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*Image of Polish and German European policy during tensions –
a comparative analysis of Polish and German press*

Introduction

This article will analyse the way Polish European policy was presented by German press and German policy by Polish press at a time of political tensions in the bilateral relations¹. The authors will attempt to answer these questions:

1. Whether rising tensions between the two countries regarding their European policy were intensified by media reports and reactions (up to the point of self reference, or the point of media mutual concentration on themselves and assessing policy based on media reports rather than politicians' activities)?
2. Whether relations regarding the countries' European policy were dominated by conflict or cooperation?
3. Whether the tensions reflect actual conflict issues or conflicts of issues in this area?
4. Whether there were apparent differences on the stances presented depending on which newspaper reported on it and its political affiliation?

European policy has been and is, both for Poland and Germany, one of their most imperative elements of foreign policy². For Poland, in its pre-accession into the EU stage, German foreign policy was particularly important. In its assessment, key was the trend to de-Europeanize German foreign policy in favour of national interests³. After Poland's accession process was completed, expected from both countries was a common European policy as a plane for cooperation and realization of common interests as was declared in the 1990s. However, the following years show no such cooperation in new, European ramifications but rather a return to old, outdated and unresolved conflicts. The question is – what role have the media played in the instigation or resolution of conflictual issues.

Foreign policy image in the press is created via reports and descriptions of major events, issues and projects in this area. Due to the character of modern media, imperative to the creation of this image are politicians' assessments. In order to specify both countries' foreign policy image, we need to assess how it is presented by the media, whether media reports include the so-called cognitive patterns or whether they use national stereotypes in their presentation of policy and politicians.

Research methodology

¹ This article is based on a project for Instytut Spraw Publicznych and Fundacja Konrada Adenauera, Using fragments of the reports by B. Ocieпка, A. Łada, J. Ćwiek-Karpowicz, *Polityka europejska Warszawy i Berlina w prasie niemieckiej i polskiej*, Warszawa 2008.

² European policy, also known as EU policy is part of foreign policy regarding the European community as a whole, including own interestp. European policy is strictly tied to domestic policy.

³ Cf. K. Malinowski, *Nauka i polityka zagraniczna. Dyskurs o międzynarodowej roli Niemiec (1990–2005)*, "Zeszyty Instytutu Zachodniego" 2007, nr 44, p. 36 and on; G. Hellemann, *Deutschland, Europa und der Osten*, "Internationale Politik" 2007, nr 62, p. 23.

The chosen research period includes the German presidency in the EU (early 2007), the following Portuguese presidency up to the October European Council summit in Lisbon and the early parliamentary elections in Poland. During this time major events took place and issues were discussed which increased tensions between Poland and Germany regarding European policy, partly due to the way they were presented by the press. Firstly, the relations between the two countries were strained as a result of a conflict of interests regarding the gas pipeline, relations with Russia and general foreign/European policy in which history has started to play an increasing role. Also, Poland had a different opinion from Germany regarding the Constitution Treaty and although it was not the only country with objections, by the European (including German) media it was presented as the country blocking the acceptance process.

The research includes newspapers from both countries representing various political affiliations. From the serious press chosen were the German dailies “Süddeutsche Zeitung” (“SZ”), “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” (“FAZ”) and “Die Welt”, and the Polish “Gazeta Wyborcza” (“GW”), “Rzeczpospolita” (“Rz”) and “Dziennik”. Additionally researched were tabloid newspapers including the German “Bild” and Polish “Fakt” and “Super Express” (“SE”). Among the weeklies, chosen were “Der Spiegel” and “Focus” (German) and “Polityka” and “Wprost” (Polish).

In the first stage of research compiled were all press texts on the other country’s European policy between January 1st and October 31st, 2007. Firstly, eliminated were texts of little relevance such as those from the Internet only or from sport sections. Altogether chosen were over 1,300 articles of which 858 were from the German press and 521 – from Polish⁴. From those, a representative sample was chosen (over a hundred articles from either country) based on the following criteria: most frequently discussed issues (five on the Polish side and seven on the German), degree of relevance (European policy, Polish policy, German policy), length of text and time of its publication⁵.

Interpretation framework. The research used a framework paradigm in order to analyse the language applied in relation to European policy. It was evaluated whether the assessment of policy was positive or negative⁶. In order to do so analysed was content (what information was included and excluded) and how the text was organized which influenced our interpretation⁷. A typical frame used in European policy texts, including Polish-German relations, is the conflict frame⁸. The authors analysed which elements were particularly stressed – quarrel, rivalry, lack of understanding and whether it was bilateral or multilateral misunderstandings.

