with 2.2 million subscribers, who tend to be non-wealthy inhabitants of provincial Poland. ITI/TVN group launched N platform and gained 320 thousand subscribers, who are mostly wealthy consumers willing to explore the possibilities of advanced digital technology, including paid-for programmes, movie subscription and HD television. The majority of the thematic channels (mostly in analogue technology) are available also in the cable TV network offer. The public broadcaster Telewizja Polska has accepted the challenge from commercial broadcasters and launched a few satellite channels (TVP Kultura, TVP Historia, TVP Sport), and is planning to start its own digital platform, which may happen in 2009.

There are a few channels which play an important role in the public debate at the national level: TVP1, TVP2, Polsat and TVN as well as two information channels: TVP Info and TVN24. Soon there will be another information channel – Polsat News. As far as informational TV channels are concerned, one fact should be underlined here: the outstanding popularity of commercial channel TVN24, which was patterned after CNN24. TVN24 was launched in 2001, but already in 2005 when the channel became part of the big cable networks' offer, the channel exceeded 1 per cent of TV audience share, and in 2007 reached 3 per cent, which is higher than pan-regional TV4. Among the many commentary programmes of TVN24, the greatest popularity and audience has been gained by 'Szkło kontaktowe', broadcast every evening. This programme is eagerly visited by many politicians of different orientations, even those who accuse TVN of representing 'liberal media', unfriendly toward populist parties. On the other hand, an 18-hour-long programme by public TVP Info (4.9 per cent of TV market shares in 2007) provides several information services, commentary programmes on national and international issues as well as transmission of parliamentary sessions and its select committees, apart from its four local versions.

The ranking list of TV audience of information programmes shows (Table 4) that two programmes of public TVP1 (*Wiadomości* and afternoon service *Teleexpress*) have the best results, but commercial broadcasters' programmes (TVN's *Fakty* and Polsat's *Wydarzenia*) successfully compete with them. In contrast, after being moved to a later hour (midnight), the formerly evening edition of *Panorama* (TVP2) lost its audience. Polsat had also broadcast a popular commentary programme *Co z tą Polską?* up until 2007, when its author and presenter Tomasz Lis quit Polsat and moved to TVP. TVN still attracts its audience with a popular political programme, *Teraz My,* with Tomasz Sekielski and Andrzej Morozowski, the prize-winners of many journalistic contests. Nevertheless, in public television (especially in TVP1) commentary programmes are broadcast more often, but the programming and authors change according to the changes of public television management which, in turn, is connected with every political change in Poland.

Table 6: The audience of information programmes in Polish TV channels as of April 2007 and 2008. The number of viewers and audience shares (in %)

		2007		*2008*	
Information programme	*Channel*	*AMR*	*SHR (%)*	*AMR*	*SHR (%)*
WIADOMOŚCI 19:30	TVP1	4 557 605	34.67	4 277 146	33.61
FAKTY 19:00	TVN	3 730 130	31.58	3 692 380	31.47
TELEEXPRESS 17:00	TVP1	3 819 996	43.55	3 648 584	41.84
WYDARZENIA 18:50	Polsat	2 361 658	20.65	2 308 888	20.23
PANORAMA 18:45/18:30	TVP2	1 509 715	13.67	1 322 413	12.21
PANORAMA 22:00/24:00	TVP2	1 536 347	13.55	418 102	10.07
PULS RAPORT 22:00	TV Puls	–	–	128 265	1.01
PULS RAPORT 19:30	TV Puls	–	–	57 453	0.45

Source: AGB Nielsen Media Research

Among other TV channels in Poland, trans-regional TV Puls has great developmental potential despite its limited market shares (so far 0.5 per cent). It is a Catholic channel which came into being on the basis of the religious station of the Franciscan Order. The changed licence allows broadcasting of more universal programming (including entertainment); as a result, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation has been investing in TV Puls since 2006. Despite a preponderance of entertainment programmes, TV Puls introduced its own information programme (*Puls Raport*) in autumn 2007, and started to broadcast a few commentary programmes on social, political, philosophical and religious issues.

