## Zeszyty Prasoznawcze

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# BREAKING NEWS AND MEDIA EVENTS IN TWO CENTURIES IN ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS OF MEDIA RESEARCH ISSUES

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Media Research Issues / Zeszyty Prasoznawcze is one of the oldest academic journals in Central Europe that has been publishing groundbreaking work by prominent media scholars for the past 65 years. The aim of this article is to present a list of important historical events, both Polish and global, reported in Zeszyty Prasoznawcze since its founding in 1957, identify researchers who enhanced our understanding of these moments from a media perspective and discuss the results of the scholars' observations and research. The paper also shows the significance of Media Research Issues for Polish and global media studies and the journal's position in the arena of international publications.

Keywords: Media Research Issues, Zeszyty Prasoznawcze, academic journal, media studies, media scholars

#### Introduction

Celebrating the 65th anniversary of *Media Research Issues* in 2025 is an excellent opportunity to explore the journal's rich tradition and its significance over a period of almost seven decades. *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* is one of the oldest academic journals in Central Europe published quarterly by the Jagiellonian University Press and Press Research Centre of the Institute of Journalism, Media and Social Communication, Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Since the journal's founding in 1957, *Media Research Issues* has published 260 issues and almost 2500 articles, written in Polish, English, German and French.

Zeszyty Prasoznawcze is a peer-reviewed journal with a 65% acceptance rate that has published papers by outstanding media scholars, including foreign scientists like Johan Galtung, Hamid Mowlana, James Halloran, Kaarle Nordenstreng, Mihai Coman, Hermann Boventer, Ian Connell, Shelton A. Gunaratne, Winfried Schulz, Michael Gallagher, Armand Mattelart, Fernand Terrou, John Willings, Luke Uka Uche, Tapio Varis, Tamas Szecskö, Tim Walters, Vladimir Holina, Colin Sparks, Slavko Splichal, Hans M. Kepplinger and Lutz M. Hagen, and Polish authors like Władysław Bartoszewski, Roman Ingarden, Karol Jakubowicz, Krzysztof Kąkolewski, Zenon Klemensiewicz, Jerzy Łojek, Adam Przyboś, Jerzy Putrament, Jerzy Toeplitz, and Melchior Wańkowicz.

The journal's great importance to the media sciences is reflected in its citation rates. As of October 2024, *Media Research Issues* recorded 327 references in the Scopus database and 251 in the Web of Science database, while the citation index (as of 30 October 2024) in Google Scholar indicated almost 4510 mentions. *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* is indexed in various international databases including ERIH PLUS (European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Science), EBSCO, Google Scholar, CEEOL, (Central and Eastern European Online Library), CEJSH (The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities), DOAJ, Proquest Central, Index Copernicus International, Zeitschriftendatenbank (ZDB), and Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

The last 5 years have been a time of profound development for the journal. During this period *Media Research Issues* showcased almost 290 texts written by 310 authors (including 45 texts in English) and expanded its group of reviewers to more than 220 external researchers, including 130 professors and 90 PhDs from 106 Polish and foreign universities, institutes and research centres (Saran, Hodalska 2024, p. 126).

## The Aim of the Article

This article presents a list of landmark historical events, both Polish and global, reported in *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* since the journal's founding in 1957, outlines the contexts of these events, and discusses the findings of the authors who made these phenomena the subject of their work. To do so, the authors traced all editions of the journal (260 issues) and created a list of the articles discussing the most significant

historical moments of the 20th and 21st centuries (Table 1). These events include: the election of Cracow's cardinal Karol Wojtyła as Pope in 1978; the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II in May 1981; the introduction of martial law in Poland in December 1981; the Chernobyl disaster in April 1986; the Polish Round Table Talks in 1989; the first partially free parliamentary elections in post-war Poland in 1989; the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989; the formation of the Slovak Republic in 1993; the Nobel Prize in Literature for Wisława Szymborska in 1996; the Kosovo War (1998–1999); the terrorist attacks of September the 11th, 2001; Barack Obama presidential campaign in 2008; the passing away of John Paul II in April 2005; the Smolensk plane crash in April 2010; the Royal Wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton in 2011; the whistleblowing cases of Edward Snowden and Christopher Wylie; the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine in 2014; Europe's migration crisis in 2015; the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown of 2020 and the following years; COVID-19 vaccine development; the 2020 Black Lives Matter Protests in the USA; the United States Capitol attack of January the 6th, 2021; Russian invasion of Ukraine which started in 2022; and finally climate change and its consequences.

Table 1. Historical events discussed in Media Research Issues since 1957.