⁴The total number of texts is as follows: German press – 280 from “FAZ”, 240 from “SZ”, 255 from “Die Welt”, 47 from “Der Spiegel”, 20 from “Bild” and 16 from “Focus” and Polish press: 168 from “GW”, 158 from “Rz”, 67 from “Dziennik”, 57 from “Wprost”, 26 from “Polityka”, 24 from “Fakt” and 21 from “SE”.

⁵ On the German side it was 156 texts (40 from “FAZ”, 47 from “SZ”, 44 from “Die Welt”, 15 from “Der Spiegel”, 10 from “Focus”), on Polish – 118 (27 from “GW” and “Rz”, 17 from “Dziennik” and “Wprost”, 10 from “Polityka”, “Fakt” and “SE”). “Bild” was excluded at this stage.

⁶ Cf. C. Trutkowski, *Spoleczne reprezentacje polityki*, Warszawa 2000, p. 276. According to the author, a text can be considered positive if it includes words such as ‘building’, ‘uniting’ ‘creation’. It can be considered negative when it includes words such as ‘destruction’ or ‘disintegration’.

⁷ Cf. R. Kuhn, *Television and l’insécurité in the 2002 French Presidential Election*, “European Journal of Communication” 2005, vol. 20, p. 192.

⁸ On framing European theme texts see research by H. Semetko and P.M. Valkenburg, *Framing European politics: a content analysis of press and television news*, “Journal of Communication” 2000, Spring, p. 93–109. See also: B. Ociepka, *Polacy i Niemcy w obrazie mediów*, [in:] *Polacy – Niemcy. Sąsiedztwo z dystansu*, ed. by A. Wolff-Powęska, D. Bingen, Poznań 2004, p. 258–289.

In addition to the conflict frame, there are also responsibility, economic consequences and narcissist media frames⁹.

The responsibility frame shows who is accountable for a given situation or issue. It was analysed whether the blame was put on individuals or groups or whether the author in his conclusions offered any solutions. This frame was particularly useful in researching events such as international summits or negotiations within the period of interest. Due to a personalization of broadcasts we can expect that responsibility is generally attributed to governments or heads of state.

The economic consequences frame shows whether the issues presented can be explained by a particular country's economic interests and whether the text includes information on costs and profits obtained from certain endeavors. It illustrates the level of foreign policy economisation in media assessment.

Regarding the narcissist frame, it was analysed to what extent the researched articles cite texts from other newspapers (both domestic and foreign). This frame allows us to see how European policy is reported on and to establish the media – foreign policy relations in both countries. The focus was on situations where media describe and assess not foreign policy itself but the way it is reported on.

Other analysis criteria. Another criterion of analysis was the context of the article – bilateral or multilateral. The bilateral context included texts only on Polish-German relations while the multilateral context included articles in which, aside from Polish or German actions or opinions, contained those of other EU countries or the entire EU. This differentiation is imperative as it shows whether the press illustrated a particular foreign policy in a wider European context or whether it focused only on bilateral relations.

Additionally, it was analysed whether the text reported on a specific event or person involved. This allowed the authors to see how foreign policy was seen by media – through the prism of events or the people creating it and to what extent journalists focused on the issues of foreign policy. Personalisation of politics undoubtedly simplifies the media transmission. This can result in a distortion of reported content, ie. depending on whether a given politician is amiable or not. In case of articles particularly focused on certain individuals, it was analysed who the subject was and in what light (positive, negative, neutral) he was presented.

Another criterion of analysis was journalist argumentation –one, two or multi sided. One sided articles discussed only one point of view, generally from the point of view of the mother country while two and multi sided texts presented both or all sides of the argument. This criterion allowed authors to determine whether journalists enabled readers to get a full picture on a given issue and develop their own opinion based on information presented.

Lastly, it was evaluated whether the articles of interest included national stereotypes or avoided them in their presentation of heated issues. The authors wished to find out to what extent media intensify the often unjust and unfounded stereotypes in describing Polish-German relations and to what extent they are objective in their assessments and judgments. The authors attempted to answer the question whether national stereotypes influence the way European policy is portrayed, meaning simplified presentations and assessments of policy.

Results of the analysis

⁹ Created by H. Semetko, P.M. Valkenburg and L.L. Kaid. For more see: H. Semetko, P.M. Valkenburg, *Framing European...* and P.R. Lichter, R.E. Noyes, L.L. Kaid, *No News or Negative News: How the Networks Nixed the '96 Campaign*, [in:] *The Electronic Election: Perspectives on the 1996 Campaign Communication*, ed. by L.L. Kaid, D.G. Bystrom, Mahwah, NJ 1999, p. 3–13.