What seems to be an unfavourable phenomenon in Poland is some kind of underdevelopment of commercial terrestrial local stations. About ten local broadcasters were granted the licence in 1994. Until now, only six have survived in the market, but their activity is limited: they broadcast their own programmes for only two hours per day and the majority of broadcasting time is filled with retransmissions from TV4 (stations owned by Odra group) or TVN (NTL Radomsko). For the first time, one can observe the revival of broadcasters' interests in local markets this year. In March 2008, the Silesian satellite channel – TVS – was started, available in regional cable networks and satellite platforms; in autumn one can expect the launch of TVN Warszawa. Even TVP is planning to start its own local programme addressed to the inhabitants of the capital. Cable TV operators granted licences for their own local programmes; however the concentration into major groups led to a huge reduction of local programmes, which are often just static TV display panels containing information and advertising. At present, the medium cable operators mainly broadcast their own commentary and information programmes.

Progressive *centralization* is the factor which strongly limits public media abilities in fulfilling its social functions. At the beginning of the media system transformation in Poland, the idea decided upon was of bringing public media closer to the inhabitants of the whole country. The concept of structural regionalization was fully carried out in public radio, while in public television, structural integrity was preserved while programme regionalization was implemented. After some years, it turned out that the programme of public radio was becoming similar to that of commercial radio stations, despite the fact that the majority of public radio finances comes from license fees. In the case of public television, the history of regional programmes is a history of constant withdrawal from initial concepts and ambitions. TVP cannot completely resign from broadcasting regional programmes (because of statutory duties); moreover, a huge amount of money was spent on regional divisions. Nevertheless, public TV acts in a similar way to licensed broadcasters: regional programmes are not developed owing to high costs and low incomes from regional advertising markets (Jakubowicz 2007: 231–7).

More fundamental changes in the television offer in Poland are caused by the introduction of terrestrial digital TV. After a long period of stagnation, the implementation of the TV digitalization plan is presently being worked on: two out of six digital multiplexes (virtual sub-channels) are planned to be launched in 2009; in 2012 Poland will totally switch from analogue to digital television.

Working conditions for journalists in Poland

After 1989, the number of press titles and electronic media in Poland increased significantly. As a result, the large and open labour market for *journalists* came into being. During the last decade, the number of journalists in Poland doubled from 11 to 18–20 thousand. But after that period, as a result of phenomena such as economic depression (2001–2), a declining interest in the local press and formatting of radio stations, as well as reductions in the number of editorial offices and the number of their employees, took place. In 2006, according to rough estimates, the number of full-time journalists was about 15 thousand, with about 30 thousand media employees in general.[33] Journalists became younger: in 2000 the average age in this profession was about 35 years of age. The number of women employed in media – especially electronic media – significantly increased. Moreover, about 1,000 graduates of journalistic studies, mainly with Bachelor Degree from 30 universities, wish to enter the profession every year (Mielczarek 2007: 70–3).

At the beginning of the 1990s, an advanced exchange of journalistic staff took place. First, it was the result of moral-political vetting of journalists of the People's Republic of Poland. Second, it was driven by the market situation of many editors, for example the breakdown of many editorial offices because of political conflicts. And, third, it was caused by the influx of new students of journalism. All these processes caused deep disintegration of the journalistic milieu. A weak interest, and participation, in professional associations' activities is proof of this disintegration. According to rather optimistic estimations, only 30 per cent of journalists belonged to journalists associations, syndicates or different professional organizations at that time.

In Poland, two professional associations fiercely compete with each other: The Journalists' Association of the Republic of Poland (SDRP), with about 7.5 thousand members in 2000, who are older or mainly retired journalists, and the Polish Journalists' Association (SDP), with about 1.5 thousand members in 2000, which refers to the traditions of so-called first 'Solidarity' (1980–1), but has recently been quite resiliently active. The centre of interest of the SDP is the process of building a new democratic order and institutional guarantees of freedom of the media in Poland. SDP focuses on such issues as the relations between the media and public opinion, the protection of professional secrets of journalists, and the protection of privacy. There are also other journalists' organizations, such as the Catholic Journalists' Association (KSD) which is well integrated. For the protection of social rights of journalists, the Polish Syndicate of Journalists (with the nature of a trade union) has been established (Mielczarek 2007: 75–6).