Event discussed	Author	Title of article	Number of Media Research Issues	Language of publication
The election of John Paul II in 1978	Tomasz Goban-Klas	Diffusion of Information About an Important Event (Selected Case Study)	3(89)/1981	PL
The attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II in 1981	Władysław Tyrański	OBP Polls: Importance and Exposure of Events in Newspapers	1-2(91-92)/1982	PL
	Tomasz Goban-Klas	OBP Polls: Diffusion of Information About the Assassination Attempt on John Paul II on May 13, 1981	3(93)/1982	PL
The introduction of martial law in Poland in 1981	Alicja Zagrodnikowa	Vocabulary and Phraseology in Newspaper Journalism in December 1981	4(102)/1984	PL
	Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz	Martial Law Poland in French Large- -Circulation Weeklies	3-4(128)/1991	PL
The Chernobyl disaster in 1986	Jerzy Mikułowski Pomorski	Polish Local Press on the Chernobyl Accident (Against the Background of Environmental Issues)	2(116)/1988	PL

Event discussed	Author	Title of article	Number of Media Research Issues	Language of publication
The Polish Round Table Talks in 1989	Walery Pisarek	Inauguration of The Round Table as an Act of Media Political Communication	4(122)/1989	PL
The first partially free parliamentary elections in post- war Poland in 1989	Jerzy Bralczyk	Pre-election Slogans (Elections to the Sejm and Senate in 1989)	2-4(124)/1990	PL
The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989	Agnieszka Szymańska	For or Against? Discussion on German Reunification in <i>Die</i> Zeit in 1989	1–2(161– 162)/2000	PL
	Agnieszka Szymańska	The Message of Prestige Media in a Situation of Political Breakthrough ( <i>Die</i> Zeit and Rheinischer Merkur IX'89-III'90)	1–2(177– 178)/2004	PL
The formation of the Slovak Republic in 1993	Vladimir Holina	About the System of Means of Mass Communication in Slovakia	1-2(133)/1993	PL (translated from Slovak by Agata Januszova)
The Nobel Prize in Literature for Wisława Szymborska in 1996	Mateusz Zimnoch	Representations of Wisława Szymborska's Poetry in Polish Opinion Weeklies Between February 2–14, 2012	1–2(209– 210)/2012	PL
The Kosovo War (1998–1999)	Paweł Płaneta	Kosovo Online	3-4(159- 160)/1999	PL
September 11 attacks	Magdalena Bożyk	The Formation of Myth. Mythic Content in Press Statements About September 11, 2001	3-4(183- 184)/2005	PL
Barack Obama 2008 presidential campaign	Julita Ślusarczyk	The Use of YouTube As a Tool of Political Persuasion in Barack Obama's Campaign	3-4(207- 208)/2011	PL
Death of Pope John Paul II in 2005	Magdalena Hodalska	At Wawel Hill People Brightened Up. Metaphors of the Papal Week Publications	1–2(201– 202)/2010	PL
Smolensk air disaster in 2010	Michał Rogoż	National Dailies to the Smolensk Disaster	1-2(205- 206)/2011	PL

Event discussed	Author	Title of article	Number of Media Research Issues	Language of publication
Wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton in 2011	Magdalena Hodalska	Media Events and Disaster Marathons: How Trauma and Terror InfluenceCommunication Theory	4(220)/2014	PL
The whistleblowing cases of Edward Snowden and Christopher Wylie	Dominika Popielec	From Edward Snowden to Christopher Wylie: The Face of the Second Generation Whistleblowing	3(239)/2019	ENG
Euromaidan (2013–2014)	Maciej Stopa	An Analysis of <i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i> and <i>Rzeczpospolita</i> Reports on the Ukrainian 2014 Political Upheaval	4(232)/2017	PL
2015 European migrant crisis	Magdalena Hodalska	#Humanity Washed Ashore. Visual Metaphors and Emotions in Social Media	2(234)/2018	ENG
The COVID-19 pandemic	Anna Lusińska, Anna Kalinowska-Żeleźnik, Ewa Miłoszewska- -Podrażka	Social Campaign as a Tool for Government Crisis Communication in Social Media in the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Poland	3(255)/2023	PL
	Krzysztof Flasiński	Media Narrative Regarding Restrictions on Social Life During the COVID-19 Pandemic on Gazeta.pl	2(246)/2021	ENG
	Weronika Saran	Communication and Cinema: A Comparative Analysis of Videocalls and Telecommunication in Film Works Before and During the Pandemic	2(250)/2022	ENG

