

News repertoires in Poland

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Abstract:

This article presents and discusses the results of the Polish part of an international research project using integrated mixed qualitative and quantitative methods, based on a Q-methodological study of cross-media news consumption.¹ The Polish target sample comprised 36 informants from three cities. The five-factor solution resulting from the factor analysis allowed five repertoire groups to be established for the Polish sample: 1. Mainstream commercial TV and radio channel users; 2. Omnivorous media users; 3 Social and new media fans; 4. Public Service Media followers; 5. Quality press readers.

Keywords: news consumption, news repertoires, factor analysis, cross-media, news audiences, news repertoires, Q methodology, democratic engagement, Poland

Poland and its mediascape

The present population of Poland is slightly over 38 million people. Poland is an almost mono-ethnic society, with Poles making up around 97% of the country's inhabitants. The vast majority of Poles (90%) belong to the Catholic Church.

Poland is undergoing rapid systemic transformation after the collapse of communism in 1989. Twenty-five years ago, state censorship was abolished and the principle of the freedom of the press was introduced. Economic reforms then led to massive investments in the private sector.

As a result of the last parliamentary elections in October 2015, the image of Poland changed radically in many countries. In spite of the democratic transition, Poland is today characterised by Euroscepticism and a rather sovereigntist political line. Within two years of the election, the government led by the Law and Justice Party transformed the public media model for radio and television back into a system where, even more openly than in the last decades of communism, the channel content parrots the rulers' line. In 2016-17, 230 journalists, editors and producers were dismissed. For print journalism and private radio and television broadcasters, the pressure has been different but no less restrictive. A new Media

Deconcentration Act is being prepared by the Ministry of Culture, which means that the state will take over the regional press, which today belongs to German or Swiss Media groups – Passauer, Ringier and Springer.

In their analysis of media systems, Hallin and Mancini (2004) suggest that Eastern and Central European countries, such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the Baltic states, tend to be close to the Democratic Corporatist model of media, which is characterised by high newspaper circulation; external pluralism, especially in the national press; a politics-in-broadcasting system with substantial autonomy; strong professionalisation; institutionalised self-regulation; strong state intervention, but with protection for press freedom; press subsidies; and strong public service broadcasting, among other features (Mancini and Hallin 2004, p. 67). Polish media researcher Karol Jakubowicz has suggested an ‘Italianisation’ of the media in the region, characterised by greater or smaller state control over the media, political party influence on the selection of topics and the structure of media organisation, a high degree of integration of the media and political elites, and ethical divisions among journalists and media personnel (Jakubowicz 2011). More recently, the World Press Freedom Index (2017) indicated the poor situation concerning media freedom in Poland (54th position, 47th in 2016). Eight countries from the region are higher ranked than Poland (Estonia (12th), Slovakia (17th), the Czech Republic (23th), Latvia (28th), Lithuania (36th), Slovenia (37th) and Romania (46th)).

Poland still has one of the most dynamic media markets in Europe (Media Data Base 2015). There are more than 300 TV and radio channels competing for the attention of listeners and viewers. As of today, Poland has the third-biggest publishing market in Europe. There are more than 5,000 press titles, including national and regional dailies, weeklies, monthly magazines and the specialised press.

Television still has a central position in Poles’ contact with the media. Television is still more frequently used than the internet; however, the younger generation – the e-generation or *digital natives* (Prensky 2001) – are moving their interests from traditional television towards the digital platforms and mobile devices, forming an environment of *phantom television*, and online outlets have become the main source of news in the country in recent years (Digital News Report 2017). Web portals such as Onet and Wirtualna Polska reach half of the online population. In 2016, the main portals invested heavily in original video production, hiring top talent from television and experimenting with new interactive formats, such as the morning live show *Onet Rano* (Onet in the morning).

In 2015, the Polish television market was dominated by the programmes of public television, TVP 1 and TVP 2, as well as two general-interest commercial channels, TVN and TV Polsat. Polsat has the greatest audience share (11.5%). The second position is taken by TVP1 (11.1%), with a small advantage over TVN, which is backed by American capital (10.4%). TVP 2 (8.3%) has the smallest share of this group. In 2015, twelve of the public broadcaster’s channels had 29.4% of the market (Nielsen 2016).