One outcome of the journalists' activity is the Media Ethic Charter. This is the most important document of press deontology in Poland. In 1995 it was accepted by the Polish Media Conference, a gathering of journalist associations, representatives of press publishers and broadcasters' organizations.

Apart from the Charter, the members of Polish Media Conference agreed to respect the provisions of the Journalistic Moral Code of the Journalists' Association of the Republic of Poland, and the members of SDP have their Journalist Ethic Code. In the last few years, the Polish Chamber of Press Publishers have prepared a very important document: The Code for Good Practices for Press Publishers. It should be added here that public broadcasters have their own ethic codes (for example the principles of journalist ethics of TVP SA) and ethic commissions. Journalists and editors decided to establish the Polish Media Conference at the beginning of 1995. Soon after, the Media Ethic Council was established, which was authorized to make announcements and statements, especially in cases of violation of The Charter (Mielczarek 2007: 77–9).

What seems to be a fundamental threat is the *weakness of a public media journalistic milieu*, which makes it significantly difficult to solve the problem of media politicization. Deep crisis causes undesirable and sometimes cynical attitudes among journalists of the public media, who are mostly oriented towards their own interest. There is no debate about important problems of media and journalists, about threats to freedom of the media or about professional ethics. 'There is no professional solidarity', says K. Pokorna-Ignatowicz (2007: 239):

> 'even when the rights of a journalist are violated. The journalist milieu is deeply divided according to ideological, social, and generational differences. There is not a single effective professional association battling for journalists' rights, and existing professional institutions are disrespected (e.g. Media Ethics Council). (K. Pokorna-Ignatowicz 2007: 240)

Another factor that threatens public discourse in Poland, and seriously restricts the internal freedom of press, is Article 10 of the press law, according to which a journalist must obey and follow the general principles of his/her publisher. Thus, *journalists' internal freedom within editorial offices* is the *conditio sine qua non* for preserving pluralism of public discourse in Poland (Pisarek 2002: 16).

Conclusion

Tadeusz Kowalski (2006: 8) has recently stated that:

> ...in Poland the media market is stable and, moreover, it is just a system of mature and competitive market that has become a part of the European media system. The press market in Poland, despite possessing some specific features, does not differ essentially from the one of the developed European countries.

The situation on the TV market is also, as was pointed out, different and reveals many special features.

The press (media) market transformation from so-called real socialism to the market economy took place at least a decade ago. Since then, the free market mechanisms have challenged press and electronic media editors with economic barriers (for example input barriers). These barriers are hard to overcome for small economic entities of decent capital even on the local market. Therefore, ongoing concentration is taking place, which embraces firms operating at a regional and trans-national level. Apart from undisputable benefits, this development also brings about less favourable effects.

The phenomenon of European and global concerns entering the Polish market is accompanied by the conviction that '... media are a typical commodity that has to be under the same regulations as parsley or the nail market' (Żakowski 2008: 17). They are no longer treated as a serious source of information and ideas, and have become a source of emotional, mostly sensational, stimulation. Having entered the stock exchange, media and entertainment conglomerates, newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations are more and more dependent on aggressive dividend-oriented investment funds, requiring the media only to be attractive to their consumers. As a result, the significance of media editors, publishers, journalists and authors is decreasing and the power of chief executives, who primarily care about other undertakings, commercials and good relations with political power, and managers and specialists in marketing, whose only mission is to provide satisfactory economic results, is increasing (Żakowski 2008: 18). Such a situation, for example, has led to the omnipresent phenomenon of the so-called 'Italian fashion' (newspaper advertisement inserts) which affect even serious opinion titles: the sales are built up on movies or cosmetics, while the press content is considered secondary.