Event discussed	Author	Title of article	Number of Media Research Issues	Language of publication
COVID-19 vaccine	Bogna Halska- -Pionka, Patrycja Cheba	Conspiracy Theories Generated by Digital Anti-vaccination Communities. Netnographic Case Study of a Facebook Group	3(259)/2024	ENG
The 2020 Black Lives Matter Protests in the USA	MyKaila Young	Digital Trauma: The Reality and The Mean World. Media Coverage of Black Lives Matter Protests during Covid-19 Pandemic in the USA	4(244)/2020	ENG
The January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol	Fathi Bourmeche	The BBC's Framing of Trump's Reaction to the 2020 Election and the Capitol Insurrection	1(257)/2024	ENG
	Rafał Leśniczak	Russia's Invasion of Ukraine in the Polish Opinion Dailies Rzeczpospolita and Gazeta Wyborcza	4(256)/2023	PL
Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022 – present)	Monika Szafrańska	War Fact-Checking: Strategies and Methodology for Debunking Disinformation on the War in Ukraine at the Demagog. org.pl Website	3(259)/2024	ENG
Climate change and its consequences	Anna Ślósarz	The Media about Global Warming: Business and Emotions Versus Facts	3(259)/2024	PL

Source: own compilation based on the full-text archive of Media Research Issues in the Digital Library of Malopolska and the current website of Zeszyty Prasoznawcze.

## A Glimpse Into the Past: 7 Decades

The Journal was founded as Media Research Bulletin (Biuletyn Prasoznawczy) in 1957 and then changed its name to Zeszyty Prasoznawcze in 1960. It was the same time when Polish Radio broadcast the first episode of the radio play In Jeziorany, a radio drama which has "constituted a phenomenon unique to Polish radio broadcasting" (Kowalczyk 2023).

On the 16th of October 1978, a landmark event in Polish recent history took place - Cardinal Karol Wojtyła was elected Pope and took the name John Paul II. The Italian press wrote that the Russians would prefer Solzhenitsyn to become secretary general of NATO rather than Wojtyła to become Pope (Hodalska 2010, p. 94). When the news of Cardinal Wojtyła's election reached Poland, bells rang throughout the country. People took to the streets, carrying flags, flowers and lit candles. "Finally the Polish worker has accomplished something", laughed Piotr Skrzynecki a famous artist from Cracow (Hodalska 2010, p. 94). The Poles celebrated, with joy and pride.

The atmosphere of those days can be found in the article of Professor Tomasz Goban-Klas "Diffusion of Information About an Important Event (Selected Case Study)" / "Dyfuzja informacji o ważnym wydarzeniu (studium wybranego przypadku)". Professor Goban-Klas discovered that people learned very quickly that Karol Wojtyła was elected Pope. "Nearly 4 in 5 of those surveyed were aware of this fact (...) a few hours after news agencies reported this information" (Goban-Klas 1981, p. 35). Poles learned of John Paul II's election mainly through electronic media, and most often through television (p. 31). One of the respondents' first reactions to the news was to confirm the information (p. 32). Press, on the other hand, was mostly used to learn more about the event itself (p. 33).

Not too long after that publication, in May 1981, gunshots in St. Peter Square Rome were heard around the world. A professional sniper, named Mehmet Ali Ağca started shooting at the Pope. Two bullets hit John Paul II and injured two bystanders. The Pope was severely wounded.

In the article "OBP Polls: Importance and Exposure of Events in Newspapers" / "Sondaże OBP: Ważność i ekspozycja wydarzeń w gazetach", published in Zeszyty Prasoznawcze Władysław Tyrański presented an analysis of the media coverage of the failed assassination attempt, noting that headlines accompanying the texts were also emotionally charged, and focused on the pope as a man rather than the head of the church" (Tyrański 1982, p. 179)1.

The assassination attempt on the Pope was also analysed by Professor Tomasz Goban-Klas who found that "The diffusion of information about the assassination attempt on the Pope was extremely rapid and almost complete within a few hours" (Goban-Klas 1982, p. 74). Unlike the election of Cardinal Wojtyła as the Pope, people mostly learned about the assassination attempt through all sorts

In the original: "Były też naładowane emocjonalnie, a koncentrowały się na papieżu jako człowieku, a nie osobistości kościelnej".

of interpersonal contacts (p. 74). Their first reaction was surprise, amazement that someone could attack the Pope (p. 76). People also indicated "a feeling of despair at the possible consequences of the act", and "indignation and condemnation of the perpetrator" (p. 76)<sup>2</sup>.

The coming months were even more difficult for the Poles. On the 13th December 1981, in a televised speech, General Wojciech Jaruzelski imposed martial law, placing many restrictions on people's daily lives until July 1983.