The presentation of results of the analysis intends to show the similarities and differences in Polish and German press in their reports on the other country's European policy. Within the researched period both countries' policies were dominated by the Constitution Treaty reforms (about 40% of all articles in both countries)¹⁰. Most of the articles of interest were printed in March and June of 2007¹¹.

Differing assessments of European policy. The majority of German newspapers, in over 50% of cases, negatively evaluated Polish policy, being in favour of Berlin policy. "Der Spiegel" presented the largest number of negative opinions (73%) while "FAZ" – the least (30%). Polish policy was described with vocabulary such as "blockade", "threat", "escalation", "division", "open split [...] a solely Polish action, lasting for months, in order to gain power and influence"¹²; "resistance"¹³; "Poles are striving to destroy the basis of European strength"¹⁴. At the same time, Berlin policy was illustrated in the following way, "in order to win favour, Berlin offered assistance regarding the second contested issue"¹⁵; "in these conditions, the German presidency in the European Council still made considerable progress"¹⁶.

The Polish press also presented various views of German European policy. In contrast to German press, there were greater differences depending on the newspaper. "Dziennik" (56%) and "GW" (55%) published the largest number of articles assessing German policy in favourable light in contrast to negative assessments by "Wprost" (65%) and "Rz" (50%). Interestingly, Polish tabloids were rather positive in their judgments and the most neutral in their assessments regarding German policy was the daily "Polityka" (44%).

Various assessments of politicians: Merkel's better results than L. Kaczynski. German press focused more on issues than particular politicians. Almost always the people were in the background of the presented subject. The politicians most often discussed were, on the Polish side – Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński, president Lech Kaczyński and Foreign Affairs Minister Anna Fotyga, and on the German side – chancellor Angela Merkel. The following phrases were used to describe the Kaczynski brothers, "constant trouble makers"¹⁷ or "egotistical, unyielding, and nationalist behaviour of the Polish brothers"¹⁸. Meanwhile, chancellor Merkel was portrayed as a politician with good will and striving for agreement, "In this situation Merkel was able to reach consensus through compromise which creates a solid basis for decision making in the EU"¹⁹, "[Merkel] is determined and friendly. She is consistent and skillful. Smiling. Calm. Persistent."²⁰

Polish Press, on the other hand, focused more on politicians than specific issues. This is where Polish and German press considerably differ from each other. This is how different Polish newspapers rated German politicians. Most critical were "Wprost" and "Rz" while

¹⁰ "Wprost" is the exception, when discussing Germany's European policy it focused more on historical issues (restitution of property claims).

¹¹ During this time, the following events took place: Merkel visit to Poland (March 17-18), Rome Treaty 50th Anniversary celebrations, Berlin Declaration signing (March 24-25), European Council summit in Brussels (June 21-23).

¹² O. Berbalk, P. van Laere, *Europa bewegt sich wieder*, "Focus" 2007, nr 26.

¹³ *Trickreiches Spiel*, "Der Spiegel" 2007, nr 43.

¹⁴ M. Winter, *Vorwärts am Nasenring*, "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 25.06.2007.

¹⁵ *Kompromisslose Polen*, „Der Spiegel” 2007, nr 24.

¹⁶ M. Winter, *Vorwärts...*

¹⁷ *Trickreiches Spiel*, "Der Spiegel" 2007, nr 43.

¹⁸ *Polen muss aufhören*, "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 03.07.2007.

¹⁹ *Freche Maxime*, "Focus" 2007, nr 28.

²⁰ O. Berbalk, P. Borst, P. van Laere, *Alle gegen Warschau*, "Focus" 2007, nr 25.

more favourable were “GW”, “Dziennik” and “Polityka”. Not surprisingly, Merkel was the politician who received most attention from journalists.

In German press, she was praised for her efforts in resolving the Constitution crisis and for pushing further EU reforms, “Merkel wrote a confidential letter to EU heads of state. The Constitution must be ready until the end of June [...] There is no more time to be hesitant, it’s time to take action [...] Merkel wants EU member state Prime Ministers to become involved which would make negotiations more significant and would speed up the process”²¹. She was portrayed as a person who is responsible for the entire EU, striving for compromise and cooperation, “Merkel’s main goal in visiting Poland is the EU and negotiating a new treaty”²². Even at a critical moment of the June negotiations she was not criticized, Merkel is upset [...] she wants to call a conference during which the future of the Treaty will be discussed. – We’ll negotiate without Poland – states the German chancellor”²³.