According to Nielsen Audience, in 2016 the main public channels – TVP 1, TVP 2 and TVP Info – lost 10% of their average daily viewing shares on the previous year, and 17% of

viewers aged 16–49, a major concern for advertisers (Polish public media are funded both by licence fees and advertising). The privately owned broadcasters have benefited, at least for the time being, as Polsat has taken over from TVP 1 as the most-watched general-interest station, and TVN 24 has taken over from TVP Info as the top news channel (Piechota 2017).

The introduction of terrestrial digital television in 2013 caused a 14-minute increase in the average time spent watching TV by 2016, to the average total of 4 hours 22 minutes. Although the pay mode of watching TV (cable and satellite) prevails (65.2 % of households), 4.3 million people have access to free terrestrial digital television (i.e. 34.8 % of households), with the possibility of receiving twenty-seven channels.

Radio is used daily by 72% of the Polish population aged 15–75. The daily time of listening to the radio in 2016 was 4 hours 30 minutes. In the radio market, listening to national programmes prevails over regional programmes. In terms of ownership type, however, commercial broadcasters have gained a significant advantage concerning both daily reach and audience share. The audience of public radio (national and regional broadcasters) in 2016 was approximately 23% and is decreasing.

Poland has the third-biggest press sector in Europe, which is dominated by German media companies such as Ringier, Springer Media and Bauer Media Group. One third of the Polish population (12 million people) are avid readers of newspapers, of which roughly five million copies are sold every day. Among the newspapers with the highest readership level, there are daily newspapers – *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* comprise the quality press, and *Fakt* and *Super Express* are tabloids – and two weekly newsmagazines, *Newsweek* and *Polityka*.

In accordance with the results of the studies conducted by the Central Statistical Office of Poland (2016), nearly 80% of households have access to the internet, with 75.7% having access to broadband.

Overall, trust in the Polish media is relatively strong at 31%, compared to 20% in Europe as a whole (Eurobarometer 2014).

Methodology

The Polish study was guided by the common knowledge interests identified by the international research team (Schrøder 2015):

- How do people choose ‘their’ media from the many available sources?
- What meanings do people give to their news media preferences in everyday life?
- How are media repertoires correlated with various forms of social, cultural and political participation?

The fieldwork consisted of in-depth interviews conducted using the Q-sort method with a sample of thirty-six people, in each participating country (for details, please see the

Introduction to this special section by Adoni et al.). One of the advantages of the Q-sort method is the possibility of performing a factor analysis using data from a relatively small number of informants (Kobbernagel & Schröder 2016), thereby transforming qualitative data into a quantitative output. This part of the research aimed at determining the types of news media repertoires built by the informants in their role as news consumers. A small number of informants (36 people), chosen on the basis of social and demographic variables (gender, age, education and location), participated in the in-depth interviews.

Table 1: The sample structure

Gender	W	18
	M	18
Education	up to 12 years	12
	Intermediary (BA)	12
	Higher	12
Age	18–35	12
	36–60	12
	61+	12
Location	Warsaw - capital city	12
	Large city - Torun	12
	Small city	12

This allowed a typology of news media use practices to be built. These are not representative of the population of Poland; however, in accordance with the logic of the Q-sort data analysis method, the typology and the practices – considering the sufficient social and demographic diversity of participants – can be considered to be fairly typical of the Polish population.

In-depth interviews were conducted in March and April 2015 in three Polish cities: Warsaw, the capital city; Toruń, a large city in the north; and Otwock, a small town near the capital city. The qualitative in-depth interviews included a card sorting exercise, in which informants sorted and ranked 36 cards with different news media platforms and formats on a pyramidal grid according to their importance in the informant’s everyday life. The grid had nine numbered columns: a middle column with the value zero, four columns to the left with values from -1 to -4 (for a declining sequence of importance), and four columns to the right with values from +1 to +4 (for an increasing sequence of importance). As a result, every news media card received a value that could be entered into the factor analytical calculation. The interviews took from sixty to ninety minutes. After this part of the interview, the informants completed a questionnaire independently concerning their use of news as a democratic resource.

