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Comparing war images: 2003 Iraq war in Polish and Norwegian daily newspapers

Introduction

Media are playing a major part in wars and conflicts around the world. In the modern world it is not enough to conquer a land, occupy cities and trash a hostile army to win a war. Battle on the field, in the air and on the sea is accompanied by a battle for souls and opinions. Media are a part in war.

The analysis of media coverage of war, and especially comparative studies focusing on different countries can increase our awareness of the role that media are playing in wars and conflicts. This kind of research can contribute as well to better understanding of the mechanisms that rule in the politics, society and the media themselves. In Scandinavia and other parts of the world there are scholars that research on wars and conflicts in the media. To my surprise I could not find any publications that would be the result of a study on this subject in the context of Poland. What is more, the comparative research on Polish and Norwegian media is virtually nonexistent.

This paper is based on the research made for my master's dissertation at the University of Gdansk. At the time of writing my master's thesis in 2004/2005 I was not acquainted with the work of Hallin and Mancini *Comparing Media Systems*. I will therefore try in this paper to see the results of my research through the perspective of media systems drawn in "Comparing Media Systems". I mean that press coverage of a war can be a perfect starting point to compare political parallelism in media systems of different countries, one of the four dimensions of media systems proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004). Political parallelism is connected with advocacy traditions in the press and the role of the journalist regarded rather

as a commentator than a reporter. "In systems where political parallelism is strong, the culture and discursive style of journalism is closely related to that of politics" (Hallin 2004:29).

The aim of the paper is to describe and compare how Polish and Norwegian daily newspapers were covering the 2003 Iraq war. The main question is: what major differences and similarities are there between the chosen newspapers? The analysis focuses on the following aspects of the press coverage: foreign reports, explicit moral evaluation of the war, Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush; the choice of sources of information, and newspaper's own approach to the role of media in the war.

Explicit moral evaluation of the war, Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush can be a useful indication of the level of political parallelism, especially when all the chosen newspapers declare themselves to be non-partisan and politically independent. One could then expect a balanced or neutral coverage of the war. Taking into consideration the fact that Poland and Norway had different political agendas in the question of war in Iraq 2003, it may be interesting to see how both agendas were pictured in the press coverage of the war in both countries.

The focus on the foreign reports can be useful in highlighting the degree of political parallelism. First of all, the choice of countries and subjects can, to bigger or lesser degree, correspond to political agenda of the countries in question. Secondly, the reporters have meanings, nationality and cultural background of their own. Women can pay attention to different things than men, and the conflict looks differently in Christian or Muslim eyes. Finally, a reporter has an access to different sources of information in Washington, Turkey or Jordan, and can as well be influenced by the news agendas of the countries they are reporting from.

The choice of sources of information can as well indicate the degree of political parallelism. The ideal situation would be a balanced use of different sources, both politically neutral and engaged. I will argue that the extended use of sources of one kind, for example military experts or humanitarian organisations can be used as a measure of political parallelism. In addition, since the war in Iraq 2003 was a US initiative, the focus on journalists' relation to American sources can possibly contribute to the debate on Americanisation as well.

During war media and journalists are subjected to an extra pressure, propaganda and disinformation from different fractions of political and social life. This is a result of media being an important weapon in the battle for souls. Not everybody is aware of it, and the newspapers differ in highlighting the problem to their readers. The newspaper's own approach to the role of media in the war can be a useful criterion used in discussing the media system of a given country.

In the paper, the 2003 Iraq war refers to the three weeks - from the 20th of March (the official beginning) to the 10th of April (the official end). Two Norwegian and two Polish daily newspapers were chosen for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. I focused on Aftenposten (AP), Bergens Tidende (BT), Gazeta Wyborcza (GW) and Rzeczpospolita (RZ). All the four newspapers have an opinion of being serious, independent and influential. The analysis was based on 349 war-related newspaper articles published during four days of the chosen timeframe: two first days, one in the middle and the last day of the war period.

Previous research on media coverage of wars and conflicts

My research was directly inspired by a paper by Gert Z. Nordström: *Bagdad-Bob, menige Jessica Lynch och Cirkus Saddam - Irakkrieget iscensatt i svenska medier*, a comparative study of coverage of war in Iraq in Swedish media, published in Stockholm in 2003. Another Scandinavian research project *Journalism and the New World Order* (Ottosen 2004) resulted in some interesting findings that I regard as relevant for my research. One of the conclusions in the report mentioned above was that

Journalists are coloured by the foreign policy as defined by his or her government and will feel pressure to be loyal in times of crisis (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2001). But this is not "law" - there are lots of examples of journalists who refuse to simply be a propaganda tool for the government (Ottosen 2004:14).

