

# **MASS MEDIA RESEARCH AND AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT IN *ZESZYTY PRASOZNAWCZE (MEDIA ISSUES QUARTERLY)***

PAWEŁ PŁANETA

Uniwersytet Jagielloński

Wydział Zarządzania i Komunikacji Społecznej

Instytut Dziennikarstwa, Mediów i Komunikacji Społecznej

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Mass Media Research and American Schools of Thought in *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze (Media Issues quarterly)***

The paper characterizes the presence of American tradition of the research on mass media and communication in *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze (Media Issues)* quarterly related to the Press Research Centre in Krakow. On the basis of the quantitative linguistic and computer assisted content analysis the author gives a brief account of the main configurations of names, ideas, concepts, notions and theories which indicate the main American mass media and communication research traditions in Krakow quarterly in 1958–2013. The author presents the graphical map of the American school of media research thought in comparison to other research traditions. Among the conclusions of that study one can find that the Krakow media researchers not only adopted the American model of science (and successfully popularized it) but also remained the

✉ Adres do korespondencji: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Wydział Zarządzania i Komunikacji Społecznej, Instytut Dziennikarstwa, Mediów i Komunikacji Społecznej, Ośrodek Badań Prasoznawczych; ul. S. Łojasiewicza 4, 30-348 Kraków; pplanet@pp.com.pl

staunch supporters of quantitative, empirical, inter-subjectively verifiable and pragmatically applicable media and communication research.

**Keywords:** *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*, American mass media research, scientific periodicals, press research

### *Introduction*

In the late 40s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States began a paradigm shift in the theory and research of mass communication. The pioneers of this change, Paul Lazarsfeld and Carl Hovland were outstanding social studies methodologists, who acknowledged that the appropriate way to assess the functioning of the media are objective empirical methods and techniques such as experiments and questionnaires, perfectly suited to the study of phenomena of communication, especially the effects of media impact.

The next decade witnessed the consolidation of the post-positivist, empirical orientation in the mass media research. The new media research centers began to open in the US. These scientific centers were modeled on Yale (based on Hovland's experimental methods) and Columbia (patterned on Lazarsfeld's questionnaire surveys). By 1960 the majority of the classic works in this field of science, which became a must in the canon for the whole generation of mass media researchers, were published. Walery Pisarek (1984) writes:

The achievements of American studies on mass communication and persuasion lived to full dissemination, so today even those researchers who are most critically-oriented towards empirical methods must not ignore the terms and concepts developed in the US in the years 1940–1960 by Lasswell, Lazarsfeld, Hovland, Schramm, Festinger, Klapper or Berelson [...]. Their ideas anyway – as a result of a variety of additions and reformulations – are less and less regarded as “American” all over the world, but more often simply as elements of a scientific workshop of empirically-oriented research.

Soon, the empirical research centers – modeled on Yale and Columbia appeared in other parts of the world and the Press Research Centre in Krakow was one of the first. However, in the case of the PRC implementing modern research methods was not an indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation of the US patterns (or more broadly the Western ones), which – unfortunately – we have to deal with now. Polish researches in Krakow and authors publishing in PRC's quarterly *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* (ZP) assumed a more careful stance, albeit benevolent criticism towards the methods and results of the American studies.

Polish mass communication researchers reached for the achievements and experiences of Polish sociology, which boated a long tradition and major achievements in the world of science (Dubiel, Goban-Klas, Pisarek 1974). The presence

of the so-called “humanistic coefficient”<sup>1</sup> was a peculiar feature of Polish sociology, just mentioning the achievements of Florian Znaniecki or Stanisław Ossowski. Moreover, the mass media research in Poland at its institutional origins also extensively benefited from the philosophical heritage of Roman Ingarden’s and Zenon Klemensiewicz’s achievements in linguistics (Pisarek 2011). Apart from slightly different theoretical assumptions, the fundamental aims of the media research in Poland were also different. While the media studies conducted in the United States were usually commercially-oriented, in Polish People’s Republic the media researchers declared that the primary goal of media science was to raise the level of the mass media, to increase their coverage accuracy and the effectiveness of social impact. However, most important was the fact that in socialist countries there was no place for a truly critical study of communist party mechanisms in the media, so Polish media researchers were aware that in the totalitarian country one could express criticism only by means of possibly formal empirical research just called “administrative research” by Lazarsfeld.

The popularization of American mass media theories and research results in Poland was fostered due to relatively intense scientific relations of the Press Research Centre with foreign institutions of media research and Western – including American – scholars, as well as the foreign travels of PRC’s researchers. Only by 1980, the PRC’s chronicles recorded 19 visitors from the United States to Krakow. In 1959 the PRC hosted Raymond B. Nixon, the chairman of AIERI, a professor of journalism at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis) and the editor of *Journalism Quarterly*.<sup>2</sup> This visit initiated a constant, systematic exchange of scientific periodicals, books and other publications devoted to the press, radio and television, and most importantly, the cooperation in the exchange of scientific thought. In turn, in 1962, Herbert Menzel, Paul Lazarsfeld’s assistant at Columbia University gave a lecture in the PRC on problems between the communication process and the identity of recipients. In 1963, the Center hosted Ithiel de Sola Pool from the Faculty of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who was extremely interested in the research work of the PRC, in particular, the research on the content of the press. It is impossible to skip the visit of Herbert Schiller from the University of San Diego, California in 1975.<sup>3</sup> Several times the

<sup>1</sup> The analyses of any social activities should take into account their significance for the social actors. The social researcher should consider what the certain actions mean for the individuals as the actors of social behaviors and try to understand their perspective.

<sup>2</sup> He visited Polish teaching and research centers and visited our country. During his stay in Krakow, R. Nixon gave two lectures: first – addressed to the staff of the Krakow Press Research Center – devoted to the directions of mass media research in the United States; second – in the Journalists Club – about the need for press research.