The introduction of martial law was also recorded in the pages of *Media Research Issues* by Alicja Zagrodnikowa who examined the lexical means of persuasion used in national dailies in December 1981 to describe the new Polish reality (Zagrodnikowa 1984, p. 23). According to the dailies, the decision to impose martial law was an "act of good sense" (p. 39). "The positive heroes of the studied December '81 journalism are mainly members of the party, the government, soldiers of the People's Army" (p. 39)<sup>3</sup>. The antiheroes – the political opposition (p. 25). This is what was written in the Polish press, but how was martial law portrayed abroad? The answer to this question was offered by Professor Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz who investigated the image of these historical events in the French press. And in it, Wojciech Jaruzelski is not a hero but is "portrayed as a soldier who put his integrity on the line and discredited himself completely" (Lisowska-Magdziarz 1991, p. 141)<sup>4</sup>. Lech Walesa, on the other hand, is even compared to Joanna d'Arc (p. 142).

5 years later, the Chernobyl disaster occurred. Information about the accident at the nuclear power plant in April 1986 quickly circulated around the world. The reaction of Polish media to the Chernobyl disaster was examined in *Media Research Issues* by Jerzy Mikułowski Pomorski who discussed the role of regional press and local weeklies in providing information about the incident. It was through the press, albeit sometimes in small amounts, that information on the prevention of radioactive contamination, statistics, or the consequences of radiation was disseminated (Mikułowski Pomorski 1988, p. 66–67). Moreover, more information on the incident appeared in newspapers located closer to the country's centre rather than in regional press, located in spheres of a more serious risk (p. 64).

Three years later, 1989 turned out to be *Annus Mirabilis*. The Round Table Discussions started between the ruling government and the opposition team – the representatives of the Solidarity Movement. The event was covered by the journal at an impressive pace, as if it were not a scientific journal, but a daily newspaper.

In 1989, Professor Walery Pisarek published an article "Inauguration of The Round Table as an Act of Media Political Communication" / "Inauguracja Okrągłego

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Full sentence in the original: "Drugim co do częstości wskazywania rodzajem reakcji było uczucie rozpaczy wobec możliwych konsekwencji tego czynu (30,1%), a dopiero na trzecim miejscu – oburzenie i potępienie sprawcy (12,6%)".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In the original: "Pozytywni bohaterowie badanej publicystyki grudnia '81 są przede wszystkim członkami partii, rządu, żołnierzami Ludowego Wojska Polskiego".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Full sentence in the original: "Ogólnie biorąc, przedstawiany jest jako żołnierz, który położył na szalę swoją uczciwość i zdyskredytował się zupełnie, stając się – być może w konsekwencji tego – czymś w rodzaju krwawego satrapy".

Stołu jako akt medialnej komunikacji politycznej" in which he analysed vocabulary, syntax and subjectivity of texts as well as key symbols in the speeches delivered at the event's inaugural session that he called "flagship terms" ("pojecia flagowe"). These included the positive ones such as: *Pluralism-Democracy*, *Consensus-Agreement*, *Justice-Truth, Freedom-Sovereignty, Homeland, Development-Growth (Of a Country),* Reforms-Transformations, Welfare-Social Security and Entrepreneurship (Pisarek, 1989, p. 40–41). And the negative ones such as: *Poverty-Crisis*, *Conflict*, *Bad Governance*, Slavery, Stagnation-Conservatism and Hostility Towards the People's Republic of Poland (p. 41-42).

The agreements between the communist authorities and the opposition allowed for the holding of, the first of its kind after the war, partially free parliamentary elections, planned for 4th June 1989. The pre-election campaign was discussed in Media Research Issues by Professor Jerzy Bralczyk who analysed the slogans used in the daily press, flyers and posters. The ways to encourage people to vote were numerous. Slogans portrayed the election as an opportunity and responsibility for voters (Bralczyk 1990, p. 40). Gazeta Wyborcza, whose title is derived from those elections stated: "Don't sleep or you'll be voted out" ("Nie śpij, bo Cię przegłosują") or "Don't complain, vote, give democracy a chance" ("Nie narzekaj, głosuj, daj szanse demokracji" (p. 40). As Professor Bralczyk notes, the slogans also referred to different values such as "change, agreement and consensus, Poland, democracy and peace" (p. 43)5.

Annus Mirablis also brought the Fall of the Berlin Wall, in November 1989. Norman Davies in his "Europe. A history" wrote: "East German border guards stood idly by as crowds on both sides of the Berlin Wall demolished it with gusto" (Davies 1997, p. 1123). The enthusiasm of that moment was captured by the press and preserved in reports analysed by Agnieszka Szymańska in her articles on the German reunion (Szymańska 2000; 2004).