It may mean that when it comes to news-reporting during wars and conflicts, the political parallelism in media may be stronger than usually. In the same publication Rune Ottosen argues that printed media are especially vulnerable to losing credibility and would rather not provoke their readers. The wish to satisfy the supporters of different ideologies results, in his

opinion, in a new newspaper trend emerging. The newspaper does not necessarily speak with one voice any longer (Ottosen 2004:109).

Further on, Ottosen points to a previous research showing that the way a newspaper covers a war is influenced by the security policy between a given country and the U.S. (Ottosen 2004:109). According to Ottosen, the membership of international organisations is another factor shaping the media image of war.

One of the findings (...) is that the media in NATO member-countries like Norway and Germany resort to American rhetoric to a greater extent than in non-NATO countries like Sweden and Finland. (...) Norwegian media was more dependent on NATO and U.S. sources than were the Swedish and Finnish media. It must be stressed that consensus within NATO was strong at this time. A study of the crisis in Iraq in the winter 2003 might give a different result, because disagreement among the elite tends to result in a more diversified media picture even in times of crisis (Ottosen, 2002).

(Ottosen 2004:118)

Approach to the Iraq issue in Poland and Norway

The governments of Poland and Norway differed in their official standpoint regarding the question of the military intervention in Iraq. The Polish government supported the U.S. and Great Britain in their policy regarding the Iraq-issue. Already on the 21st of March 2003, 74 Polish soldiers from the chemical regiment were to be sent out to undertake logistic tasks in the region of the Persian Gulf (GW, 20.03.2003).

The Norwegian government declined to support any military operation in Iraq without the United Nations' agreement. However, Norway was willing to contribute to humanitarian help after the closing of military operations. As a result, 150 Norwegian soldiers were sent to Iraq on the 9th of July 2003.

Both Poland and Norway have been members of the UN since 1945, and members of NATO - Norway since 1949 and Poland since 1999. Both were close and loyal allies of the USA until

the split over the military intervention in Iraq. While the Norwegian government conditioned their support on the UN resolution, the Polish government chose to disregard UN's position and side with the U.S.

It is worth mentioning, that the level of consensus over the Iraq issue between the society and the government, and within the society as such, was quite unlike in the countries of interest.

The polls conducted in March 2003 by OBOP¹ showed that 50% of the interviewed Poles believed that it was a mistake to side with the U.S. instead of with the EU, against 28% who responded that it was a right choice. The polls conducted by Aftenposten and NRK² in January 2003 showed that 90% Norwegians opined that military operations should not be accepted without the UN resolution.

Table 1. Selected results of polls in Poland and Norway on the support of military operation in Iraq

	Norway ³		Poland ⁴	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Should we support the USA politically?	30%	62%	44%	41%
Should we contribute with our soldiers?	-	-	21%	69%

In none of the two countries did the idea of political support for the U.S. gain the majority. Polish society seems though to be much more divided compared to the Norwegian one, with almost equal percentage of supporters and opponents of the idea. This fact shows that Polish and Norwegian media operated in quite different socio-political circumstances. While in Norway the opinion on USA policy regarding Iraq was generally shared by the government and public opinion, such consensus was not present in the case of Poland. In consequence, the media in both countries had to face different challenges. The way the respective newspapers coped with those challenges will most probably reflect the degree of political parallelism in the media systems of Poland and Norway.

Polish and Norwegian media systems

¹ Polish Public Opinion Research Centre

² Norwegian Public Broadcasting

³ <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article477143.ece>, 4.9.2005

⁴ <http://www.tns-global.pl/archive-report/id/1388>, 4.9.2005

In the three models of media systems proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) Norway represents the Democratic Corporatist model. Although the Polish media system was not a subject of analysis in their book, the authors suspect that the Democratic Corporatist Model

will have particularly strong relevance for the analysis of those parts of Eastern and Central Europe that share much of the same historical development, like Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the Baltic states (Hallin and Mancini 2004:144).