<sup>3</sup> Edward A. Walsh of Fordham University (New York), who was interested in the Press Research Center’s research work, especially in the field of sociology of the press, was visiting PRC in 1964. On this occasion the platform for exchange of scientific publications was established between the PRC and the university represented by A. Walsh. In the following years, the PRC was many times visited by foreign guests: in 1965, O.W. Riegel, the director of the Journalism Center and Lee University in Washington who was particularly interested in the issues and activities of the PRC

PRC was also visited by representatives of international organizations (UNESCO, AIERI *et al.*).<sup>4</sup>

The reception of American mass media research achievements was also supported by PRC's scholars' foreign scientific trips. For example, from 27 March to 3 April 1977, W. Pisarek<sup>5</sup> participated in the international conference devoted to international flow of communications, organized by University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. From September 1976 to August 1977, Tomasz Goban-Klas during his scholarship sponsored by the US State Department visited the research institutions and journalistic training institutions in the USA: Stanford University (Institute for Communication Research) and The Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, and from 29 April to 8 May 1979 he took part in the annual conference of the International Communication Association and in the working group meeting of cultural analysis indicators. In the 1980s (October 1985 – July 1986) T. Goban-Klas was in Philadelphia at the Annenberg School of Communication, and in Los Angeles at the School of Communication of the University of Southern California on a scholarship of the American Council of Learned Societies.

The dissemination of American mass media research ideas in *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* quarterly was upon a large scale thanks to 'Benedictine' work of the authors who were systematically reviewing media studies periodicals, especially *Journalism Quarterly* and *Journal of Communication* as well as the American books on media and communication. Bringing the achievements of American media thought closer to the Polish readers was conducted in a systematic way and on a massive scale in *ZP*, often more intensely than in other European magazines.

One should, therefore, pay attention to the fact that from the beginning of 1960s – and later for the next two decades – the number of reviews of foreign publications (including media studies scientific periodicals, especially German and

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press law section; in 1967, Stanley Senk, the representative of Institute of Public Opinion Research in Philadelphia; in 1971, Floyd G. Arpan, Dean of the Journalism Faculty of the Indiana University; in 1977, Alex Edelstein, from School of Communications, University of Washington, in 1978, B. Ward from the University of Tennessee, USA, Alex Edelstein from the University of Washington, Seattle and E.M. Kent from the University of Florida, Gainesville; in 1980, Maurice Simon, from the University of North Carolina and Jim Morrison, from the University of Florida in Gainesville; in 1988, Julia Scott from the University of Carlton.

<sup>4</sup> In total, 318 visits from 36 countries were recorded. The most numerous were researchers on mass communication and related fields. There were over 200 of such visits. The Press Research Center was also visited by many foreign journalists. In the PRC's chronicle about 70 such visits were recorded. Representatives of diplomatic missions, international organizations, etc. visited PRC app. 20 times, as well as groups of journalism students from different countries. Several times PRC hosted foreign press publishers. Besides the visits of the American guests, the PRC hosted 74 visits from the USSR, 40 from the GDR, 37 from the CSR, 21 from Bulgaria, 19 from the USA, 18 from Hungary, 13 from Yugoslavia, Germany and Romania, 9 from Finland, 7 from France, 5 from Spain, Italy, Canada, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Vietnam.

<sup>5</sup> Walery Pisarek was a vice president of International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR). W. Pisarek. The First Decade As Seen From Cracow, Poland [<https://iamcr.org/node/2947>; access 2017-04-04].

English-language ones) systematically increased in *ZP*. Thus, the Polish media researchers had a pretty good overview of the main trends of discussions, concepts, theories and research results in the field of mass communication all over the world. From the 1960s, the most influential scientific publications reached Krakow impressively fast if we take into consideration the contemporaneous circumstances. On the pages of *ZP*, works of American researchers hardly available at this time, such as Carl Hovland, Marshall McLuhan, Joseph Klapper, Theodore Peterson, Wilbur Schramm, William Stephenson, and many others (e.g. James D. Halloran and Abraham Moles) were reviewed. In the subsequent years, the contents of the world's mass media research periodicals were also carefully monitored.

Over the years the reviews section of the Krakow quarterly was even more powerful than similar sections in European media studies magazines. According to the results of research conducted by Paweł Dubiel (1976), *ZP* reviewed many more books than the German *Publizistik*, although there is no doubt that the number of publications on the subject was much higher at that time in the Federal Republic of Germany than in Poland. For instance, in the years 1958–1975 *ZP* reviewed 44 American-published books, which were never reviewed in *Journalism Quarterly*.<sup>6</sup> It is also essential that the timeliness of reviews was very impressive, especially if one takes into account logistic and economic limitations of *Zeszyty* as the periodical functioning behind the “iron curtain” in the bipolar division of the world. According to Dubiel, it was found that out of the 45 books published in the USA, which were reviewed by both *Journalism Quarterly* and *ZP*, 5 were reviewed by the Polish quarterly earlier or at the same time as in *Journalism Quarterly*. The openness to the reception of foreign media research achievements was greater in the Krakow quarterly than – in comparison – in the German *Publizistik*.<sup>7</sup> It is also worth noting that in the years 1958–1975 the number of American publications reviewed in the Polish quarterly was 3 times higher than that in the German *Publizistik* (89 to 33). This justifies a thesis that the Polish press research quarterly tried to present – often from a critical point of view – as big as possible a number of new elaborations published also by ideologically and methodologically foreign centres.

P. Dubiel also conducted – in 1981 – an excellent pilot study on the structure of citations in the field of mass media research, on the example – the case study

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<sup>6</sup> Among others: E. Blum, Reference Books in the Mass Media; A. and L. Kirschner, Journalism. Readings in the Mass Media; W. Schramm, The Impact of Educational TV. Moreover, *Zeszyty* review 49 publications published in the FRG and omitted by *Publizistik* – among them: E. Noelle-Neumann, W. Schulz, *Publizistik*; Ch.E. Siegel, E.E. Kisch. Reportage und politischer Journalismus; D. Stolte, Das Fernsehen und sein Publikum (Dubiel 1976).