Like a diligent chronicler, the journal also noted the political developments in Central Europe. On January 1, 1993, Poland's neighbour - Slovakia - became an independent and sovereign state after the breakup of Czechoslovakia. What was the situation of the media in the new country? The answer to this question is given by Vladimir Holina in his article "About the System of Means of Mass Communication in Slovakia" / "O systemie środków komunikacja masowej w Słowacji" published the same year in Zeszyty Prasoznawcze (1993). Holina observes:

The Slovak Republic faces the task of creating a system for the flow of information within Slovakia and from Slovakia abroad. The current state of affairs, where information from correspondents accredited abroad back in the CSRF era

Full sentence in the original: "Spośród nazywanych wartości szczególnie obecne w hasłach były: zmiany, porozumienie i zgoda, Polska, demokracja i spokój".

reaches Slovakia via Prague, and the Czech press serves as a source of information, reduces the informational value of the news disseminated (Holina 1993, p. 95)<sup>6</sup>.

It was also important for the journal to note important cultural events such as the moment when Wisława Szymborska received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1996 "for poetry that with ironic precision allows the historical and biological context to come to light in fragments of human reality" ("The Nobel Prize in Literature 1996" n.d.). Following the death of the Laureate, Mateusz Zimnoch examined how Polish opinion weeklies presented Szymborska's poetry, showing her work was often inadequately portrayed (Zimnoch 2012).

Through the past decades, *Media Research Issues* also reported on international conflicts, such as the war in Kosovo, which ended after the NATO intervention in 1999. "The struggle in Kosovo has proven that humanity is facing entirely new challenges", noted Paweł Płaneta, author of the article "Kosovo Online" / "Kosowo w sieci" published in *Media Research Issues* in 1999. (Płaneta 1999, p. 8). What sounds extremely familiar to people today – spreading war propaganda by different sides of the conflict – was also a part of the Kosovo conflict online. "(...) stretching facts and arguments, biased selection of facts, the use of half-truths and baseless assertions, presuppositions and implications has become the norm of the propaganda activity", noted Płaneta in 1999 (p. 13). Just like nowadays, the virtual world became the battleground, used to spread manipulative content. Paweł Płaneta points out: "It is true that, if something important happens anywhere in the world, the fastest way to learn about it is through the Internet. But what of it, when it turns out that the information we get is mostly uncertain, superficial and sometimes untrue" (p. 31).

Another horror recorded in the pages of *Media Research Issues* is the Al Qaeda's terrorist attack on the United States on September the 11th 2001. "The darkest Tuesday since World War II" ("Najczarniejszy wtorek od drugiej wojny światowej"), "Mass murder" ("Masowe morderstwo"), "Unimaginable horror and carnage" ("Niewyobrażalny horror i masakra" (Bożyk 2005, p. 88). These are just a few statements that have appeared in the Polish press in response to the tragedy. In her article on the mythcreating potential of news media, Magdalena Bożyk observes that "it is *September II* that remains that turning point, the time to which everyone refers when talking about a new era in the (Western) history" (Bożyk 2005, p. 98–99).

For the last 6 decades, *Media Research Issues* has also recorded the arrival of novel media technologies, describing their shapes, forms, and functions. The journal also did not miss the breakthroughs associated with the advent of social media. One such event was the launch of the YouTube platform in 2005. The widespread popularity of the site has sparked discussions about its social and cultural dimensions.

In the original: Przed Republiką Słowacką stoi zadanie stworzenia systemu przepływu informacji na Słowacji oraz ze Słowacji za granicę. Stan obecny, gdy informacje korespondentów akredytowanych za granicą jeszcze w czasach CSRF docierają na Słowację za pośrednictwem Pragi, a prasa czeska służy jako źródło informacji, obniża wartość informacyjną rozpowszechnianych wiadomości".

YouTube has not only opened the field of creativity for users around the world, but has also become a channel used by celebrities, activists and politicians. For example, Barack Obama used the site in 2008 to run a successful pre-election campaign. "Yes We Can" - that was the slogan of the first African American President in the history of United States (Ślusarczyk 2011, p. 146). "This is the first time in the history of campaign activities that the Internet has been used on such a large scale", observes Julita Ślusarczyk in her article "The Use of YouTube As a Tool of Political Persuasion in Barack Obama's Campaign" / "Wykorzystanie YouTube'a jako narzędzia perswazji politycznej w kampanii Baracka Obamy" (p. 147)7. Obama's staff not only published a variety of promotional materials including TV commercials, family stories and convention coverage (p. 149), but also actively engaged Americans in the campaign by allowing them to comment on Obama's materials, including in the form of video responses (p. 151). In November 2008, Obama defeated John McCain, becoming the 44th President of the United States.