In the factor analysis, after an in-depth analysis of the possible solutions (up to ten), a solution with five factors was chosen (see **Appendix 2**), for the following reasons: 1. it included a sufficient proportion of the explained variance (58% towards the recommended minimum of 50–60%); 2. the simplicity of the solution (small number of factors); 3. a

relatively small number of people with loading on more than one factor (five people); 4. no factor consisting of only two people.

The solution also had a number of weaknesses: 1. two people had a negative loading (however, this problem was also present in the case of all other solutions); 2. each factor had a minimum of one person who also loaded for another factor; 3. by applying the recommended borderline value for loading (i.e. 0.43), two people did not belong to any factor.

News media repertoires in Poland

Generally, people's use of news media depends on numerous factors, including the number and kind of news platforms available, their interest in the content, the geographical and social reach of the media, and their degree of trust in the various media.

In the course of the qualitative interviews, an attempt was made to identify how the constellation and shape of individual repertoires were created by news users, as a result of their assessment of which media they see as valuable and essential. The selection of a given news media was thus seen as being dependent on the so-called 'worthwhileness factors' (Schrøder & Larsen, 2010): in order to be included in a person's news media repertoire, a news media should therefore be worthwhile in terms of building public connection (in terms of its democratic value or role in everyday networks), having situational fit, being affordable, complying with normative pressures from peers, having participatory potential, having technological appeal, etc.

The optimal five-factor solution resulting from the factor analysis allowed five repertoire groups to be established for the Polish sample. Their main characteristics are included in **Table 3**. These refer to the list of characteristics of repertoires presented in Swart et al. (2016) and Schrøder (2015). **Appendix 1** includes the list of average values for particular media in the following five repertoires:

Repertoire 1: Mainstream commercial TV and radio channel users (12 informants)

Repertoire 2: Omnivorous media users (10 informants)

Repertoire 3: Social and new media fans (5 informants)

Repertoire 4: Public Service Media followers (6 informants)

Repertoire 5: Quality press readers (3 informants)

These repertoires are presented below, indicating their preferred media and paying attention to the social and demographic characteristics of the people assigned to a given repertoire. **Table 2** shows the main characteristics of the five repertoires defining the informants.

Repertoire 1: Mainstream commercial TV and radio channel users (12 informants)

Informants composing this repertoire focus on TV news and current affairs on 24-hour TV news channels, radio news on commercial radio stations and TV current affairs in the light version. They do not have any particular characteristics apart from their place of residence (five of them live in Toruń, i.e., a large urban environment). Their selection of particular media as sources of information is a result of the belief that it is worth committing a lot of time to the media on a daily basis and at selected times during the day. The use of media takes place in several manners. Some people do it as a routine and a habit:

In the morning, it's *Dzień Dobry* TVN. That's what my husband watches. I take a look at times. At work, while having coffee, I check *Onet*, read the headlines. I open it when there's something attractive. The radio's on all the time at work. In the evening, it's TVP One – the news; sometimes *Wydarzenia* on Polsat. (#1, woman, capital city, 35–60, BA)

However, if they know that something important has happened to which it is worth paying attention, the same recipients select other options:

When things happen, then I watch *Wydarzenia* (news magazine on commercial TV Polsat) after a film. I watch *Fakty* (commercial TV, TVN) too. (#1, woman, capital city, 35–60, BA)

For people in Repertoire 1, the use of various media constitutes a daily routine; however, within this main trend, they mainly check television (public and commercial) and daily newspapers such as the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza*:

TVN24 or Polsat News. I watch Polsat Info until 8 a.m. and then TVN24, if I can.' (#13, man, provincial city, 18–34, BA)

In general, I check the news. I've got an app for TVN24. RMF (commercial radio station), WP (online service) and I follow it there. I buy newspapers, but not always. We usually buy *Gazeta Wyborcza* (quality daily press) on Fridays. We buy local newspapers.' (#13, man, provincial city, 18–34, BA)

There seem to be two reasons for the use of media: the need for knowledge about the surrounding world (on a global scale as well as, to a larger extent, of a nationwide and local scope) and the pressure to keep in touch with others:

Table 2: Media news repertoires and their main features

Repertoires	R1 (11 informants) Mainstream commercial TV and radio channel users	R2 (10 informants) Omnivorous media users	R3 (5 informants) Social and new media fans	R4 (6 informants) Public Service Media followers	R5 (3 informants) Quality newspapers readers
Most important news media	Commercial TV; TV current affairs; 24-hour TV news channel; radio news in commercial stations; TV current affairs in light version	Professional magazines; portals; public TV; commercial TV; news from Twitter	News from Facebook; news from YouTube; SMS and e-mails; online news media; news on national commercial TV	Regional TV; public TV; TV current affairs; radio news on PBS; 24-hour TV news channel	National quality press online; national weekly magazine; national daily quality press print; radio news on PBS channels; TV current affairs, serious
Least important news media	TV news from international providers; national news magazines; local daily newspaper online; international broadcasters online news; local daily newspaper online	National tabloid online; public radio news; national tabloid print; news on other social media; news on Facebook	Free newspaper online; national tabloid online; local TV news; national tabloid print; news on TV text	National commercial TV news; news on Twitter; free newspaper print; local weekly online; local weekly newspaper print; TV news light	News on TV text; TV news on commercial TV; TV public news, news on Facebook; news from born-online news media; national tabloid print
Scope	National	National	International	National	National
Mode of news use	Lean-back	Lean-forward	Lean-forward	Lean-back	Lean-back
demographics	Two from 18-34 age group, three from 61+ and six from 35-60 age group, six up to BA level, five with university level education	Three 18-34 age group, three from 35-60 age group, four from 61+ age group, two up to 12 years education, three up to BA, five at university level	Four 18-34 years age group, one from 61+, two up to 12 years, two up to BA, one at university level	Four 61+, one from 35-60 age group, one from 18-34 age group	Three from 35-60 age group, one university level, two up to BA

When they read the news, you catch bits and pieces just to know what's going on in the world. We take an interest in things, we go voting. We buy *Gazeta Wyborcza* so we have it for the weekend. (#31, woman, large city, 18–34 BA)

The local perspective is typical for people living in smaller towns, where identification with the local community and its matters is obviously easier than in a bigger city:

I take an interest in what's going on, even locally. When there are campaigns, I try to take part. I try to participate, if I can. Other things, it's hard to say. (#31, woman, large city, 18–34 BA)

Surely, living in Otwock, I don't get enough information about Otwock and the region. I'm interested. (#19, woman, provincial city, 35–60 BA)

We talk about different things. Recently, we talked about the parties that keep fighting over the new PM. One should talk about things, as we have different perspectives; you can learn a lot. (#31, woman, large city, 18–34, BA)

Under the conditions of severe political conflict suffered by Poland, a dialogue, a conversation or even a regular exchange of opinions is difficult. For some people, it means withdrawal from conversations about politics.

We share views, there are no conflicts, but it's better not to discuss a subject because people have different experiences and they get different information. If you want to avoid conflict, you'd better not to discuss politics. (#3, man, capital city, 35–60, BA)

Repertoire 2: *Omnivorous media users* (10 informants)

Repertoire 2 was composed of informants living mostly in a small town outside Warsaw. The media in this repertoire are of various kinds, both traditional and new. The highest values go to the media outside of the TV mainstream, such as industry and professional magazines, online portals and social media. Therefore, the specific characteristic representing this repertoire is the variety of media used. There are many variables differentiating the members' choices: way of life, time regime, interests, practical needs, etc. The fundamental circumstance is the location of using media. Different media – and consequently other sources of information – are used at home, at work, in the car, etc.

At work, it's the radio – RMF FM, best news, up to date. Then, it's the internet, and finally, television. (#12, man, capital city, 18–34 BA)

At about 2 p.m., I checked what's on at the stock exchange, via Onet; I referred to current listings, technical analysis, etc. This took around 1.5 hrs. At night, I watched current affairs programmes. I try to watch between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. In the evening, it's a book, TV or a film. After the news, I watched *Biznes Świat*, TVN. (#8, man, capital city, 61+, university).