The Democratic Corporatist Model is characterised by historically high political parallelism and diminishing, but still present, external pluralism, as well as persisting legacy of commentary oriented journalism, “mixed with a growing emphasis on neutral professionalism and information-oriented journalism. Journalistic professionalism is high, and marked by a high degree of formal organization (Hallin and Mancini 2004:74)”.

Poland differs however from other Democratic Corporatist countries, mostly because of the strong impact communism had on the political and social development and as a result also on the shape of the media system. The relatively recent emergence of liberal institutions, strong position of the Catholic Church and high ideological diversity among social and political actors are the qualities shared with Hallin and Mancini’s Polarised Pluralistic Model.

In this paper I will disregard the three remaining dimensions of the media system mentioned in *Comparing Media Systems*: the question of the shape of media market, state intervention in the media system and journalistic professionalism. I believe that the study of press coverage of the war in Iraq cannot contribute to a satisfying degree to a comparative discussion on those three dimensions.

Poland and Norway were two NATO and UN member countries with quite a different political approach to the question of the intervention in Iraq and thus differing pressure on media from the state administration (national interest) and public opinion (newspaper buyers). The comparative study of Poland and Norway can possibly highlight the differences between the Norwegian Democratic Corporatist Model and the Polish model by focusing on the degree of and differences in political parallelism in the newspapers of both countries.

General picture

In order to draw a picture of press coverage of the 2003 war in Iraq I analysed 349 war-related newspaper articles. I focused on all war-related articles published on 20th, 21st and 30th of March and 10th of April 2003 in the four selected daily newspapers. The number of the articles varies from newspaper to newspaper and there is a significant difference between particular dates. The table below shows the relation between the number of articles, the newspaper title and the date:

Table 2. The number of war-related articles in the selected newspapers

	Aftenposten	Bergens Tidende	Gazeta Wyborcza	Rzeczpospolita
20th March 2003	23	13	31	24
21st March 2003	30	29	45	26
30th March 2003	24	11	23	19
10th April 2003	14	6	16	15

On Friday the 21st of March the number of war-related articles reached the peak in all of the selected newspapers. The attack on Iraq started at 3:30 Norwegian and Polish time on the night from Wednesday to Thursday the 20th of March. The fact that the highest number of war-related articles was published on Friday and not on Thursday could be explained by the newspapers' inability to react immediately, in contrast to electronic media. Especially in the newspapers' foreign reports the previous day's atmosphere of anticipation prevailed.

Another common feature that is worth pointing out is that the events of the 10th of April (the taking of Bagdad and the fall of Saddam Hussein's statue), resulted in the lowest number of articles in all the selected newspapers, compared to the other analysed days. Assuming that the more articles, the higher "newsworthiness" a newspaper ascribes to a subject, one can conclude that the official ending of the war was not regarded by the newspapers as a particularly interesting occurrence, at least not in comparison with the outbreak.

The selected newspapers differed in what kind of article genre prevailed in presenting the information about the war in Iraq. Table 3 illustrates how the analysed war-related articles in the selected newspapers were divided between different genres.

Table 3. War-related articles in the selected newspapers in the selected period divided by genres

	Aftenposten% priority	Bergens Tidende% priority	Gazeta Wyborcza% priority	Rzeczpospolita% priority
news /report	26.37 1.	35.59 1.	27.83 2.	41.67 1.
comments	16.48 2.	18.64 2.	11.3 4.	16.67 2.
notice	16.48 2.	8.47 5.	1.74 6.	7.14 6.
mixed, unclassified	14.29 3.	8.47 5.	10.43 5.	9.52 5.
facts/overview	10.99 4.	11.86 4.	18.26 3.	11.9 4.
interview/portrait/quotation	9.89 5.	15.25 3.	28.7 1.	13.1 3.
editorial	4.4 6.	1.69 6.	1.74 6.	0
PERCENTAGE BASIS	91	59	115	84

The news/reports were regarded as the most relevant genres in presenting information concerning the war in Iraq. The war-related articles in RZ were news or reports in as much as 41.67 %. The only newspaper that did not have the same category as number 1 in the article quota was GW, which favoured interview/portrait/quotation but, nevertheless, closely followed by news and reports. None of the selected newspapers employed interview/portrait/quotation to such a modest degree and the notices to such an extended degree as AP. The notices were mostly newswires from different news agencies. The comments quota was at a comparable level in all of the newspapers except for GW, where it was a bit lower.