<sup>7</sup> Whereas in the *Journalism Quarterly* 92% of reviews concerned the books published in the United States and in the *Publizistik* 84% of reviews were those of the books published in the FRG, in *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* only 55% were the reviews of Polish books. In absolute figures the *Journalism Quarterly* reviewed 164 foreign books, the *Publizistik* 145, and *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* as many as 600 in the years 1958–1975 (Dubiel 1976).

– of *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*.<sup>8</sup> According to Dubiel's research, in the three years studied – 1958, 1968 and 1978 – among the most frequently quoted foreign authors were Americans: Elihu Katz, Wilbur Schramm, Bernard Berelson, Melvin de Fleur, George Gerbner, Joseph F. Kubis, Harold D. Lasswell, Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Everett M. Rogers. It is also worth noting that in terms of the foreign quotations in the initial period when the Polish press research was only just being institutionalised, German material from before WWII was dominant, overtaken later by American publications (a total of 4%, in 1978 – 22%).<sup>9</sup>

The review texts, undoubtedly, had fundamental significance for the dissemination of American media thought in *ZP*. The articles of Michael E. Bishop played a significant role in the early 1970s. The author follows there the development of theoretical and methodological studies of mass communication in the United States (1973), presents communication models (1971),<sup>10</sup> and reviews the theory (1974). The publications of Polish authors, among which Jerzy Mikułowski Pomorski had a special place, were equally important. In the 70s and 80s, a series of articles by this author were published (Mikułowski Pomorski: 1971, 1975a, 1975b, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1983). We cannot forget about the articles by Walery Pisarek (1971/1972, 1972, 1974, 1978, 1980, 1983, 1991a, 1991b), especially the text devoted to the contemporary directions of research on mass communication (1984), and numerous articles by Tomasz Goban-Klas (1976, 1981, 1990). Not less important was the publication of the fundamental books by H.I. Schiller (1976) and over a dozen translations of fundamental works, e.g. B. Berelson's (1970) work devoted to the content analysis (from "Handbook of Social Psychology", originally printed in the USA in 1959) or P. Johns-Heine's and H.H. Gerth's (1970) excerpt from "Mass Culture. The Popular Arts in America." These publications were published in PRC's Theory and Research Methodology Abroad series.<sup>11</sup> Another important PRC's publication was "World Directory of Mass Communication Periodicals" by Sylwester Dziki (and Teofila Kadow,

<sup>8</sup> On the evidence of quotations, from three separate years of the quarterly *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 1958, 1968 and 1978, the sources from which the authors quoted generally in the 87 articles were ascertained. 1098 quotations were used (some were repeated including 1570 references) In particular articles the number of quotations was very wide-ranging from 1 to 50 and with repetitions of up to 88. For every quotation an information card was made out about the author, the title, type of work (the book, the article in the periodical, archival material), place and year of publication or origin (these quotations being expressed with approval or criticism (Dubiel 1981).

<sup>9</sup> About 5% were quotations from French and West German sources and about 4% from Russian ones. The entire literature quoted came from 28 countries. Quotations in English came to 15%, German to 10% and 7% in the Roman languages (Dubiel 1981).

<sup>10</sup> In 1971 Michael Bishop, assistant Professor at the North Carolina University, wrote – exclusively for *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* – an article discussing basic models applied in the U.S.A. in research on the communication process: the Information Model, the Learning Model and the Coorientation Model.

<sup>11</sup> Among other famous authors whose works were translated one can find Kaarle Nordenstreng's critical review of the mass media research in the USA, Morris Janowitz's text devoted to the mass communication research, Peter Clarke's work on the selective reception of the mass media content, Alexander L. George's analysis of the propaganda and science on mass communication, Wilson

Janina Maczuga and Urszula Szczepańczyk) with the foreword by Walery Pisarek, published in Bibliographic Section of IAMCR in 1980.

### *Methodology of Research*

In order to reconstruct the agenda of American theories and research results in *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* in the years 1960–2013, various quantitative techniques were used. In the first stage of the analysis, from the global contents of the quarterly the bunch of paragraphs containing references to the United States were extracted. The total number of units of analysis (paragraphs) in this set amounted to 248,533 paragraphs. This collection – which can be called the detailed corpus of the US references – was subjected to simply statistical operations: a frequency list of words in the USA corpus was constructed, and then – correlated with the list of frequencies of the entire collection of *ZP* (treated as a referential list) – the American discourse key-words list was constructed. These quantitative linguistic surveys were the starting point for the main part of research, i.e. computer assisted content analysis (CACA).