The journal also reported on two sorrowful events in Polish history: the death of John Paul II in 2005 and the Smolensk plane crash in 2010.

When the Pope died, on the 2nd of April 2005, many people united in grief, and newspaper pages were filled with metaphors. Not only metaphors of death, but metaphors of people grieving the loss that "brought out the layers of goodness that we had not even imagined"; the Blonia fields in Cracow were covered with "a carpet of lights". And people realised that "There are still many such Poles left... who are beautiful". This was the story told by the newspapers in the weeks that followed the death of John Paul II (Hodalska 2010). The linguistic means used by journalists during that special time were analysed in the article "At Wawel Hill People Brightened Up. Metaphors of the Papal Week Publications" / "Pod Wawelem ludzie pojaśnieli. Metaforyka publikacji z Papieskiego Tygodnia" (Hodalska 2010a).

On the 10th of April 2010, many people rushed home from Saturday errands, to watch the TV coverage of the ceremonies taking place in the Katyn War Cemetery, commemorating the anniversary of the crime committed there during the Second World War. "Let's have the Katyn wound finally healed and turned into a scar," (Gov. pl 2020) wrote President Lech Kaczyński in a speech he did not have the opportunity to deliver. It was a cloudy Saturday morning. The TV live reports were about to start. And then, suddenly, the news broke about the plane crash in Smoleńsk. We learnt that the plane carried 96 people, including President of Poland Lech Kaczynski and his wife Maria, Members of Parliament, senators, and commanders of the Polish army. News of the plane crash made the headlines globally and shook the country. This is evident in the analysis of newspaper articles, presented by Michał Rogoż in his article "National Dailies to the Smolensk Disaster" / "Dzienniki ogólnopolskie wobec katastrofy smoleńskiej". Did dailies with different political orientations write the same about the catastrophe? Rogoż observed:

In the original: "Po raz pierwszy w historii działań kampanijnych na tak szeroką skalę wykorzystano Internet (...)".

Certainly, immediately after the tragic event, the mood of the various editorial offices was similar, as reflected in the similar layout of content in the first Monday issue of the dailies. (...) However, in the long run, such a unified message structure could not hold up in the pages of such different dailies. Even the extraordinary event at Smolensk did not change the optics of the perception of reality and the style of statements of the various newspapers (Rogoż 2011, p. 25)<sup>8</sup>.

The following year, 2011, the Royal Wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton, now Princess of Wales, was the focus of global new media attention. It was watched by millions of people worldwide. And it found its way to the pages of *Media Research Issues* in the article devoted to contemporary media events (Hodalska 2014).

In 2013, Edward Snowden, a former employee of CIA, revealed classified documents to a small group of journalists "about the government's sweeping collection of Americans' emails, phone calls and internet activity in the name of national security" (Smith 2023). A few years later, in 2018, the so-called Cambridge Analytica data scandal happened, in which Christopher Wylie was a central figure. "Why did Snowden and Wylie decide to inform the media?", "What was the range of the information impact?", "How did the cooperation between journalists and Snowden and Wylie go?" (Popielec 2019, p. 40). These are just some of the questions Dominika Popielec dealt with in her article "From Edward Snowden to Christopher Wylie: The Face of the Second Generation Whistleblowing" published in *Media Research Issues* in 2019.

Another significant event analysed in *Media Issues Journal* is the EuroMaidan Revolution – a wave of protests against then-Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych's decision not to sign the European Union Association Agreement that took place between November 2013 and February 2014 (Sobolieva n.d.). In his article titled "An analysis of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* reports on the Ukrainian 2014 political upheaval" / "Analiza relacji *Gazety Wyborczej* i *Rzeczpospolitej* dotyczących przewrotu politycznego na Ukrainie w 2014 roku" Maciej Stopa examined 197 newspaper articles published in two Polish dailies and found noticeable differences in the way of writing about the Ukrainians: "*Rzeczpospolita*, using metonymy, judged the Ukrainian people through the prism of the government's and president's decisions, while *Gazeta Wyborcza* emphasised that Ukrainian public opinion does not support Yanukovych's actions" (p. 817)9.