These general remarks, under Polish circumstances, seem to be more fully justified in regard to the press market than to the TV market. Most of the former had been sold to Western media concerns much earlier, whereas, in the case of electronic media, foreign capital shares were limited until 2004. Among the biggest press publishers, one can find such companies as Axel Springer, Verlagsgruppe Passau, Mecom (originally – Orkla, Bonnier), while the magazine market belongs to the 'big four': Bauer, Axel Springer, G+J (indirectly Bertelsmann) and Edipresse, with growing shares by Marquard and Burda. Thanks to them, we are experiencing the inflow of 'leisure time' press, basically meeting entertaining needs. Tomasz Mielczarek (2007: 364) seems to be right when he writes that their expansion 'has objectively decreased interests in the opinion and Catholic press and commercialized the press addressed to the youth and kids.'

Thus, is there any space for plurality of opinions and information in the free market of dailies and opinion press? Undoubtedly, there are no other obstacles for the free market development apart from the above-mentioned economic input barriers and demand for specific content. For example, if rural inhabitants had wanted to read peasant press and if different peasant parties (ruling in coalitions for nearly two decades) had wanted to publish it, it would not have disappeared in the early 1990s. In fact, it is the only remaining uninfluenced space on the political map of newspapers and weeklies. All other political views are expressed in low-circulation magazines. The milieu of 'excluded', poor, elderly inhabitants from the countryside is supported by the media conglomerate of the controversial Redemptorist, Father Tadeusz Rydzyk (*Nasz Dziennik*, Radio Maryja, Telewizja Trwam). The tabloid press, in principle, supports populist views. The four biggest quality dailies often do not differ in views on the economy (liberal option), thus seeking their place on the market and attempting to distinguish themselves from the *Gazeta Wyborcza*. From time to time they follow socio-political trends, depending on the social situation in a given period of time and on the temper of leading journalists. Moreover, the three most popular opinion weeklies have a consensus on economic issues, seek their identity in relation to major socio-political disputes, positioning themselves on the left or on the right. Other titles, less popular, usually express more distinct views. Looking at press models in the European market, we can say that we are closer to the Anglo-Saxon than to the Mediterranean model.

In turn, the biggest commercial TV stations (TVN and Polsat) have a Polish origin and prevailingly Polish capital. While struggling for a wider audience, they follow the pattern of western[34] entertainment TV stations and chase after trendy formats; however, they still accept the position of the public giant (TVP), at least as long as it maintains its position on the market.

For the public media authorities, the interests of public media themselves seem to be most important. It leads to pathologization of 'corporate culture'. Mrozowski (2007: 156) says that 'the autonomy and independence – which in the case of the Polish media means lack of any control over the current activity of the public media – cause the situation in which the public media present their own benefits as public interests'. This situation was the effect of the lack of control over public media, not only from public authorities but from social institutions as well. Polish public broadcasters take only the interests of political principals and advertisers into account. Hence, the range of beneficiaries of public media activities is small: management, protégés of management and privileged deliverers of the programme (producers, performers, authors, and so on). As a result, Mrozowski says that the public institution is subordinated to oligarchic appropriation:

> The real control over the public media is in the hands of a narrow group of politicians and representatives of big corporations. The former decide about position appointments, the latter influence the income from advertising time sales...The interests of cultural institutions and civic society are marginalized...In this way the programme policy of the public media is a specific mixture of paternalistic and commercial model, while the civic model is totally ignored, says Mrozowski (2007: 156–7).

Another threat to the public media is the *crisis of identity*. The public media are torn between opposite values – declared vs. actually realized (Jakubowicz 2007: 250–1): independence, impartiality and public service vs. ideological engagement; non-commercial vs. dependence on advertising and commercialization; respect for audience and public service vs. objectification of the audience as an aim of ideological actions and 'audience-commodity'.