The need for media in this repertoire group seems, most of all, to be due to the functioning of 'the effect of presence', which may manifest itself in the fulfilment of the need to exchange opinions or comment on reality, especially political reality, referring to authorities as well as the need to be aware of the surrounding world.

I talk to my colleagues at work. We comment on things. Everyone has their preferences: *Onet*, *WP*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*. We go through it during the day and meet to talk about it. We email each other about different cultural events. I sometimes send it to my kids. Even my 6-year-old grandson can comment on things. (#24, woman, provincial city, 61+, university)

Thanks to information media, people are more aware about things that are going on and can discuss them, have an opinion. (#12, man, capital city, 18–34, BA)

The political conflict mentioned above has the effect that people seek others who represent the same or similar opinions to their own.

I try to avoid political subjects, unless I talk to someone who has similar political views. I believe that our Polish politics are not worth losing friends over, or entering into conflict. It's not worth it. (#24, woman, provincial city, 61+, university)

However, one informant (#8, Warsaw) points out the weakness of civic society in Poland:

I regret that there is no society in Poland. A society is a nation that has a common interest. In the communist era, people had a different social awareness because they had a common enemy. That's why they got together. There's no community, apart from the particular interests of various professional groups; there's no common interest. (#8, man, capital city, 61+, university)

The use of various media is accompanied by online activity regardless of the level of social capital. Statements of people with relatively low cultural capital are interesting here.

Whenever there are comments on the internet, I always place my comments. When there's something I don't like, I comment on it right away, send my opinion. I try to be active. I'm not indifferent. I'm not a brawler, either. (#21, woman, provincial city, 61+, up to 12 years)

WP.pl, Google. I surf the internet. I listen to the radio. *Radio Maryja* (conservative Catholic Church station), the news, too. They have the most reliable news there. Then I go biking, shopping, go to see the doctor. Back home, lunch, and the TV is on all that time. *Newsweek Poland* – I like going through it, but I don't like buying it. I read it through when I get hold of it. (#21, woman, provincial city, 61+, up to 12 years).

People with higher education point out such social engagements, including among them a particular NGO.

I get Greenpeace and Amnesty International because I once declared my support and made a contribution. (#24. woman, provincial city, 61+, university)

Repertoire 3: *Social and new media fans* (5 informants)

Repertoire 3 is quite special because it is connected with intensive use of the new media, including social media. It is mostly composed of young people below 35 years of age, whose main characteristic is use of networking opportunities. With the arrival of the age of social media, traditional sources of information were complemented by new sources using online technologies. Given their nature, Facebook and Twitter are particularly well suited to reporting on natural as well as other disasters, demonstrations, riots and other unexpected and rapidly changing events, with which the traditional media often can no longer keep up. Twitter and Facebook are sources of information, both personal and impersonal, official and unofficial, found and created, the sources of both first and second-hand information.

I don't often turn on the TV in the morning; I usually use the internet. Yesterday, I used Facebook a lot. (#14, woman, provincial city, 18–34, university)

The internet is the most important media channel – on the phone, on the computer. (#9, woman, capital city, 18–34, BA)

Depends on the day. Facebook – not more than 30 minutes. YouTube, depends what I watch, a whole concerto or one short film; half an hour, on average. (#14, woman, provincial city, 18–34, university)

Folders for global and European matters. News for Albania and Serbia. I refer to them, and that's interesting. My Facebook friends place posts and because of that, I can keep in touch with the language; I know what's going on directly in Albania. Surely, it has an impact. The topic is discussed among friends, either through Facebook or when we meet; because something happened, because I'm terrified of what happened to those kids somewhere in the other end of the world. (#29, woman, large city, 18–34, up to 12 years)

They (new media) are important to me (blogs, websites on animals) because you can place protests, take part in campaigns, etc. (#11, woman, capital city, 18–34, up to 12 years)

Being interactive, being in touch via Facebook. It's a standard. I get news from the internet. I have my favourite sites and I go there. That knowledge makes me feel that I'm up to date. (#9, woman, capital city, 18–34, BA)

Repertoire 4: *Public Service Media followers* (6 informants)

The majority of the informants who composed Repertoire 4 are connected with the capital city and more than the others use public broadcaster programmes, Polish Radio and TV, including Polish regional TV, which is well developed in Poland. What is interesting is that these people prefer traditional media, especially radio, as a source of information (Jedrzejewski 2015).