In the original: "Z pewnością bezpośrednio po feralnym wydarzeniu nastroje panujące w poszczególnych redakcjach były podobne, co znalazło wyraz w zbliżonym układzie treści w pierwszym poniedziałkowym numerze dzienników. (...) Jednak w dłuższej perspektywie taka ujednolicona struktura przekazu nie mogła się utrzymać na łamach tak różnych dzienników. Nawet to nadzwyczajne wydarzenie spod Smoleńska nie zmieniło optyki postrzegania rzeczywistości i stylistyki wypowiedzi poszczególnych gazet".

<sup>9</sup> In the original: "Rzeczpospolita, stosując metonimię, osądziła naród ukraiński przez pryzmat decyzji rządu i prezydenta, podczas gdy *Gazeta Wyborcza* podkreślała, że ukraińska opinia publiczna nie popiera działań Janukowycza".

2015 is when the European refugee crisis starts. One of the migrants was 3-yearold Alan Kurdi, whose story is described by Magdalena Hodalska (2018) in her article titled "#Humanity Washed Ashore. Visual Metaphors and Emotions in Social Media". "The toddler has become a human face of the crisis, a symbol, an icon, an emblem, and emotional vehicle allowing thousands of Internet users to express their grief and outrage and manifest their compassion (...)", the author points out (Hodalska 2018, p. 210). Her article not only examines "how Internet users manifest their views and express what words cannot express" but also explores how the stories created by media audiences go beyond the narratives prevalent in traditional media (Hodalska 2018, p. 210).

In December 2019 the first information about the mysterious virus spreading in Wuhan province is reaching Europe. People soon learn that there is a SARS--CoV-2 virus that causes a contagious disease. Panic is breaking out all over the world: people are stockpiling products from stores, hospitals are running out of places for the sick, and the media are constantly reporting on mass illnesses and deaths. The key is effective and timely crisis communication, which is sadly lacking in many countries. And how was it in Poland? Has the government effectively used the media to spread crisis information? This question is answered by Anna Lusińska, Anna Kalinowska-Żeleźnik and Ewa Miłoszewska-Podrażka (2023) in their article "Social Campaign as a Tool for Government Crisis Communication in Social Media in the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Poland" / "Kampania społeczna jako narzędzie rządowego komunikowania kryzysowego w mediach społecznościowych w pierwszym roku pandemii COVID-19 w Polsce" where the researchers noted that the Ministry of Health "tried to inform and educate the public about safety and public health measures implemented to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus" (Lusińska, Kalinowska-Żeleźnik, Miłoszewska-Podrażka 2023, p. 103). However, "the government's lack of experience in using new media channels in crisis communication (...) caused a fierce public discourse in social media, for which the rulers were not prepared" (p. 103).

With the first wave of coronavirus came lockdown and restrictions unknown to people until 2020. Schools, stores, churches, offices and other places were suddenly closed. Each week brought new information on the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths which led to frequent changes in government policies and restrictions. These were disseminated via media, including online news portals. One of them - Gazeta. pl – became the subject of Krzysztof Flasiński's study published in Media Research Issues in 2021. In his article "Media Narrative Regarding Restrictions on Social Life During the COVID-19 Pandemic on Gazeta.pl" Flasiński (2021) analysed more than 16 thousand news stories in which the word 'coronavirus' appeared and found that "the subject of the pandemic follows the principles of the life cycle of a news topic" (Flasiński 2021, p. 101). Interestingly, the research results also showed that there is no positive correlation "between the number of new stories on COVID-19 and the number of confirmed cases of the disease" (p. 101).

Another pandemic-related subject – COVID-19 vaccines – has been the subject of an article by Bogna Halska-Pionka and Patrycja Cheba (2024) in which the scholars examine the conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 vaccine spreading on the Internet.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly changed the ways of communicating with other people. But is it for sure? During the lockdown most of the private and work conversations had moved to the virtual world and instant messaging, but as the analysis of the COVID-19 film *Locked Down* (dir. Doug Liman, 2021) and other films of different genres show there are significant similarities between old methods of communication and the new ones, such as online communication. In her article "Communication and Cinema: A Comparative Analysis of Videocalls and Telecommunication in Film Works Before and During the Pandemic" Weronika Saran notes:

accessing information not intended for public view during a video call also has its equivalent in telecommunication. The characters, hearing on the phone information not intended for them, like many people during video calls, accidently access the private spheres of their interlocutors. Self-presentation during video calls also applies to telephone conversations. As film history shows, the characters change the topics of their conversations, modulate their voices, or pretend to be someone else during phone calls to achieve their personal goals or keep secrets from others (Saran 2022, p. 89).