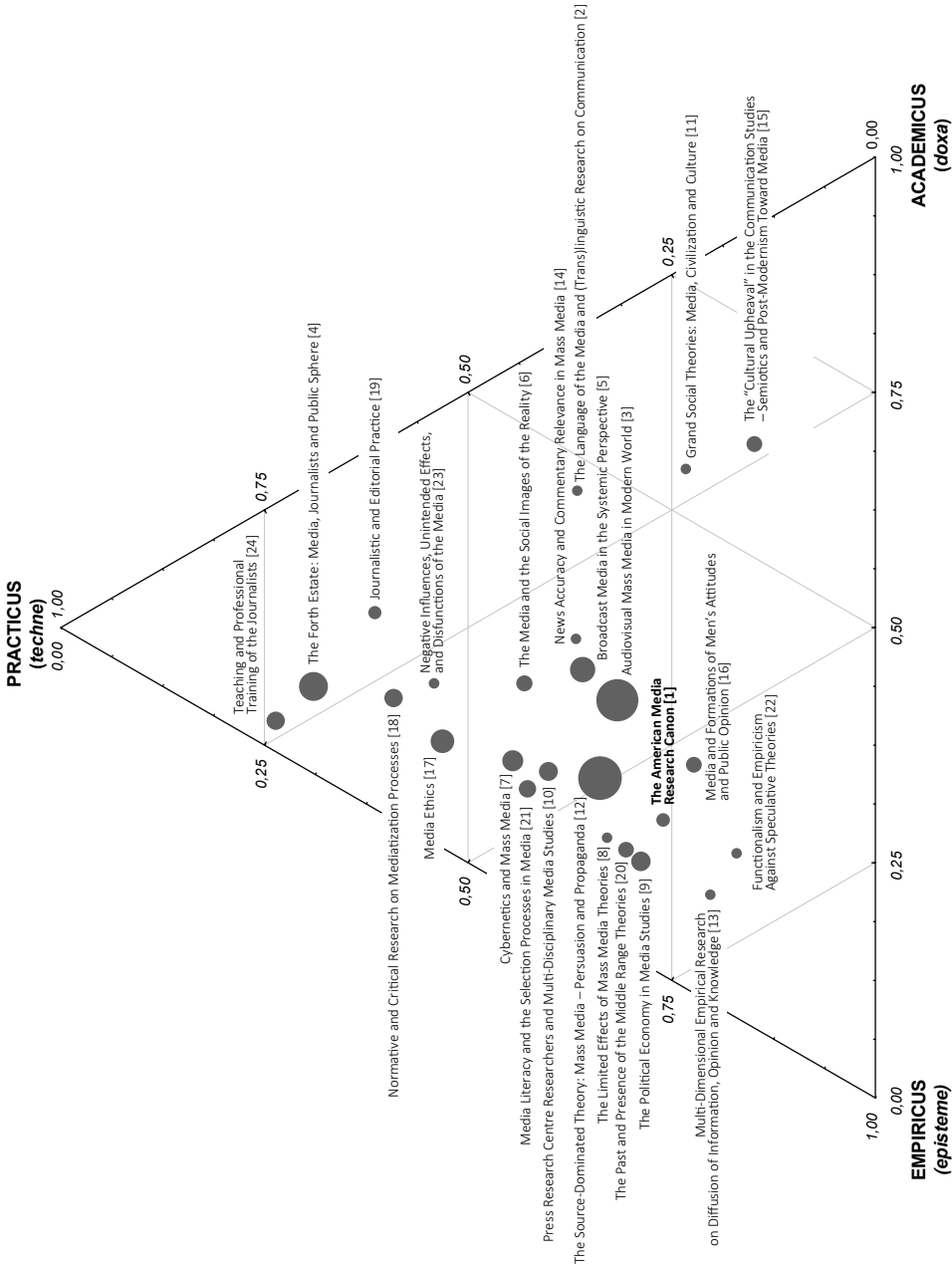
The key-code for CACA (*computer assisted content analysis*) was based on the list of entries derived from the indexes of two books, the first one being “Mass Communication Theory” by Stanley J. Baran and Dennis K. David (which represents the world-renowned and one of the most comprehensive overviews of foundations, development and future of mass media and communication research and theories) and the second, entitled “Jednostka i społeczeństwo w świecie mediów. Klasyczne i współczesne idee w teoriach średniego zasięgu” by the Polish scholar Stanisław Michalczyk, which should be evaluated as an extremely valuable publication due to its insightful and timeliness view on classical and contemporary ideas within the so-called middle-range theories tradition. The items from these indexes were operationalized by constructing the dictionaries of approximately 300 categories. The dictionary of each category includes different variants (tokens) and aliases of words indicating names, ideas, concepts, notions (etc.) within the field of mass media and communication research. The final tool for CACA was Text & Data Mining module of the Statistica software.

The analysis has led to the separation of 24 clusters of categories which represent the main theoretical and research reflections in the field of media and communication, which at the same time have direct references to the United States.

It should be stressed here that many of the clusters’ objects (e.g. names of the mass communication researchers) that appear in the presented configurations do not come from the US. It means that in *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* the output of

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Taylor’s study on close procedure technique, Charles Osgood’s psycholinguistic publication devoted to semantic differential or John C. Merrill case study of *Time*’s coverage of three US presidents.



Graph 1. The Map of the American School of Media Research Thought in the Comparison to Other Research Traditions



American media thought was usually confronted with the results of the theories and research results from other countries.

The schema presented in this article should be considered as an indicative graphical map of knowledge, in which the distance between objects illustrates the strength of relationships between them (trends of co-occurrence), while the size of objects informs about the intensity of occurrence of particular threads (issues, concepts, theories, models, etc.) and which is measured by the frequency of words from the dictionaries of each category of analysis.

The volume of this article does not allow for the publication of the exhaustive bibliography of the works of authors who cited the American media researchers in *ZP*. This bibliography is, however, available in the Press Research Center archive. Instead, a list of US published, most cited sources – as well as the whole report and detailed methodological description – is presented as additional material at PRC's website (<http://www.obp.pl>).

The most “American” – measured by the presence of the words and expressions representing the United States – the 1<sup>st</sup> group of texts published in *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* is represented by a collection of those paragraphs (analysis unit) in which there are numerous references to the names of well-known American media experts<sup>12</sup> and their works. This group – separated in the process of factor analysis – can be called the Canon of American Media Research present in *ZP*.

Another (2<sup>nd</sup>) group – a vivid configuration of categories related to the American issues – gathers those parts of the texts which are related to cultural perspective, especially ‘(trans) linguistic’ orientation in mass communication studies. The key-element of that group are the categories indicating the study of language in the media (from the stylistic studies to the hermeneutics of the media).

The 3<sup>rd</sup> collection of texts is characterized by a reflection on electronic audiovisual mass media in the age of 20<sup>th</sup> century globalized world and consumer society. Therefore, it is a factor between the dimensions of the cultural and critical reflection on mass communication. That dimension is associated with the notion of the market.<sup>13</sup> One can observe that American media research tradition – in that case – is strongly linked to the various aspects of the audiovisual media landscape of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The most specific categories-indicators of that configuration are ‘cinema’, then ‘television’<sup>14</sup> and ‘VCR (videocassette recorder)’.

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<sup>12</sup> This list should be supplemented by the names of non-US researchers: Gerhard Maletzke, Jay G. Blumler, director of the Center for Television Research at the University of Leeds, Karl E. Rosengren of the Faculty of Sociology, Swedish University of Lund.

<sup>13</sup> It is evidenced by the high frequency of words (from the categories dictionaries) indicating economy, market and consumption.

<sup>14</sup> In this group represented, for example, by ‘tv series’ category.