From other studies conducted in Poland it is evident that for numerous media recipients the fundamental public medium is still television. They use both public channels as well as commercial channels, along with less frequently used religious (social) and thematic channels. Thus, there are numerous sources of information, but concerning the reliability of information, public media seems to be privileged among older people. Such media generate more trust; therefore, information presented by them seems more reliable.²

I watch it (TVP - public TV) and I like it. It's a habit; I try not to be biased. The *Wiadomości* (TVP 1 News magazine) is broadcast when I'm free to sit down and watch it. I like the way they present it; I like the presenters. (#1, man, capital city, 35-60, BA)

I don't have much time to search. I sometimes catch it so I watch it. Especially TVP1. On TVP1, the news is quite objective; they have access to the agency news from PAP. (#23, man, provincial city, 61+, BA)

Some regional influence concerning the choice of news channels can be observed. In Warsaw, commercial channels are more popular, including specialised thematic channels, whereas in smaller towns, local media gain greater significance, presenting news from the region. This is

confirmed by a statement from one informant, who appreciates public television for its reliability and greater resistance to manipulation than other media.

TV news, public television, but local. It seems less manipulated, more reliable when it comes to facts. (#17, man, provincial city, 35–60, BA)

Despite the dominant position of public television, an important role is also played by public radio.

I listen to Radio Three (public radio station), the news during the day ... Radio definitely so. This is brief news. One moment and I know if there's anything interesting happening. (#5, woman, capital city, 61+, up to 12 years)

Radio is irreplaceable. I can listen to it at any time... (#7, woman, capital city, 61+, BA)

Other informants underline the fact of being influenced by public television and radio mostly on an habitual basis.

In the morning, I switch on *Kawa czy Herbata* (TVP morning show). (#7, woman, capital city, 61+, BA)

They also highlight a specific property in the form of newsworthiness: the quality of being sufficiently interesting to be reported in news bulletins.

Most important is the news on a current basis, interesting things. I watch it all the time.' (#7, woman, capital city, 61+, BA)

Others pay attention to the fact that the offer of public media is subject to selection, depending on individual interests.

I try to be selective. *Panorama, Wiadomości* (public TV news magazine), documentaries.' (#7, woman, capital city, 61+, BA)

The informants in this repertoire do not limit their attention to the offerings of public media, holding that knowledge about the surrounding world should be multilateral, and therefore come from various sources.

You need to have knowledge in order not to be a slave of the information given by the media. It's true when they say that it is the 'fourth power'. It's good to have different views, not just limited to the mainstream; also to read and listen

to news from independent media and compare them. Drawing your own conclusions is the key. (#10, man, capital city, 18–34, university)

Repertoire 5: *Quality press readers* (3 informants)

Repertoire 5 is composed of three informants, who use the printed press more than those of the other repertoires, both dailies and weeklies. The informants prefer the national quality press (also online) and weekly quality magazines.

Print out press, I read it at times. My neighbour buys it and gives me the supplements. (#36, man, large city, 35–60, BA)

Newspapers – I often use that source of information when travelling. Sound journalism, accurate information. The A4 format is attractive, easy to pack. The graphics – attractive. I considered subscribing to some magazines, newspapers, but it's not possible to subscribe selectively. And I can't afford to subscribe to all of those I want. (#25, woman, large city, 35–60, university level)

When meeting friends, we have talks about the news. I'm not keen on talks about the weather or sport. It's politics. My neighbours are extreme rightists. We like each other and we enjoy having intense discussions. (#36, man, large city, 35–60, BA)

Certainly, reading the daily press is also frequently being conducted online, partly from logistic necessity. It also happens because of easier access to information regardless of one's whereabouts and other circumstances, which ultimately create new patterns of media use.