The table below shows what priority the different subjects were given in the selected newspapers. Only the subjects that occurred in more than 9 % of war-related articles are included in the table. One article could take up more than one subject.

Table 4 Main subjects occurring in war-related articles divided by the newspaper and percentage of articles taking up the subject

	AP	BT	GW	RZ
22-25%		Comments\ reactions	U.S. war strategy	Others, Comments\ reactions
19-22%	Comments\ reactions, Casualties and civil		Comments\ reactions	

	situation\ civil casualties\ humanitarian help			
16-19%		War events	Others	U.S. war strategy
13-16%	War events	Hunting Saddam\ Is Saddam alive?\ Saddam's person, U.S. war strategy		Demonstrations and protests, War background\ split within EU\UN
9-13%	Others, Media and journalism during the war \ media war, Demonstrations and protests, U.S. war strategy	Casualties and civil situation\ civil casualties\ humanitarian help, Demonstrations and protests, Political comments\ atmosphere in Norway	War background\ split within EU\UN, War events, Political comments\ atmosphere in Poland	Hunting Saddam\ Is Saddam alive?\ Saddam's person, War events

All of the selected newspapers focused on comments and reactions to a similar degree. GW differs visibly from the rest of the newspapers by having U.S. war strategy as the most frequent subject taken up in its war-related articles. At the same time only 1,7 % of GW's war-related articles take up the subject of antiwar demonstrations and protests. This fact can indicate a pro-war orientation of GW. The articles in GW that had the U.S. war strategy as the main subject were usually coloured by a type of rhetoric that could encourage a reader to identify with “us, the good ones” against “them, the evil ones” as well as regard the war as nothing more than a strategic game. The low quota of the articles mentioning opposing reactions can indicate that not a great newsworthiness was ascribed to this subject in GW, or that this type of news did not correspond to the war picture GW wanted to present.

In contrast to GW both the Norwegian newspapers tend to be anti – war. The relatively strong focus on casualties, civilians and humanitarian help, together with demonstrations and protests as well as Saddam Hussein (in BT) supplied Norwegian readers with a great amount of information pointing out atrocities of the war. In this way Norwegian readers could get the picture of the war as something gruesome and unjust.

The Norwegian newspapers join thus the tradition of what Ottosen (2004:10,11) describes as “global compassion”.

Through extensive media coverage, images of distant suffering have become part of ordinary citizens' perception of conflicts and crises in the world. (...)

The importance of global compassion, from a propaganda strategy point of view, is revealed in the continuous struggle around visual images of civilian casualties and sufferings in war. (...) On the whole, however news media are to a greater extent than before focusing on civilian populations as victims of conflicts and wars. (Ottosen 2004:10,11)

A good example of how the Norwegian newspapers follow the “global compassion” pattern is an extended focus on “the ideal victim” – a child. The subject “Children in war” does not appear in the analysed articles in the Polish newspapers. In AP and BT there were respectively 2.2 and 5.1 per cent of war related articles taking up this subject.

It must be pointed out however that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to establish what the objective way of covering war events is and, if it is possible at all to find a journalistic balance between war technology and the price of missiles and child casualties.

As shown in table 4, AP presents itself as the most self-conscious compared with the three other selected newspapers. 12.1 % of war-related articles in AP were classified as “Media and journalism during the war \ media war”. RZ came last with only 6.3 %. Based on the article quota, the Norwegian newspapers seem to be absorbed to a higher degree than the Polish ones by the “media and war” subject.

Another subject that draws a clear line between the Polish and the Norwegian newspapers is “War background \ split within EU \ UN”. While both the Polish newspapers took up the subject in 13 % of war-related articles, the quota in the Norwegian newspapers lingered around 4 %. This difference is worth further commentary. The big interest in the split within the EU in the Polish newspapers can be explained by the fact that Poland was a Candidate Country with the near EU enlargement in view. Because of the Iraq-issue, Poland got in a sort of a diplomatic conflict with two of the biggest EU member countries: Germany and France. The uncertainty in the society regarding the EU membership and almost demonstrative governmental support for the U.S. and Great Britain made the split within EU a very hot subject.