Another – 4<sup>th</sup> – factor grouping the categories of analysis is associated with the media perceived as “Fourth Estate” and mutual relationship among the world of the media (especially journalists), the citizens and the political realm.

Broadcast media: systems, markets and technologies is the 5<sup>th</sup> bunch of categories indicating this part of *ZP* content which is related to the USA. As one can easily notice, the 5<sup>th</sup> cluster is situated in the center of the diagram (see: graph 1.) illustrating the mutual positions of the “American discourse” elements. Within this configuration there are numerous categories indicating broadcasting media (‘radio’, ‘television’, especially in the context of ‘broadcasters’ and ‘auditors’), but there are also ‘cinema’, ‘videotape, video’, ‘computer games’ and ‘Internet’. Moreover, the 5<sup>th</sup> cluster consists of detailed code-key entries, such as ‘TV series’, ‘reality show’, ‘docudrama’ and ‘multimedia’.

Media as means of social images of reality in the mass communication age is another bundle of categories. One can find within that cluster the names of classic researchers such as Gustav Le Bon, Gabriel Tarde (both French), Charles H. Cooley, Walter Lippmann, Bernard Cohen (US), William McDougall (UK) and Emile Durkheim (France). The crucial element for the 6<sup>th</sup> cluster is the category of ‘mass’ which co-occurs with ‘selection’ and ‘image’ of the world, reality etc. The two detailed categories – ‘framing’ and ‘news value’ – connected with the names of Scandinavian researchers such as Johan Galtung and Mari H. Ruge indicate the specific feature of the cluster related to the mediation processes which can be discovered by the results of content analyses<sup>15</sup> surveys. It is worth mentioning that the factor discussed here is also connected with such a category as ‘new information order’ which strongly correlates with the already mentioned categories of ‘gatekeeping’, ‘news value’, but also ‘image’.

Cybernetics and mathematical theory of information transmission are closely linked to the USA issues in *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*. The 7<sup>th</sup> cluster includes the names of Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (the creators of mathematical theory of information), Norbert Wiener (the father of ‘cybernetics’). The key phrase in this group is the transmission and dissemination of information, which has its manifestations in the form of ‘diffusion’ and ‘circulation’ categories. Hence, in this group of texts, there is also the name of the French researcher Abraham Moles, the author of the socio-dynamic model of cultural circulation. The presence of ‘mass communication’ and ‘interpersonal communication’ categories is also significant for that cluster.

A separate group are those texts in which one can find precise references to the theories of limited media effects (8<sup>th</sup> cluster), which have often been confronted with the tradition of the research on long-term effects. Therefore, the names of the architects of the limited media effects paradigm, P. Lazarsfeld,

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<sup>15</sup> It is also worth noting that the detail category ‘headline’ plays an important role in this configuration.

E. Katz and C. Hovland and J. Klapper (the author of the classic synthesis of empirical research until 1960), appear, on the one hand, in the neighborhood of European writers whose critical works<sup>16</sup> preceded the American post-positivist model of science. On the other hand, the American empirical paradigm is confronted with the achievements of researchers of the next era, the period of re-discovery of powerful, long-term media impacts.<sup>17</sup> The names of the researchers mentioned above are, of course, accompanied by categories representing the most important concepts in the study of the limited media effects era, for instance the ‘boomerang effect’ or ‘cognitive dissonance’.<sup>18</sup> The content of *ZP*, however, is dominated by empirical and functional attitudes, as evidenced by the names of (mostly American) scholars – present in many other clusters of categories: Wilbur Schramm, Bernard Berelson, Leon Festinger, Frank Stanton, Hadley Cantril, Everett Rogers, Kurt Lewin, Harold Lasswell, Charles R. Wright and many others.

If one looks at the graph attached to this article, it turns out that there is some proximity between “post-positivist” clusters, i.e. limited effects, the middle range theories (described below) and scientific discourse which refers to the macroscopic political-economic direction of mass communication research (9<sup>th</sup> cluster).

PRC’s researchers toward the multi-disciplinary media studies is the 10<sup>th</sup> cluster of categories. This configuration is – of course – based on editorial, academic<sup>19</sup> and research<sup>20</sup> activities of the leading Krakow scholars. The most distinctive in that configuration are the names of PRC’s researchers and *ZP* editors such as W. Pisarek, J. Mikułowski Pomorski,<sup>21</sup> P. Dubiel and T. Goban-Klas, but also the Western scholars – e.g. Shelton Gunaratne, J. Halloran, Tapio Varis, Kaarle Nordenstreng – intensively co-operating with Krakow media studies milieu. The mentioned names – treated as categories in the coding procedure during CACA process – tend to co-occur with those elements of the key-code which represent the scientific disciplines.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Especially “academic” and “speculative” Frankfurt School represented among others by Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer.

<sup>17</sup> For instance George Gerbner or the German researcher Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann.

<sup>18</sup> But often confronted with – for instance – Noelle-Neumann’s ‘spiral of silence’ hypothesis representing the next period of mass communication research.

<sup>19</sup> And very strong presence of such categories as ‘academy’, ‘university’ and ‘studies’.

<sup>20</sup> The key category of that cluster is ‘research’ category.

<sup>21</sup> It is worth mentioning that the high correlation coefficient values were observed among the names of such researchers as Cantril, Stanton, Tunstall, Tonies (treated as separate categories) and the name of J. Mikułowski Pomorski.

<sup>22</sup> The strongest correlations are with ‘political science’, then ‘press research’ (and to a lesser degree with ‘media research’), but also ‘linguistics’, ‘sociology’ and ‘psychology’. The main research areas which tend to appear with the mentioned categories are (media) ‘content’ and ‘reception’, therefore, the ‘survey’, ‘poll’ and ‘questionnaire’ categories are present in this configuration. The highly remarkable is the fact that a specific category of the 10<sup>th</sup> cluster – not present in other configurations – is ‘monograph’ but also ‘Gallup’.