Public broadcasters in all countries must strive to confirm their existence and to gain public acceptance. In Poland, we also have to deal with the 'crisis of legitimization of existence of public broadcasters' (Jakubowicz 2007: 252). Some people refuse to support public broadcasters, especially if they do not meet public expectations. In Poland, commercial media (and also some politicians) excite social resistance to an obsolete model of the public media and especially to licence fees. Despite such an aggressive campaign, Poles still declare that they trust public media, though they also manifest their disappointment with how the public media function and operate. People commonly protest by not paying the license fee. Urgent and fundamental reforms are needed, otherwise – as Karol Jakubowicz (2007: 256) points out – 'progressive programme convergence between public and licensed broadcasters will finally deprive the former of the right to exist'.

Among many tendencies which push the public media away from the society, Maciej Mrozowski (2007: 158) lists the decline of the ethos of aspiring (original and valuable) creativity, the lack of concern about the quality of programme (attractive and valuable), and the lack of the sense of existence (caring about yourself, your own functioning, and employers' favour is more motivating than the idea of public service). Moreover, the public media in Poland thoughtlessly imitate their commercial rivals. Thus, commercialized and politicized public media do not respect their audience and are not pluralistic enough. What can be said about the public media as a kind of 'cultural industry' – according to Karol Jakubowicz (2007: 246) – is that they should be 'public in programme and commercial in management in order to be effective, which is necessary on the free competitive media market'. In Poland, however, 'the situation looks completely different: public media are commercialized in programme and definitely public in management (i.e. ineffective and poorly organized)'.

Obviously, a number of accusations about the commercialization of the TVP programme (mainly entertainment oriented TVP2) and its politicization (TVP1 and TVP Info) are justified, but all of these public and commercial stations are mutually checked and maintain a relatively high level of quality. The idea of a purposeful and determined weakening of public TV would probably open the way to even bigger 'primitivism' or 'tabloidization' of the offer of commercial broadcasters. Global giants, as is expected, are going to show up in a few years, when multiplexes of terrestrial TV are sold, and it is likely that Polish medium scale market players (TVN or Polsat Group) will not hold up against their competition.

Notes

1. The national dailies – except for Trybuna Ludu – were pre-dated, for example were printed in Warsaw and reached their readers in distant regions of Poland with outdated news (two days old).
2. Those titles were published once a week or month, so the readers' contact with the press was no longer everyday.
3. In 1994 the first radio (for seven years) and television (for ten years) broadcasting licences were granted according to the Broadcasting Act (29 December 1992). The second licence-granting process for radio stations began in 2001 and for television stations in 2004. According to the new broadcasting act (29 December 2005) licence validity periods for radio and TV were the same (ten years), so all licences for analogue terrestrial frequencies for TV broadcasters will have expired by 2014. However, obligatory analogue TV switch-off and conversion into digital terrestrial TV broadcasting is planned for 2012.
4. These titles consist of a smaller number of pages (twelve to sixteen) and they are printed on poorer quality paper. There are no supplements inside (which can be found every day in great numbers in quality papers), fewer illustrations and advertisements.
5. For instance, as a result of liquidation of the Communist press concern RWS, the right to publish *Express Wieczorny* was granted to the Press Foundation of 'Solidarity' trade union (Fundacja Prasowa 'Solidarności') related at that time to Porozumienie Centrum (PC), a party led by the

Kaczyński brothers. *Sztandar Młodych* was owned by another strong right-wing party of these times: Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej (KPN). Both titles, soon in crisis, were transferred to the portfolio of Swiss Marquard.