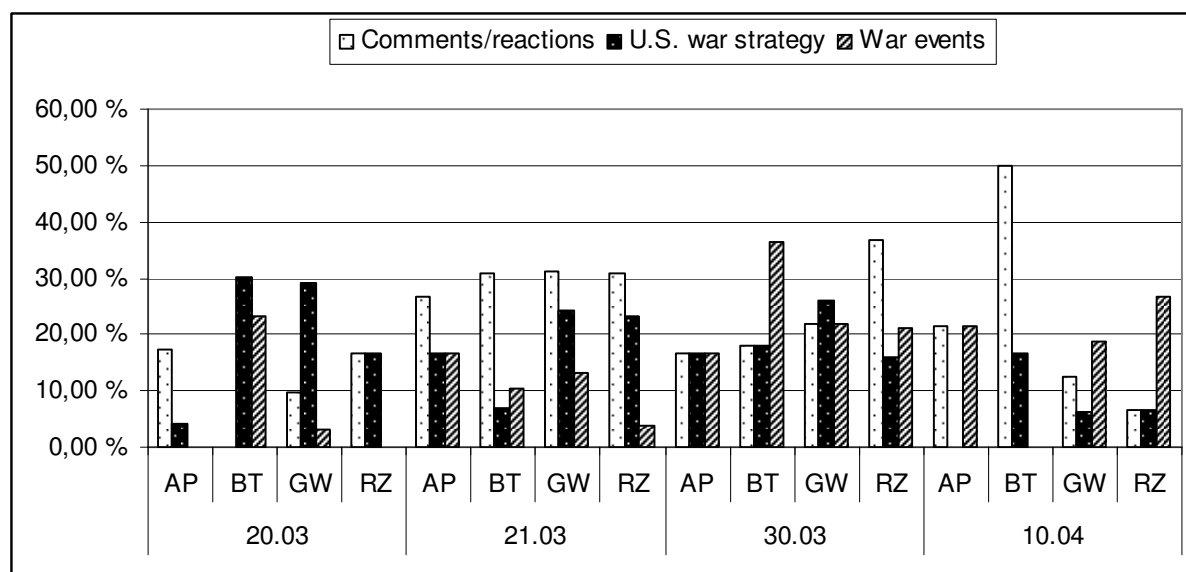
While the percentage of EU / UN-articles in the Polish newspapers may seem very high, the percentage of the war-related articles taking up the same subject in Norwegian newspapers may on the other hand appear strikingly low. True enough, Norway was neither an EU-member nor a Candidate Country during the analysed timeframe; nevertheless, one cannot argue that the EU-debate is an issue that does not provoke vivid polemic in the Norwegian socio-political life. In addition, Norway is a member of the UN, which was affected by the split to the same degree as the EU. Such modest press coverage of the “War background\ split within EU \ UN” issue is therefore quite arresting.

It is worth noticing that a relatively high quota of subjects in the Polish newspapers was classified as “Other”. This is due to the subject list being inspired by the list of most common subjects appearing in the Swedish research on media coverage of war in Iraq 2003 (Nord, Shehata, Strömbäck 2003). During the data analysis for my comparative research it occurred that, although the Swedish list serves well the quantitative analysis of Norwegian press coverage of the Iraq war, it did not suit the Polish one that well.

The major difference was that Polish soldiers were sent to Iraq, while the Norwegian were not. In this way the Polish newspapers had a controversial and highly emotional issue to write about. Another difference was that the Polish newspapers, in contrast to the Norwegian ones wrote about Iraqi war equipment as well as about the American one. In addition, GW was eager to describe weapon of mass destruction, anthrax bacteria among others, with slight references to the possibility of Iraq having this type of weapon at their disposal.

Generally speaking, comments and reactions topped the list of the most frequent subjects, followed by American war strategy and war events. Nevertheless, the relation between those three varied in different war periods. The diagram below illustrates the relation between those three subjects in the four days.