In Polish press, there were considerable differences in assessment of the politicians and their activity. President Lech Kaczynski was the one who received most attention from the media. His evaluation by journalists was substantially lower (41% positive and 41% negative commentaries) than that of chancellor Merkel (68% positive and 16% negative). The press commented the very fact that he was active on the EU arena, “Kaczynski is going to Berlin. Before next week’s EU summit he will attempt to convince Merkel to accept the Polish proposal for changes in the voting system of the European Council”²⁴. However, the results of his negotiations were sharply criticized, “If you were to look inside the president’s briefcase, you would see that what he brought to Brussels was something entirely different than we thought [...] the president’s war-like, euro-skeptic rhetoric and his unyielding attitude only for a moment drew attention away from the fact that he has so little to say”²⁵.

German press multilateral context, Polish press bilateral context. In over three fourths of all articles from German press, Polish European policy was portrayed in multilateral context, that it, compared to other EU state actions. Generally, that fact that the issues were presented from many different angles shows that Poland is perceived as a key actor on the international arena and that its opinions and actions are closely tied to those of other countries.

In contrast, instead of multilateral view, the Polish press presented German European policy in a bilateral context. Polish journalists did so for two reasons, 1) they see Germany as a country with much more economic and political potential which is of interest to Polish public opinion, 2) a multilateral take would mean a broader European perspective which would take attention away from Polish and German differing views and may lead to justifying German action. It should be noted that bilateral context was dominant in those newspapers which were critical of German policy while those which were more favourable presented issues in a more multilateral context. This was particularly visible in newspapers such as “GW”, “Dziennik” and “SE”, and less so in “Rz”.

Two sided argumentation in German press and one sided in Polish. In German press, dominant was two sided argumentation which allowed readers to become familiar with both sides’ views and to then make up their own opinion on European policy. Journalists

²¹ K. Niklewicz, *Merkel pogania Europę*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 13–14.01.2007, and A. Woś, *Merkel walczy o eurokonstytucję*, “Dziennik”, 30.05.2007.

²² Ł. Lipiński, *Merkel na zgodę – komentarz*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 17–18.03.2007.

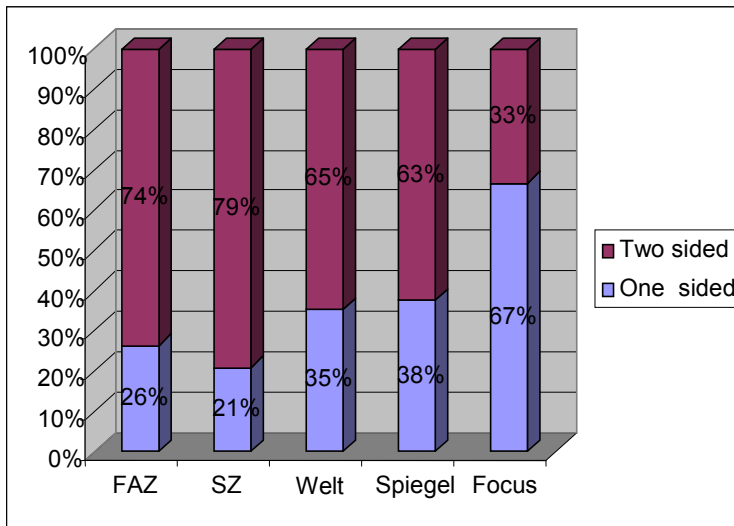
²³ W. Lorenz, A. Słojewska, *Merkel zagroziła izolacją Polski*, “Rzeczpospolita”, 23.06.2007.

²⁴ A. Woś, *Prezydent może przekonać Niemcy do poparcia Polski*, “Dziennik”, 16.06.2007.

²⁵ K. Bachmann, *Traktat jest nagi*, “Polityka” 2007, nr 27.

presented both side's arguments by citing politicians and without stressing their own opinions or the articles' theses. It cannot be said that German journalists omitted the Polish point of view. Since they supported the German government regarding European integration, the presented the opponents' arguments were much less convincing. However, they were, nevertheless, included in the articles.