6. For instance, in 1995–9 high circulation dailies (during the People's Republic of Poland) vanished from the market: *Gromada-Rolnik Polski*, *Kurier Polski*, *Sztandar Młodych* (under the name *SM-Sztandar*), *Słowo Powszechne* (since 1993 as *Słowo-Dziennik Katolicki*), and additionally *Życie Warszawy* became a regional daily.
7. *Życie* was suspended at the time of the collapse of the stock exchange company 4Media (December 2002). The new investor re-launched the daily but published it for only one year (from January 2004 till January 2005). During this period its sales were about 20,000 copies.
8. 49 per cent of the shares of the publishing company Presspublika are owned by PW 'Rzeczpospolita' (a holding publishing a few other titles additionally possessing a book publishing house, music company and printing house). PW 'Rzeczpospolita' is state property (the Treasury). The new (since November 2007) government led by Donald Tusk announced the 'cleansing' of this ambiguous situation and selling the state treasury shares in the daily *Rzeczpospolita*. Other governments before 2006 did not interfere in the editorial programme line of *Rzeczpospolita*. The present government led by Donald Tusk wants to sell the shares. Currently the Treasury and Mecom are negotiating Mecom's purchase of the rest (49 per cent) of shares in Presspublica (see Makarenko 2008).
9. The president of Mecom Plc. Management, David Montgomery (2007), made a special announcement published in *Rzeczpospolita*, in which he supported the necessity of preserving the rule of not interfering in the press freedom of over 300 press titles (including *Rzeczpospolita*) owned by Mecom. The editors of *Gazeta Wyborcza* do not believe in such declarations (see Stasiński 2007).
10. The previous editorial line, oriented towards confrontation with that of *Gazeta Wyborcza* was broadly presented by editor-in-chief himself (see Gluza 2007).
11. Since the 1960s, Adam Michnik has been a well-known oppositionist and a political prisoner repeatedly.
12. Both papers – *Rzeczpospolita* and *Dziennik* – regard so-called 'Michnik-like-opinions' (in Polish *Michnikowszczyzna,* the term taken from the title of a famous book by a right-wing publicist, Rafał Ziemkiewicz) as the main evil in public life.
13. The right-wing milieu has made many accusations that the logo of Solidarity was appropriated and the funds used to develop a private company (see Remuszko 1999). The representatives of Agora denied these aspersions many times.
14. Agora SA owns (apart from *Gazeta Wyborcza* with 40 per cent of shares in daily press advertising market) the only free-of-charge daily *Metro*, several colourful magazines (with the leading, high-circulation women's monthly, *Poradnik Domowy*), the trans-regional radio TOK FM and about 25 local stations gathered in 'Złote Przeboje' network and Roxy FM, the Internet portal *Gazeta.pl* and other enterprises (for example, an outdoor advertising company).
15. The newspaper is a 'descendant' of *Trybuna Ludu,* which in the People's Republic of Poland was the official Communist party (PZPR) daily. After that time, and for many years, *Trybuna* has been published by a private company, but there is a popular belief that its editor-in-chief is still assigned by the authorities of social democratic party (SLD).
16. Since September 1994, Polskapresse has been a Polish branch of the Bavarian publishing house, Verlagsgruppe Passau.