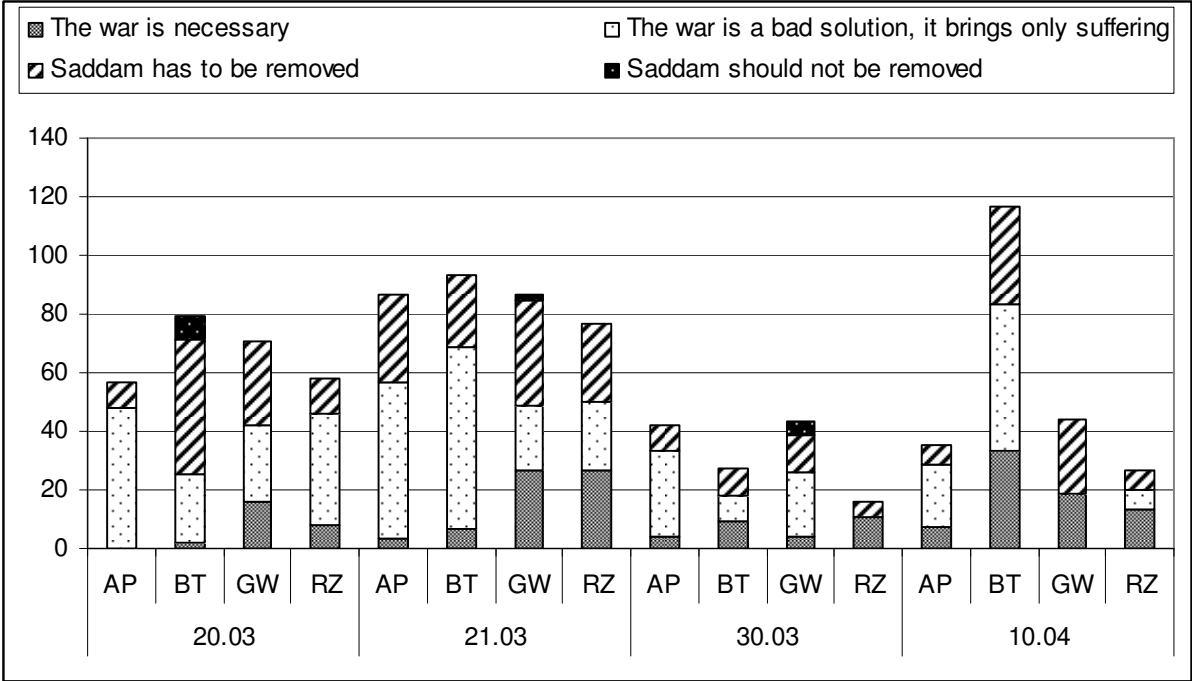
Diagram 1. Overview of the three most frequent subjects in relation to the newspaper and the date.



On Tuesday the 20th of March the American war strategy subject predominated, especially in the Polish newspapers. On Friday the 21st of March comments and reactions outbalanced all the other subjects, in all the selected newspapers. On Sunday the 30th of March each of the newspapers focused on something else with slightly more attention paid to comments and reactions in the Polish newspapers. On Thursday the 10th of April the Norwegian newspapers focused noticeably more on comments and reactions than the Polish newspapers.

The concentration of all the newspapers' attention on comments and reactions on Friday the 21st of March indicates that the world's reactions to the outbreak of the war, together with political comments were more important for the newspapers than the event itself. It is possible that the newspapers wanted to help their readers to get an opinion on the war as early as possible. This theory seems plausible especially if diagram 1 is compared with diagram 2, which gives an overview of explicit moral evaluation of the war, George W. Bush and Saddam Hussein in statements of interview objects, in quotations or by authors.

Diagram 2. Overview of quota of explicit moral evaluation in the war-related articles in selected newspapers



The high comments quota corresponds to the high quota of moral evaluations. It is worth noticing that the anti-war opinions dominate in the Norwegian newspapers while the Polish ones tend to present the opinions that the war is necessary and Saddam Hussein has to be removed. RZ has the lowest quota of moral evaluations of all the newspapers which can make it the most objective and thus closer to Hallin and Mancini’s Liberal Model. Noticing that the opinion of war being a bad solution which brings nothing more than suffering is more frequent in the Norwegian newspapers, one could argue that Norwegian newspapers were to a higher degree anti-war than the Polish ones.

The fact that on Thursday the 10th of March the Norwegian newspapers published more comments, while the Polish ones focused more on war events (the U.S. entering Bagdad, victory, fall of Saddam Hussein’s statue) can support the theory of Norwegian newspaper’s tendency to be against the war and the Polish ones supporting the war. The comments in the Norwegian newspapers were sceptical and saturated with uncertainty about the future of Iraq while the Polish newspapers presented a picture of victory and celebration.

It is possible, that coding of “explicit moral evaluation” could result in a different diagram while coded by a different person. Deciding which article evaluates and which does not, is a difficult task. In most cases one article could evaluate in many ways, for example that “Saddam has to be removed and that’s why the war is necessary although it is causing

nothing more than suffering”. War and objectivity do not go together and it needs to be pointed out that the diagram above is an outcome of my personal impression after analysing the war-related articles.