Chart 1. Type of argumentation in German press



Especially worth noting is the “Der Spiegel” issue from June 18th with extensive articles on Poland²⁶. It included four long texts and an interview with Mariusz Muszynski, the plenipotentiary for cooperation with Germany. The articles focused on the negative attitude toward Germany delineating the present government's European policy. This was directly related to Poland's blocking the voting reform of the Treaty. The weekly presented the complicated Polish-German history and reminded readers of the suffering that Germans caused Poles. It also mentioned Germany's later efforts to aid Poland. Additionally, authors pointed out the generally pro-German Polish attitude. Muszynski in his interview postulated that Germans need to start treating Poland like a partner who is willing to negotiate and take responsibility for the future of the EU. The articles presented an in-depth analysis of the complicated relations, did not use simple clichés and outlined both sides' arguments. What was interesting was also the readers' response to this publication. On June 25th “Der Spiegel” printed 15 commenting letters. Some writers included their positive experiences in contacts with Poles while other criticized the newspaper. There were also opinions criticizing the Polish viewpoint. What is imperative is the fact that the newspaper printed such a large number of various commentaries. This proves that “Der Spiegel” strived to be objective in its presentation of the subject matter.

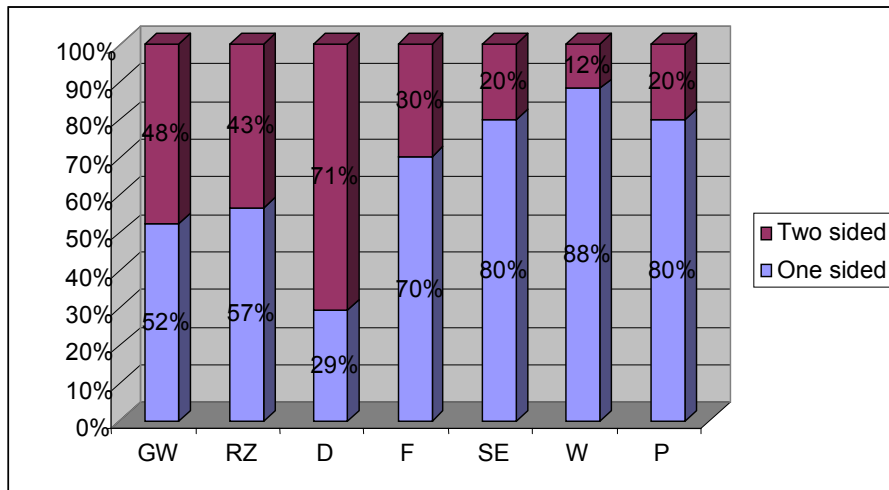
Meanwhile, in Polish press, journalist commentary was predominantly one sided²⁷. With the exception of “Dziennik” this was the case in over half of all researched articles.

²⁶ This was an exceptional issue for this influential weekly. See A. Szymańska, *Wizerunek Polski w „Spieglu” w latach 1990–1999*, “Zeszyty Prasoznawcze” 2000, nr 3/4.

²⁷ In some cases, newspapers included reprints from other foreign (including German) press. This was used to inform readers of what is written about Poland abroad. This practice, however, cannot be considered two sided argumentation as it includes citing the other side's arguments and not the presentation of what other people wrote. This is rather an example of media narcissism..

Journalists mostly cited the arguments of one side and only briefly reported the other side's point of view from their own perspective.

Chart 2. Type of argumentation in Polish press



The fact that „Dziennik” used mostly two sided argumentation (see Chart 2) was characteristic. One explanation for it could be the influence of the German publisher (Axel Springer) on journalistic standards. It is unfortunate that both Polish dailies (“Wprost” and “Polityka”) had high (over 80%) percentages of one sided texts. In contrast, on the German side only the “Focus” daily used predominantly one side argumentation. It would seem that weeklies which enjoy more space for in-depth analysis of issues should publish more objective analyses than a presentation of only side of the argument.

General openness. Another helpful factor in assessment of newspaper objectivity is determining whether the papers were open to outside, independent authors as well as interviews with people of different political sympathies. In this criterion both, German and Polish press, were alike. The research distinguished those newspapers which were open to others' views and those which were limited to one view only²⁸.