When I read it from other sources, then I don't need to turn the radio on and listen to the news. I have a 5-minute journey to work, so I have no chance to listen to the radio, even in the car. (#2, woman, capital city, 35–60, BA)

TV screen news is passé. You sometimes go on *Wiadomości* (TVP1 news magazine) from internet portals or services ... just to find news you've already read somewhere else. (#36, man, large city, 35–60, BA)

Conclusions

In analysing the Polish news repertoires, I have attempted to answer several important questions related to the patterns of news carried by media in various forms and on various platforms. First, established the media repertoires that the participants had built, and how these were related to the social and demographic variables. The next step was to show how they, as media users, give meaning to the news.

The project was conducted in February and March 2015, that is, before the parliamentary elections of October 2015, which totally reconstructed the political stage in Poland. At the beginning of 2015, public service media enjoyed high credibility, which they lost – particularly public service television – after the election, when they were included in the manipulation and propaganda of the victorious, radical conservative and populist Law and Justice Party.

For many people, the use of various media constitutes a daily routine, with television (public and commercial) playing a central role. Despite the dominant position of public television, an important role is also played by public radio. Many of the informants do not limit their attention to the offerings from public service media, believing that knowledge about the surrounding world should be multilateral and therefore come from various sources.

People need the news media very much, due to the functioning of ‘the effect of presence’, which may manifest itself in the fulfilment of the need to exchange opinions and comment on reality, especially political reality. They also have a need for knowledge about the world (at a global level as well as, to a larger extent, of a nationwide and local scope) and experience pressure to keep in touch with others. A local perspective is typical of people living in smaller towns, where identification with the local community and its matters is obviously easier than in a bigger city.

There are many variables differentiating people’s choices: way of life, time regime, interests, practical needs, etc. One fundamental circumstance appears to be the location of media use and the situational fit of certain media platforms. Different media – and consequently different sources of information – are used at home, at work, in the car, etc. The use of various media is accompanied by online activity, regardless of the users’ level of social capital. Reading the press, especially the daily press, appears to be happening online with greater frequency, due to logistic necessity but also because of the easier access to information regardless of one’s whereabouts and other circumstances, thereby ultimately creating new patterns of media use.

The most important conclusion resulting from this research is that in their choices the participants constituting the Polish sample focus on the opportunities offered by the mainstream news media. The most preferred medium for news is still television, particularly public television. This does not mean that the participants do not use new media, including social media. Rather, the study indicated that they constitute a supplement and are often used as communication platforms rather than as news platforms.

As mentioned above, the data gathered from the small sample of 36 informants are not representative of Poland’s adult population. However, in accordance with the logic of the Q-sort method, and considering the social and demographic diversity of the participants, the repertoires as well as the news practices revealed by their members can be considered to be typical of news consumption in Polish society at this moment in time.

Biographical note:

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Appendix 1: Factor set with Q-sort values for each repertoire

News media	R1 (11 informants) Mainstream commercial TV and radio channel users	R2 (10 informants) Omnivorous media users	R3 (5 informants) Social and new media fans	R4 6 informants) PSM followers	R5 (3 informants) Quality newspapers readers
Public TV news bulletin (Wiadomości, Panorama)	2.4	3.3	1.6	3.5	-2.2
National TV news bulletin on a commercial channel (Fakty, Wydarzenia)	4.6	2.5	1.9	-2.0	-2.1
Regional/local TV news bulletin	1.3	1.5	-3.3	4.3	-0.4
TV current affairs, light	2.8	-1.4	1.3	-4.9	1.1
TV current affairs, serious	3.6	-1.8	-0.8	3.0	3.2
TV news and/or current affairs on national 24-hour TV news channel	3.2	-0.6	0.4	2.8	-1.6
TV news and/or current affairs from international providers (including 24-hour TV news channels)	-2.5	1.3	-2.2	-1.7	-0.9