The numerous references to the grand social theories and various cultural and civilizational and cultural media theories, including specific concepts such as symbolic interaction and frame theory were an important part of the content of *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*. The media research from the cultural studies perspective (including ‘civilization’<sup>23</sup> and media relations) is the specific feature of the 11<sup>th</sup> cluster of categories which includes the names of such scholars – not only American – as George H. Mead,<sup>24</sup> Erving Goffman, Joshua Meyrowitz, but also Thomas Luckmann (Germany) or Hamid Mowlana, and technological determinists (Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan), new media researchers (e.g. Spanish Manuel Castells) and the German researcher, the representative of the modern incarnation of the ‘Frankfurt School’ engaged in the critical analysis of the media and public space relations, Jürgen Habermas.<sup>25</sup>

The media and propaganda and – more broadly – the persuasive influence of mass media in the social and political sphere is the next (12<sup>th</sup>) bunch of categories derived from those texts which are related to American issues in tandem with the so-called source-dominated theory.

Empirical studies on the role of the media in the flow of knowledge and information at various levels of society are another trend in *ZP*. The key element of this narrative are, for example, the two detailed categories: ‘two-step flow of information and opinion’<sup>26</sup> and ‘uses & gratifications’. Moreover, within the 13<sup>th</sup> cluster one can identify the names of researchers such as E. Rogers, Phillip J. Tichenor, George A. Donohue, Clarice N. Olien, Jay G. Blumler, Michael Gurevitch and Floyd H. Allport. The most specific for this group of texts are the general categories of ‘empirical research’ and ‘group communication’.

Multi-faceted research on information accuracy and objectivism as well as the perspicacity of journalistic commentary is the 14<sup>th</sup> trend separated from the content of *PRC*’s quarterly. The basic element of this group of texts is obviously the ‘information’ category and several categories indicating opinion journalism genres such as ‘essay’, ‘commentary’, ‘columnist’ and many others.

It is possible to isolate from the general content of *ZP* – especially in the later period of publishing the quarterly – those parts of texts in which there are clear references to semiotic and postmodern cultural theories of communication and media discourses (15<sup>th</sup> cluster).

Communication between people at different levels of society (individual, group, broad community) especially in the context of the media as a tool for

<sup>23</sup> And also ‘technological determinism’.

<sup>24</sup> The specific category ‘symbolic interaction’ functions most strongly in the 11<sup>th</sup> cluster.

<sup>25</sup> It must be noted here that in the discussed cluster there is also the name of the German researcher Noelle-Neumann and the category of ‘spiral of silence’. These two objects have a multi-dimensional character. It means that they tend to appear in many clusters.

<sup>26</sup> Together with the names of E. Katz and P. Lazarsfeld.

shaping public opinion, is the 16<sup>th</sup> thematic trend separated from that part of the *ZP* content, where references to the United States together with broadly understood scientific issues exist. The most peculiar elements for this configuration are the names of classic social scientists – G. Le Bon, C.H. Cooley, G. Tarde, E. Durkheim and W. McDougall and John and Matilda Riley.

Much of the content of *ZP* is a discussion on media ethics and journalistic deontology in the sociological and psychological view. This trend – albeit to a lesser extent – is correlated with the American theme as well. The essential categories in the 17<sup>th</sup> cluster are ‘study’ and ‘ethics’ related to the issues of ‘journalist(s)’ and ‘broadcaster(s)’. But the specific element of the described configuration is also ‘empiricism’ and ‘theory’ closely bound with ‘research’.

The normative-critical direction in the study of mediatization of social reality (with a particular emphasis on the Frankfurt tradition) is the 18<sup>th</sup> trend in which the presence of German thought coincides with references to the United States. The most important elements for this configuration are names of Max Horkheimer, Theodore W. Adorno and Herbert Marcuse (the influential representatives of the *Frankfurter Schule*) but also categories denoting the names of other German and Swiss scholars.<sup>27</sup>

Cultural studies on communication and journalistic practice – from semiotic studies, through social constructivism to poststructuralism – is the 19<sup>th</sup> set of categories that includes the names of scholars representing culture studies, semiotics (e.g. Roland Barthes, Ferdinand de Saussure, Umberto Eco), social constructivism (Niklas Luhmann) and postmodern philosophers. It is worth noting that among the names in the latter group there are not only Richard Rorty or Jacques Derrida, but also representatives of critical postmodernism (e.g. Michel Foucault) and of the extremely pessimistic diagnosis of modern media (Jean Baudrillard). The 19<sup>th</sup> configuration is similar to the one described earlier (15<sup>th</sup> cluster), including semiotic and postmodern cultural theories, however there is also a significant difference. The categories that denote ‘journalistic pragmatism’ and the normative as well as the critical direction in mass communication research occupy here a stronger position.

The 20<sup>th</sup> cluster consists of categories which refer to the middle range theories of mass communication. Therefore, the key categories of this configuration are ‘priming’, ‘framing’, ‘agenda setting’ and the names of American researchers developing these concepts, e.g. Maxwell McCombs and others.

The 21<sup>st</sup> cluster of categories – adjoining the 19<sup>th</sup> group (gathering the PRC scholars) – consists of the elements which indicate the issue of communication literacy and media selection processes. The specific categories of this configuration – i.e. not so prominent in other groups – are ‘cognitive aspect’ (a broad category representing references to mental and knowledge functions and

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<sup>27</sup> Winfried Schulz, Gerd G. Kopper, Hans-Bernd Brosius, Hans Mathias Kepplinger and Ulrich Saxer.

mechanisms) and ‘media and communication literacy’. Out of the specific elements of the described cluster, the unique status is gained by the print press ‘headline’ but also by ‘infotainment’ and ‘tabloid’ categories.

The remarkable 22<sup>nd</sup> cluster gathers those categories which represent the empirical and functional orientation in mass media research, so the key category here is ‘functionalism’.<sup>28</sup> But it is worth noting that the set of categories denoting the empirical-functional direction in mass communication is enriched by the elements indicating symbolic interactionism, social constructivism, ritual model of communication but also the second generation of the Frankfurt school.