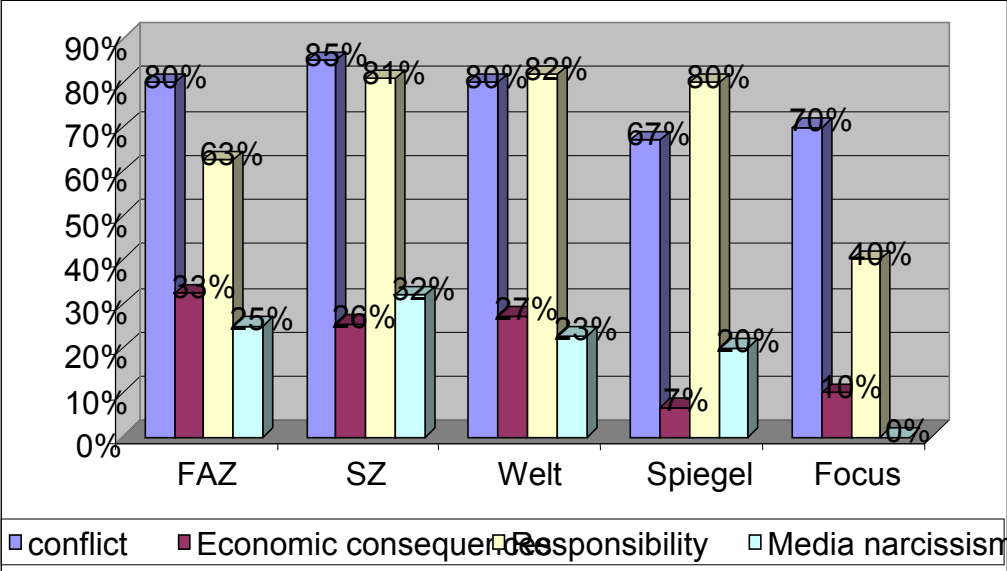
On the German side mentioned needs to be the daily “Die Welt” which invited all sorts of politicians with completely opposite world views (ie. G. Verheugen and E. Steinbach, B. Geremek and J. Kaczyński, A. Michnik and M. Muszyński).

In Polish press, the German point of view was mostly presented by people from the government (A. Berkel, F.W. Steinmeier, R. Polenz, R. Schweppe) and accepted authorities (R. von Weizsäcker). The two exceptions were “Dziennik” and “Fakt” which also interviewed opposition party politicians (D. Cohn-Bendit from the Green Party). As a result of presenting German European policy in Polish press, there was much heated debate among Polish politicians. Among the top three most influential newspapers in the country distinguished should be “GW” which invited the largest number of politicians representing different political preferences, both left-wing (Danuta Hübner, Dariusz Rosati) and right-wing (Anna Fotyga, Ewa Ośniecka-Tamecka, Konrad Szymański). The same cannot be said of “Rz” which was dominated by right-wing politicians and writers (Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Mariusz Muszyński, Barbara Fedyszak-Radziejowska, Paweł Zalewski) or “Dziennik”.

²⁸ Here, all article on European policy were analysed, then selected were 858 German texts and 521 Polish.

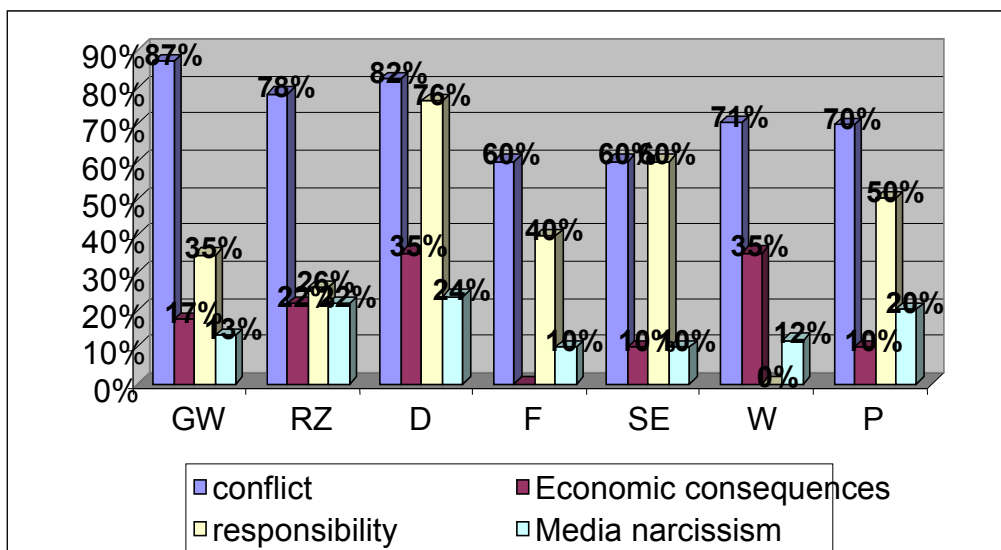
Dominant conflict and responsibility frames. In German press, the prevailing frames were that of conflict and responsibility. The conflicts presented by the media were predominantly between Poland and Germany or Poland and the EU or Russia (in this case Germany was Poland's opponent). Journalists mainly saw the issues discussed via the Poland – EU or Poland – EU – Germany frames. Economic reasoning or other media opinions were rarely cited.