The tendency of the Polish newspapers to be pro- and the Norwegian being anti-war is again reflected in the choice of front-page photos. On the first day of war the Norwegian newspapers publish photos of bombed Bagdad an Iraqi civilians, while the Polish newspapers show photos of allied soldiers.

Foreign reports

Although the focus on the U.S. in all the selected newspapers seems similar in quantity, it differs in quality. While the Norwegian news reporters write from several places in the U.S. and present different points of view, the focus of Polish newspapers lies on the White House in Washington. As a result, the Norwegian newspapers presented war-sceptical American citizens, as well as Iraqi emigrants having a trace of hope that the war will change the situation to the better. Polish newspapers concentrated on U.S. modern war strategy and equipment.

With the development of war operations the difference between the Polish and Norwegian newspapers grew bigger and bigger. Polish reporters wring from the U.S. focused mostly on the positive presentation of the military operation while the Norwegian mostly on the negative.

When it comes to coverage of the situation in Iraq, the Norwegian newspapers more or less “agreed” on how one presents the situation. The readers could get the same picture of the situation no matter which newspaper they would have chosen. The case is completely different with the Polish newspapers. There are big differences between RZ’s and GW’s approach to the subject. While RZ tried to balance their publications and keep some kind of integrity, GW could publish contradictory articles even in the same issue. GW was also the only one of the analysed newspapers to cooperate with an American journalist embedded in the Charlie Company. Although his articles were doing nothing but glorifying the soldiers and the intervention in Iraq, they constitute however one piece of the extremely complex picture.

Regrettably it is not clear whether GW wanted simply to supply their readers with greater diversity of meanings or if they supported and wanted to popularise the American journalist's point of view.

War-related foreign reports in the Norwegian newspapers focused almost exclusively on the USA and Middle East. The Polish newspapers concentrated additionally on the impact the conflict in Iraq had on Europe (UE-countries, Russia, Vatican and Bulgaria).

Reportages from Vatican confirm the strong position of Catholic Church in Poland (the Pope was Pole at that time) and thus placing the Polish media system more towards the Polarised Pluralistic Model. The interest in Germany and France can be explained by the fact that those countries opposed strongly to the military intervention in Iraq. Since Poland was a Candidate Country at that time, it was important to follow closely the EU reactions to the Polish participation in the operation in Iraq. The small interest in the inner problems of the EU in the Norwegian newspapers can be a sign of the tendency to keep distance from the European fellowship.

Another interesting relation occurring in the foreign reports is that the journalists get influenced by the place they are residing in. This tendency is especially striking in case of reportages from Washington, New York and Kuwait. Journalists, no matter whether they were Polish or Norwegian, writing from the two first places were advocating the American government's point of view. The atmosphere in Kuwait had also quite a strong impact on journalists as the reportages written there were tinted by a visible pro-war approach.

Explicit moral evaluation of Saddam Hussein, George W. Bush and the war

The contrast between how the Polish and Norwegian newspapers wrote about the two main actors in the Iraq war is arresting. The two Norwegian newspapers, although characterised by dichotomy and contrasting approaches to the issue in the beginning phase of the war, quickly become and remained quite homogenised and very similar to each other. The Polish newspapers were strongly affected by the inner antagonisms during the whole period. At the same time GW's articles were noticeably more subjective than the articles in RZ. The Polish newspapers painted a much more complex picture of the conflict than the Norwegian ones and

the readers could get acquainted with the whole spectrum of, often quite strong, meanings but as well read balanced analysis not advocating for any particular interpretation of the conflict.

The explanation of this phenomenon lays probably in the differences in socio-political situation in both countries. Since in Norway both the government and the public opinion were against the war in Iraq, the mainstream newspapers took no risk in reporting in anti-war spirit. It would be much more risky to justify the war. Public opinion in Poland was divided, the political agenda was to support the U.S. intervention and apparently the Polish newspapers had to balance between pro- and anti-war meanings to keep their readers.

In the Norwegian newspapers Saddam Hussein was portrayed as a crazy and dangerous man, but with time the spotlight was directed more and more at George W. Bush. The newspapers kept expressing their scepticism towards his strategy and the negative impact of the war was highlighted.