17. In fact, there are seven dispersed 'independent' newspapers. But speaking about the 'duopolistic situation' on the regional dailies market makes sense, as in every region of Poland Polskapresse and Orkla own at least one title and very rarely is an 'independent' daily stronger (Kraków, Szczecin).
18. The regional daily, *Kuriel Lubelski* is still owned by Zbigniew Jakubas and only co-operates with the project Polska. In this case, contrary to other editions, the nation-wide part of *Polska* is just the supplement to the regional newspaper. The Polish Chamber of Press Publishers and Press Circulation Audit Unit do not let *Polska* be treated as the national newspaper competing on the same market with *Gazeta Wyborcza* or *Dziennik*. The situation is more complicated because in six biggest regions *Polska* is the nation-wide part of long-existing regional dailies. The editorial offices, though reduced in manpower, have remained in the regions and the front page is often filled with regional news mixed with national news. On the other hand, in most of the remaining regions – except for Warszawa, Opole and Lublin – there are no regional editorial offices so *Polska* is published in the version edited by the Warszawa headquarters. These editions have very low sales (about 700 to 2000 copies).
19. *Przegląd* has much smaller sales, limited content and simpler layout.
20. *Przekrój* – after the change of editorial formula into an opinion weekly – started to increase sales rapidly, and in 2004 exceeded 100 thousand copies, so it got close to the leading three (*Polityka*, *Wprost* and *Newsweek Polska*). Unfortunately, this result was not maintained.
21. The weekly *Ozon* – published from April 2005 until August 2006 – with its elegant layout and gathering of well-known, right-wing publicists, had difficulties with gaining satisfactory sales results (52 thousand copies in 2005, 31 thousand in 2006). Thus, for economic reasons, it stopped being published.
22. Sub-local titles, according to the Press Research Centre's methodology, are addressed to small communities in municipalities or in parts of big cities (quarters, districts, housing estates).
23. Other estimations: 2.6–3.1 thousand of sub-local titles in 2005 (Jarowiecki 2007: 29).
24. Since January 1994 Polskie Radio has been a public broadcaster. Before that, for a several dozen years it was a state institution.
25. According to the Broadcasting Act (1992), the status of 'public broadcaster' (Polskie Radio, Telewizja Polska) or the status of 'licensed broadcaster' was projected. Licensed broadcasters consist mainly of private ones, but also Church, academic and – initially – self-government ones. In 2001 the possibility of gaining the 'social broadcaster' status appeared and it was granted to some Church and academic stations. 'Social broadcasters' cannot gain profits from advertising. Other stations (without licence) are the pirate ones.
26. Several other MW stations, even though they have licences, have problems with broadcasting.
27. Since 2001 the licences of these stations have gradually been changed. Thus, they operate partially in commercial circumstances, indirectly financed by self-government funds (for example by cultural community centres).
28. Public television and radio remain under powerful political control. The National Broadcasting Council (Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji – KRRiT), which has controlled the electronic broadcasting sector since April 1993, has broad rights as regards broadcasting supervision and administration of general viewer licence fees. The Council has powers in monitoring and regulating programming on radio and television, allocating broadcasting frequencies and licences, and apportioning subscription revenues to public media. In order to encourage KRRiT's apolitical character, the KRRiT members are legally obliged to suspend any membership in political parties or public associations. However, they are chosen for their political allegiances and nominated by the Sejm, the Senate, and the President

following political bargaining, thus raising potentially serious questions about the independence of broadcasting oversight from political influence. According to this principle, politically chosen members of the Council choose politically convenient members of the supervisory boards of the public television (TVP) as well as national and regional companies of Polish Radio (PR). Members of the boards, programming directors, and so on are appointed in the same way. Additionally, the Treasury (as the formal owner of TVP SA company and public radio companies) joins these 'party games' connected with appointing the public broadcasting authorities.

29. Until October 2007 TVP Info operated as TVP 3 Regionalna, gathering sixteen regional divisions of TVP, which in discrete time bands, broadcast their own programmes about four hours per day.
30. All quoted data about television viewing market shares come from AGB Nielsen Media Research telemetric surveys. There are also research results of TNS/OBOP available in Poland.
31. The number of cable TV subscribers has remained almost unchanged for a few years. Thus, one might say that cable TV broadcasters are not interested (for economic reasons) in spreading the networks in so-far not-cabled areas (suburban, parish). For the inhabitants of such areas, the only chance for a couple more years (until the digital terrestrial TV is launched) is to become a subscriber of a digital platform. Cyfrowy Polsat and platforma N offer cheap subscriptions (about 35–40 PLN) and many attractive sport channels which are entitled to transmit the most attractive sports events.
32. In 2005 the group of 'underprivileged' was about 2m higher.
33. After introducing the new labour code (1996), the phenomenon of encouraging journalists to become self-employed was observed in Poland (for example launching one-man companies). It has become easier to break an agreement with a journalist in such a situation than with a journalist as a full-time employee. (see Mielczarek 2007: 71).
34. TVN was launched in 1997 and employed many journalistic stars. TVN had an ambitious programme concept with information, commentary and entertainment programmes of 'high quality'. Unfortunately, at the beginning of 1998, under market pressure (and American shareholder CME and later SBS) the programme priorities were changed to more entertainment. The president of TVN, Mariusz Walter, admitted that in the clash with the market reality he had to resign from the dreams of perfect television. To some extent, these dreams were realized a few years later when TVN24 and special interest channels were launched.

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