Chart 3. Interpretation frames in German press



In Polish articles, the frequency of frame use was similar to that in German press, however, there was more focus on the conflict frame rather than responsibility. Also, similarly to German press, economic reasoning or other media opinions were rarely cited. We can, therefore, say that there was no particular stress on media narcissism. That fact that newspapers hardly ever quoted each other *proves that within the researched period public debate on Polish-German relations and Polish foreign policy toward Germany was practically inexistent.*

Chart 4. Interpretation frames in Polish press



In Polish press we can distinguish three different types of conflict frames. The first type centers around the negative assessment of Kaczynski brothers' policies, "Kaczynskis treat politics like a on-going battle [...] Kaczynskis behave as if the only important thing was "who won" and "who gave in". [...] Kaczynskis cannot think rationally or separate the country's interests from their own"²⁹; "this anti-German phobia and its manifestation, even though the Kaczynski brothers do not say everything they want, they allow others to do it, there can be nothing said for political correctness."³⁰ Another type of conflict frame is based on a negative evaluation of German policy, "[...] they justify their aggression by saying that they 'care about Europe's common future' [...], German dailies are right behind the chancellor and are convincing public opinion in Europe that what is good for Germany is also good for the EU. [...] Is the Russia-Germany gas plot not a threat to the future of the EU? Isn't the German government slowing down integration by limiting access to its job market? What about the fact that Germany has, for the last several years, been breaching the stabilization pact? What about the idea of a free market if there is the so called Volkswagen law which protects this company from being taken over by a foreign investor?"³¹ The third type of frame focused on conflict but did not evaluate either side, "It is time to play the game with some tough players. [...] It is risky that it is Kaczynski who has to play this round of poker with Europe's bigwigs"³².

Based on the above, once again we can see a clear division between different Polish newspapers. There is "GW" and "Polityka" with most favourable assessment of Germany's policies and most critical of Polish government on the one side and there is "Rz" and "Wprost" most negatively evaluating German policy and rather positively - Polish. Somewhere in the middle were other newspapers (predominantly tabloids) which were generally positive in their judgment of both Polish and German policies („Dziennik”, „Fakt” and „SE”).

²⁹ M. Bosacki, *Niemcy jako wróg*, "Gazeta Wyborcza", 17–18.03.2007.

³⁰ M. Ostrowski, *Arytmetyka polityczna*, "Polityka" 2007, nr 25.

³¹ M. Magierowski, *Niemcy, czyli główny hamulcowy Unii*, "Rzeczpospolita", 19.06.2007.

³² T. Noske, T. Sygut, *Dziś poker na szczycie Unii w Brukseli*, "Super Express", 21.06.2007.

Rare use of stereotypes. German media are often criticized for having a stereotypical view of Poland and its inhabitants and, thus, reinforce these nationalistic attitudes. This was verified by the research in which it was calculated what percentage of texts included the stereotypes and which kind. We distinguished the following types:

- simplified assessments, such as those in Polish „Polenwitze” jokes,
- conventional statements regarding policy, such as ie. Germany being the country, which, for centuries, has strived to control Poland,
- statements in which Poland was portrayed as the country halting progress in the EU, a country responsible for integration difficulties and one unable to compromise,
- opinions that Poland is ungrateful to Germany which, after 1989, was so supportive of Poland becoming part of the EU.

The research carried out shows that the use of the above mentioned stereotypes was not common and appeared in lower number of articles than expected. Newspapers *Der Spiegel* and *„Die Welt*” had the largest number of texts with such connotations (36% each). Other stereotypes, regarding society (that Poles as thieves, illegal workers or alcoholics), even though existent in Germany, were not included. Present, however, was a tendency to simplify the image of both countries’ European policies. Poland was portrayed in negative light, hindering integration, while Germany – in positive and being pro-integration.

Also, among Polish dailies the frequency of stereotypes use was similar to that in German press. The exceptions were two Polish weeklies, *„Wprost*”, which used national stereotypes³³ and *„Polityka*” with conventional statements regarding European policy. Surprisingly, tabloid newspapers *„Fakt*” and *„SE*” had a significantly low number of texts with stereotypes – 10% and 30% correspondingly. This means that generally journalists did not associate European policy with national or historical stereotypes. The tabloids focused on reporting facts and did not play on readers’ emotions or use excessive sensationalism in this case. The one exception was a headline *„SS Authority*” referring to Gunter Grass’ commentary on Polish government negotiating style during the June summit in Brussels³⁴.