The pandemic was also a time of important public protests. On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, accused of using a counterfeit 20-dollar bill at a grocery store, was killed by a white police officer (Young 2020, p. 128). This tragic event, captured by bystander videos, led to nationwide protests that "peaked on June 6, when half a million people turned out in nearly 550 places across the United States" (Buchanan, Bui, Patel 2020). In her article on *digital trauma*, MyKaila Young shares with us "the perspectives of activists, reporters, and students that were personally impacted by the viral video of George Floyd during the coronavirus outbreak" (Young 2020, p. 126). What are the effects of exposure to such distressing content? "Each of the respondents (...) expressed one or more feelings associated with vicarious and/or secondary trauma after viewing the eyewitness digital content of George Floyd's death", Young reveals (p. 133).

A few months later, on January 6, 2021, the United States Capitol Building in Washington D.C. was stormed by a mob of Donald Trump supporters in an attempt to overturn elections. The Capitol Insurrection, described as "an Attack on Multiracial Democracy" by *The Atlantic*'s writer Adam Serwer (Serwer 2021) has become the subject of much academic analysis, including an article written by Fathi Bourmeche, in which the author analyses how Trump's response to the riots on Capitol Hill were portrayed by the BBC (Bourmeche 2024). Using McCombs' media framing, Bourmeche finds that three themes were used to frame Trump's reaction: 1) "a tight race for the White House and a highly-contested campaign on social media", 2) "Trump's narrative of a fraudulent election and the potential violence

to stop the steal", and 3) "the Capitol Hill riots and its impact on the US image and American democracy" (p. 125).

Finally, Media Research Issues journal reported on the tragic event that unfortunately continues to this day - the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In his article "Russia's Invasion of Ukraine in the Polish Opinion Dailies Rzeczpospolita and Gazeta Wyborcza" / "Inwazja Rosji na Ukraine w polskich dziennikach opinii Rzeczpospolita i Gazeta Wyborcza" Rafał Leśniczak explores the representation of the initial stage of the war and the period just before it in two Polish dailies: Gazeta Wyborcza and Rzeczpospolita. Using the content analysis method, the framing analysis concept, the priming concept and the locus communis concept, Leśniczak finds that "The frame of conflict and the frame of human affairs were the dominant frames in Polish opinion dailies" (Leśniczak 2023, p. 43). The researcher's attention is also directed to the tópoi in the research sample. Leśniczak discovers that "The most numerously represented natural tópoi were: the right to freedom and security, human dignity, the right to life, while the cultural tópoi were: the politics of superpowers, the economic consequences of war, migration and refugees" (p. 43).

Monika Szafrańska, in turn, focuses on the war fact-checking, describing the strategies and methodology for debunking disinformation on the war in Ukraine, based on the example of the fact-checking portal Demagog.org.pl (Szafrańska 2024).

The 2024 Autumn issue of Media Research Issues also touches upon another huge crisis, namely climate change, discussed by Anna Ślósarz (2024) in her article on global warming and the way that problem is presented in media - "The Media about Global Warming: Business and Emotions Versus Facts". The recent events in Poland and neighboring countries affected by the floods proved that "Humanitarian care for the planet" (Ślósarz 2024, p. 78) is a pressing issue.

## Conclusion

For almost 70 years, Media Research Issues has informed its readers about important historical events, both Polish and global, showing how they can be interpreted from the perspective of media studies. The journal not only covered important media breakthroughs, but also environmental, migrant and health crises, wars, social protests, and political events, to name a few, which shows the journal's remarkable thematic diversity and great importance for social studies. It is hoped that in future years the journal will continue its mission by providing scholars and readers with new insights into the media field.

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#### **STRESZCZENIE**

## Ważne informacje o zdarzeniach, które przeszły do historii oraz wydarzenia medialne ostatnich dwóch stuleci w publikacjach naukowych na łamach Zeszytów Prasoznawczych

Zeszyty Prasoznawcze (Media Research Issues) to jedno z najstarszych czasopism naukowych w Europie Środkowej, które od 65 lat publikuje przełomowe prace wybitnych badaczy mediów. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest: przedstawienie ważnych wydarzeń, które przeszły do historii, relacjonowane były w mediach polskich i światowych, a medialne z nich relacje były przedmiotem analiz publikowanych w Zeszytach Prasoznawczych od momentu powstania pisma w 1957 roku; wskazanie badaczy, którzy przyczynili się do lepszego zrozumienia tych momentów z perspektywy mediów oraz omówienie wyników ich obserwacji i badań. Artykuł ukazuje również znaczenie Zeszytów Prasoznawczych dla polskiego i światowego medioznawstwa oraz pozycję czasopisma na arenie międzynarodowej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *Media Research Issues, Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*, czasopismo naukowe, medioznawstwo, medioznawcy