Negative influences, unintended effects, and disfunctions of the media are yet another (23<sup>rd</sup>) separate group of threads present in the texts published in *ZP*, which also contained references to the USA. However, it is worth drawing attention to specific categories that do not appear so clearly in other configurations. This is, for example, the category of ‘dissonance’ (cognitive, cultural, etc.), which accompanies L. Festinger’s name, but also ‘manufacturing consent’ (Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky). The representatives of this trend are researchers such as Neil Postman or Horace Newcomb.

*The American Mass Media Research Traditions in Press Research Centre and Zeszyty Prasoznawcze quarterly. An Attempt at Synthesis*

As Tomasz Goban-Klas (2013) claims, Harold Lasswell, Kurt Lewin, Carl Hovland and Paul Lazarsfeld can traditionally be perceived as the founding fathers of American empirical mass media studies (predominant all over the world from the 1940s), simply called mass media research. They developed the basic approaches in communication research: political persuasion studies (represented by Lasswell), sociological, questionnaire-based surveys (e.g. Lazarsfeld), psychological, laboratory, experimental research (e.g. Hovland) and small group research (e.g. Lewin). All these extensive traditions were systematically presented in *Zeszyty*, together with other minor research approaches such as the normative-reformist approach (represented, for instance, by the Commission on the Freedom of the Press), journalism (represented by journalism education), historical (present in the works of David Riesman and Harold Innis), mathematical and cybernetic (Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver), social and psycholinguistic (Charles Osgood, Jonathan Miller) and psychiatric (Jürgen Ruesch, Gregory Bateson). For many years *Zeszyty* brought the traditions and achievements of American mass communication science closer to its readers.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> And also other categories such as ‘knowledge gap’.

<sup>29</sup> Melvin de Fleur in his book entitled “Milestones of Mass Communication” discusses the breakthroughs of mass communication research development, such as Cantril’s research on “The War of the Worlds” radio drama transmission, Hovland’s research program (Yale team and Erie County electoral survey), Lazarsfeld and his co-workers’ research, the work of uses and gratification theory

*Zeszyty* was a magazine whose editors effectively disseminated the results of indigenous mass communication research, especially those undertaken within the PRC. And the structure of the Center – which should be remembered – was organized according to Lasswell’s form of communication (sender-message-receiver), and which – as it is well-known – was designed in such a way to make it possible to comprehensively study communication processes at the same time isolating the main fields of mass media research.

The PRC’s research projects had primarily applied research character (in the American tradition – after Lazarsfeld – called ‘administrative’) and were situated within the so-called empirical-functional orientation of mass media research.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, the scientific model of the PRC and *ZP* had a clear outline of the post-positivist orientation from the very beginning. The Krakow scholars, like their American counterparts, as observers of the social world wanted to systematically study the communication phenomena. They searched for a scientific paradigm within natural sciences. Thus the Krakow scholars, the authors of *ZP*, and especially the editors of the quarterly, supported the view that knowledge can be obtained only through empirical research on the observable and quantitative phenomena by means of scientific methods.<sup>31</sup> In 1984 W. Pisarek presented the results of his extensive studies of directions in the world media research. In the conclusion of this publication one can read that the members of the PRC’s team and the editors of *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* – despite the expansion of qualitative methods in the world media research – will continue to support quantitative research methods and techniques.

Melvin L. De Fleur (1988) – in the article entitled “Where Have All the Milestones Gone? The Decline of Significant Research on the Process and Effects of Mass Communication” – pointed out that since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century very few media research results were groundbreaking in comparison to previous

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(and its development), Bandura’s modeling and social learning theory, Rogers’ research on diffusion of innovations, and crucial McCombs and Shaw agenda-setting theory. All of them were carefully and repeatedly discussed in *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*.

<sup>30</sup> Functional analysis, according to Robert Merton’s assumptions, and developed in Polish conditions thanks to Irena Tetelowska, the “founding mother” of mass media research in Poland, is about recognizing the places and roles of particular elements of the communication system in order to maintain the balance and functionality of the system, as well as researching the relations of the communication system to other systems: political, social and culture ones.

<sup>31</sup> The supporters of the scientific method in communication research tend to follow empirical observation, despite the fact that people and their behavior cannot be considered as permanent elements of the physical world. It is about explaining, anticipating and controlling communication. Ontology of post-positivist orientation assumes that the social world exists beyond our conception, and human behavior is predictable enough to be empirically tested (even if the social world is more diverse than the physical world.) According to epistemological assumptions of post-positivist theory, the advancement of knowledge takes place through a systematic, logical search for regularity and causal relationships using the scientific method. And that is the scientific method that determines the axiology of post-positivism: the pursuit of objectivism (i.e. intersubjective verifiability) which allows to separate scholars and theoreticians axiological bias from the process of discovering and knowledge searching.

epochs. Since the 1980s we did not see any significant contribution to the development of the mass media theory. At the same time, after the golden era of mass communication research the fundamental transformations in the media landscape took place. The unprecedented diversity of the increasing number of communication channels and of media range was accompanied by historical acceleration of communication manifested by the expansion in technological advances (especially in terms of accessibility and transmission), and a significant growth in the media industry. It, in turn, enhanced the opportunities for the media themselves and for media professional training and journalistic academic education. The same phenomena occurred in Poland but the situation was more complex owing to the radical transformation of the economic and political dimensions of the domestic media system.

There are many reasons for the slack in the mass media research and in the process of delivering groundbreaking results of mass communication research. In the United States (and more broadly in the Western world) as well as in Poland since the early 1990s, many social scientists abandoned their current research on traditional mass media (press, radio and television) to seek answers to important research questions in other areas. But what was even worse was the abandonment of long-term research programs (such as the Hovland's project) in favor of one-off, occasional, ad hoc research actions. It seems that the media studies milieu deserted the pursuit of long-term and systematic research and transformed its activity according to the shape: "from one research project to the next." This problem is particularly acute in the case of the PRC (and its quarterly), because – to some extent – the continuity of mass media research was broken. Moreover, in Poland younger generations of mass media scholars are better acquainted with the ectypal Western research results and publications in the field of media and communication science, ignoring almost entirely the praiseworthy achievements of domestic researchers.