Conclusion

The analysis of Polish and German press on the subject of both countries European policies presents a comprehensive picture of how both countries view each other on an international arena. The researched period of time was specific since many significant for the EU events took place then. Hence, in German press there was a larger than usual number of articles on Poland. This was visible on cover pages of *„Der Spiegel*” and on front page headlines of other newspaper. In Polish press, the ‘tabloidisation’ trend involving shorter and simpler articles (with more graphic supplements) and a focus on domestic issues, resulted in less focus on foreign affairs. In Polish media, European policy was considered part of general foreign policy while in German press, European policy was treated as a separate issue.

Also, in Germany, the press generally supported its government’s actions while the Polish media often negatively assessed or criticized our politicians’ actions. This is the biggest difference between the two media and it is so for the following reasons.

³³ In 2007, *„Wprost*” used a German theme cover page as many as three time, once the publisher used a picture of Hitler with industry machines in the background with a headline, *From whom did Germany steal prosperity?* (*„Wprost*” 2007, nr 35).

³⁴ *„Fakt*”, 20.06.2008.

Firstly, in Germany there was consensus regarding policy goals, therefore, the majority of political forces and mass media means supported government action and were pro-integration. Merkel's activity during Germany's presidency was focused on unifying and strengthening the EU which was naturally supported by journalists. H.M. Kepplinger research on German press over a long period of time (1951-1995) shows that historically the media have been pro-government policies³⁵. This is true not just in case of European policy but foreign policy in general. German press was critical of the fact that Polish politicians' actions often lead to EU divisions instead of consolidation and to friction in relations with the German government. In this case, German media supported their own vision of Europe and not the Polish attitude.

Secondly, the fact that often there was no consensus among Polish journalists regarding policy, negatively evaluated in Poland³⁶, should not be so, in fact. Differences of opinion have a positive influence on public debate and this is, in Poland, a relatively new trend. It shows that various political parties have different attitudes regarding foreign policy goals after Poland's accession into NATO and the EU, and that there is media pluralism.

Regarding the conflict frame, there were no historical comparisons used by the media. In German press, conflict was shown mostly between Poland vs. the EU as a whole, then Poland vs. Germany and Poland vs. Russia. In Polish press, it was Poland vs. Germany and less often Poland vs. the EU. As far as the responsibility frame, in German press (and partly Polish press), Polish politicians were blamed for halting negotiations during summits. In contrast, Polish right-wing media negatively assessed German politicians' actions. It should be noted that the Kaczynski brothers were presented in negative light by both, German and some Polish print media and that chancellor Merkel had better press in Poland than president Kaczynski. Her stance was considered pro-integration by everyone. As far as economic consequences and media narcissism frames, these were not very popular and, thus, did not influence the image of European policy. It can be said that press in both countries was mostly focused on itself and not on bilateral relations.

Additionally, the researched materials did not include the use of stereotypes to the extent that was predicted. However, the analysis shows the reinforcement of previously established stereotypes of the each country's European policy. In German press, there were more articles presenting two sided argumentation, while Polish press was more multilateral. In Poland, dominated one sided argumentation. The assessment of European policy of either country depended on the type of context.

From the analysis, it seems that both sides had some difficulties in accepting Poland's new role as a member of the EU. In Polish press, it appeared that European policy was seen as a source of conflict and a clash of interests. In German press, it resulted in a general criticism of Poland threatening integration. Even though Great Britain has a similar stance to Polish, it was Poland (a new member) which was more often projected in negative light. The negative image of Polish European policy was not present solely in German media. According to Klaus Bachmann, other EU countries were just as critical of our government's actions³⁷. We cannot, therefore, generalize that it is German media which are responsible for this negative image of Polish policy.

The analysis gives us a comprehensive look at the image of both countries' European policies from the neighbour's point of view. The dominant tendency was that German media supported its government's activity, were positive, offered constructive criticism and focused more on solutions than problems or accusations. In contrast, Polish press was much more

³⁵ H.M. Kepplinger, *Demontaż polityki w społeczeństwie informacyjnym*, Kraków 2007, p. 94.

³⁶ This was said by M. Muszyński in an introduction to research on German press, published in 2007 by Fundacja „Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie”, www.fnpn.pl.

³⁷ K. Bachmann, *Paternalizm czy partnerstwo*, „Odra” 2007, nr 12, p. 10–11.

differentiated, depending on a given newspaper's political affiliation. The Kaczynski brothers were either supported or criticized, there were little constructive proposals or compromise solutions offered by journalists. Some media limited themselves to accusations and focused on Kaczynski's aversion and pathological suspicion toward Germany. All in all, the criticisms were strongest after the negotiations were over.