News on Text-TV	-0.3	-0.1	-5.2	1.2	-1.7
Radio news as part of a general public service radio channel and regional public stations (PR1, PR2, PR3, PR4)	2.0	-2.9	0.5	2.9	3.3
Radio news as part of a general commercial radio channel (Radio ZET, RMF FM)	2.9	-1.0	1.4	0.8	0.0
Radio current affairs as part of a general radio channel and/or 24-hour radio news/information channel	1.0	-1.0	-0.1	1.6	2.3
National daily quality newspaper, print (<i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i> , <i>Rzeczpospolita</i>)	2.2	2.1	-0.5	-2.3	4.4
National daily tabloid newspaper, print (<i>Fakt</i> , <i>Super Express</i>)	1.2	-3.9	-3.5	-0.1	-3.3
Free daily newspaper, print (<i>Metro</i>)	2.1	-1.6	-0.5	-2.8	-1.2
National news magazines or weekly quality newspaper, print (<i>Polityka</i> , <i>Wprost</i> , <i>Newsweek</i>)	0.4	2.4	1.0	-1.9	4.5
Local/regional daily newspaper, print	2.2	0.2	-1.5	-1.0	-1.2
local weekly/bi-weekly/monthly newspaper, print	1.5	0.9	0.8	-4.2	-1.4
National quality newspaper online (gazeta.pl, wyborcza.pl, rzeczpospolita.pl)	-0.9	1.3	1.0	1.2	4.5
National tabloid newspaper online (fakt.pl)	-1.7	-2.7	-2.9	0.2	-1.6
Free daily newspaper online (metro MSM)	-0.7	-0.5	-2.4	-2.0	-1.1
National news	-2.6	1.4	-0.1	-0.1	-0.5

magazines or weekly quality newspaper, online (newsweek.pl, polityka.pl)					
Local/regional daily newspaper online	-2.7	2.5	-2.2	0.5	-0.3
Local weekly/bi-weekly/monthly, online	-2.8	1.6	0.4	-3.3	-2.0
National broadcaster's online news (polskieradio.pl, TVP.pl)	-1.7	1.6	-1.0	0.1	2.0
Local/regional broadcaster's online news	0.0	-0.4	-0.3	-1.8	-1.7
International broadcaster's online news	-2.8	-2.6	-0.3	0.7	1.9
News on Facebook	-1.0	-4.4	5.4	0.7	-2.9
News on Twitter	-0.5	-2.6	-0.6	-2.5	1.2
News on other social media (LinkedIn, Instagram etc.)	-2.6	-4.0	1.8	1.6	-0.4
News distributed by online video sharing media (YouTube, etc.)	-2.0	0.4	4.7	1.3	-1.4
Blogs with news	-2.4	-0.4	1.0	-0.6	2.4
News shared by email or SMS	-2.3	1.3	3.8	0.5	-0.1
professional magazines (trade union magazines, professional associations' magazines)	-1.7	3.8	-1.0	2.3	-1.0
News via news aggregators or personalised news services (Google News, Flipboard, etc.)	-1.4	-0.4	-1.3	-0.3	1.8
News from born-online news media (Onet, Wirtualna Polska, wpolityce.pl, natemat.pl etc.)	1.1	3.8	1.9	1.7	-3.0
National, regional or	-2.1	-0.1	1.1	0.8	-0.1

international news sites online, not provided by media (local government, parties, NGOs, EU, Unesco, Greenpeace, etc.)					
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Appendix 2: Rotated Component Matrix

Informants	R1 (11 informants) Mainstream commercial TV and radio channel users	R2 (10 informants) Omnivorous media users	R3 (5 informants) Social and new media fans	R4 (6 informants) PSM followers	R5 (3 informants) Quality newspapers readers
27	0.86				
35	0.77				
31	0.74				
26	0.70				
1	0.68				
6	0.66				
4	0.64				
3	0.63				
19	0.62				-0.56
30	0.56			0.50	
12		0.79			
18		0.64			
20		0.63			
24		0.63			
32		0.57			
28		0.54			
8		0.52			
33		0.51		0.46	
15		0.48			
21		0.42			
29			0.77		
14			0.74		
9			0.74		
22	0.49		0.58		
11			0.42		
17				0.73	
7				0.69	
23				0.56	
10				0.53	

5 34				0.49 0.46	
25 36 2		0.46			0.75 0.66 -0.44

Notes:

¹ See also the Introduction to this Special Section by Nossek et al.

² The project was conducted in March and April 2015, which was before the parliamentary elections of October 2015. The ruling Law and Justice Party has turned the public media into a mouthpiece of the party and government, resulting in a lack of impartiality, a bias in terms of providing information and comments, and manipulation and propaganda.