The situation is getting worse – in Poland as well as in the world – because many talented mass communication researchers leave universities to seek better paid work in business. The main reason for this migration was the reduction of subsidies for academic media research. A lot of applied research projects – conducted in between academy and media market – which were peculiar for The Press Research Center in Krakow, were almost completely abandoned. From the end of the 1990s the media researchers very often heard the unfortunate phrase that "the university is supposed to focus on academic teaching" and "the applicative, pragmatic research should be reserved for commercial institutions." Today – after two decades – university researchers in Poland hear exactly the opposite: "it is necessary to establish some efficient forms of cooperation between academy and market in the pursuit of innovative modernization." Unfortunately, some structural changes cannot be easily reversed and the process of redressing irreversible damages in the utilitarian research sector in Poland requires time and money.



These negative changes were accompanied by a revolution in the working conditions of university lecturers. For example, the increase in the number of part-time scholars imposed heavier burden on full-time lecturers, leaving them with less time to conduct important surveys. Moreover, the pursuit of full-time employment forced them to undertake short-term, fast-paced research. It must be added that the profound effects of that situation usually led to collecting points in the age of “lethal parameterization of science” but not to groundbreaking scientific discoveries.

Probably the most destructive cause for the dramatic decrease in the number of important research projects on the media – not solely in Poland – is the shift towards critical, cultural, interpretative academic discourses which – according to the supporters of post-positivist direction in mass communication research – have speculative and non-scientific character.

The defenders of new directions in social sciences usually argue that the current confusion in the media research is not only due to the limitations of social sciences, but rather to the fact that young media researchers have so many interesting options that lie in store. Arguably, this wealth of possibilities makes researchers’ choices so difficult and causes cognitive confusion. Today it is difficult to demand homogeneity in communication research approaches. We should require higher quality in research, regardless of underlying philosophies or methodologies, rather than claim that our approach is the best.

In the past, at the beginning of the 1960s, the Krakow media researchers not only adopted the American model of science (and successfully popularized it) but also – what is extremely unique – remained the staunch supporters of quantitative, empirical, inter-subjectively verifiable and pragmatically applicable media and communication research. The critical reflection on mass communication, however, was also always present in *ZP*, which was not only the result of a different ideological orientation, but rather the consequence of rooting the PRC and *ZP* in the European scientific tradition. The Krakow researchers’ epistemological perspective and their advocacy of the American schools of mass media research thought should, therefore, be regarded as a creative and autonomous attitude in light of today’s, often uncritical, approach to Western scientific concepts.

This support was something extremely important because *ZP* and the PRC in Krakow were not just regional media research institutions representing Central and Eastern Europe. Numerous contacts with the Western scientific community – including US researchers and institutions – and active participation of scholars from Krakow in the work of world-wide scientific societies helped successfully overcome the cold war barriers and offered prospects for global research to the next generations of media researchers in Poland.

### *Concluding Remarks*

The American paradigm of empirical research on mass communication was, paradoxically, a way to overcome political entanglements and pressures from political control in socialist Poland. The results of empirical research enabled criticism. Since the Communist authorities were keen on obtaining reliable research results on social communication (e.g. trust in the media and state institutions), the Press Research Center, using a number of research techniques transferred from the USA, could reach the truth about the relationships (and the effects of interactions) between media, power and society. Unfortunately, the most politically sensitive data on this subject could not be publicly available nor be published in the PRC's quarterly or – if so – the dissemination of confidential content was in a partial form. However, this knowledge was archived in the form of classified materials (for internal use only) which have survived till the present day and constitute a priceless source of information about the system of media and social communication in Poland in the past.

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## STRESZCZENIE

### **Amerykańska myśl medioznawcza na łamach *Zeszytów Prasoznawczych***

W końcu lat 40. XX wieku w Stanach Zjednoczonych rozpoczęła się zmiana paradygmatu w teorii i badaniach komunikowania masowego. Wkrótce nastąpiła konsolidacja postpozytywistycznej orientacji empirycznej, a w USA zaczęto otwierać nowe ośrodki badawcze. Dorobek amerykańskich badań nad komunikowaniem i perswazją doczekał się pełnego upowszechnienia, a nawet najbardziej krytycznie ustosunkowani do niego badacze nie mogą ignorować terminów i pojęć stworzonych w USA w latach 1940–1960 przez Lasswella, Lazarsfelda, Hovlanda, Schramma, Festingera, Klappera czy Berelsona. Na wzór amerykańskich rozwiązań empirycznych zaczęto tworzyć podobne ośrodki w innych częściach świata, a krakowski Ośrodek Badań Prasoznawczych był jednym z pierwszych. Aby zrekonstruować agendę obecności amerykańskich teorii i wyników badań na łamach *ZP* w latach 1960–2013, zastosowano różnorodne techniki pomiarów ilościowych. W pierwszym etapie badań z ogólnej zawartości *Zeszytów Prasoznawczych* wyodrębniono te fragmenty tekstu, które zawierały odniesienie do Stanów Zjednoczonych. Zbiór poddano operacjom statystycznym: skonstruowano listę frekwencyjną wyrazów oraz wyodrębniono słowa klucze charakteryzujące te fragmenty zawartości kwartalnika OBP, które odnoszą się do Stanów Zjednoczonych. Wyniki tych pomiarów stanowiły punkt wyjścia do zasadniczej części badań, czyli komputerowej analizy zawartości. W jej wyniku wyodrębniono ponad 20 konfiguracji kategorii odnoszących się do nazwisk badaczy, koncepcji teoretycznych, wyników badań, hipotez (etc.), które reprezentują najmocniej obecne na łamach kwartalnika OBP tradycje amerykańskiego medioznawstwa. Z zaprezentowanych w artykule badań wynika m.in., że krakowscy medioznawcy nie tylko przyjęli amerykański model nauki (i z powodzeniem go popularyzowali), ale także przez lata pozostali zwolennikami ilościowych, empirycznych, intersubiektywnie sprawdzalnych oraz użytecznych badań nad mediami i komunikacją społeczną.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*, amerykańskie badania mediów, czasopisma naukowe, badania prasy