The Polish newspapers portrayed Saddam Hussein in a way that is comparable with the Norwegian one, only using stronger words. Hussein was juxtaposed with both Hitler and Stalin. George W. Bush appeared only in the initial phase and was not to be visible in the Polish newspapers later on. The focus lied on soldiers, equipment and war as strategic game. There was a tendency to promote pro-war opinions although contradictory ones were also present. There was however a big difference between the Polish newspapers as well. As mentioned before, the Polish newspapers had to attract both supporters and the opponents of the war. They solved the problem in different ways. GW went to extremes while RZ tried to give a more objective and balanced coverage.

Media and war

”Media and the war” was a subject taken up by all the selected newspapers. RZ showed in addition an interest in Arabian media. Nevertheless, the approach to the subject was different in Polish and Norwegian newspapers.

AP and BT were discussing the role of the media during the war from the very start. BT was publishing regularly the comments of a media expert warning against trusting any media

coverage of the war, and encouraging a very critical approach to the reporters since they usually did not inform their readers about the constraints they are subjected to.

One interesting example of a misleading usage of terminology discussed in BT was the case of Scud-missiles, reported by all the selected newspapers except for RZ to have been fired against Kuwait in the initial phase of the war. The name of the missiles given to the media by British military sources was not accidental. Saddam Hussein denied having this kind of “forbidden” missiles in his possession, so if they were Scuds, George W. Bush would appear a credible leader, while Saddam Hussein as the one that really hides and uses forbidden weapon. Bush’s credibility could raise the support for his military plans. RZ did not mention Scud-missiles; however, the most probable reason was its lack of a reporter in Kuwait.

While the Norwegian newspapers encouraged their readers to a critical approach to the news as well as discussing the role of the media, the Polish newspapers did not analyse the role of the media (RZ from the last day is an exception). They simply publish articles from foreign newspapers, Iraqi and Arabian included.

It seems that that the Norwegian newspapers were more self-conscious than the Polish newspapers. However, the Polish ones gave their readers the opportunity to read how foreign newspapers, from different cultural backgrounds, regard the situation. The Norwegian readers did not get this opportunity, at least not to such a high degree.

Sources of information

The sources of information were coded, among others, according to their function and nationality. I will present here the categories that gave the most interesting results in comparative analysis.

In contrast to the Norwegian newspapers the Polish ones quoted and used as sources of information the European political actors different from the British or local ones, mainly from France and Germany. It seems natural in a country with a high political parallelism, especially that France and Germany were in the centre of European attention in the context of the split in the UE and the UN-crisis. The fact that the Norwegian newspapers did not quote French and

German politicians can confirm the earlier conclusions that the Norwegian newspapers keep a distance from the European issues.

Apart from that, the pattern of using politicians as the sources of information is quite similar in all the selected newspapers. In the initial phase the local politicians prevailed, expressing their opinion on the situation. The Russian president predominated the middle phase and on the last day local and American politicians were quoted.

The difference between the Polish and the Norwegian newspapers in quoting military sources gets visible in the middle phase of the war. The military sources talking about problems the U.S. and other countries encountered during the operation, failing strategy and doubtful legitimacy of the operation were usually quoted in the Norwegian newspapers. Not such issues were taken up by the military sources quoted in Polish newspapers.

The Iraqi sources were quoted more frequently in the Norwegian newspapers compared to the Polish ones. What is more, the Norwegian newspapers quoted Iraqi people from Bagdad, the U.S. and Norway. In the analysed articles, the Polish newspapers quote only Iraqi people from Bagdad. The most possible explanation is that it is much easier to find Iraqi refugees in Norway than in Poland. When it comes to Arabian/Muslim sources, the situation resembles the case with Iraqi sources. Politicians, journalists and ordinary people were quoted. Only AP had a slight tendency to present the opinions of Arabs of high social status.

Moral guides were also picked differently in the Polish and Norwegian newspapers. In the former, there were basically people representing the Catholic Church and in the latter - authorities in the secular cultural life.

The selection of experts can be a further confirmation of an earlier noticed relation: that the Norwegian newspapers followed an anti-war profile while the Polish had the opposite one. The Norwegian experts were mainly humanitarian organisations and their spokespersons highlighting horrible consequences of the war, while the Polish experts were mostly military officers discussing the war in terms of a strategic game. Various oil-experts were quoted in all of the selected newspapers. The only difference between the Polish and Norwegian newspapers in this case was the use of Russian experts in Polish newspapers. Most probably

that approach can be explained by Poland's geopolitical location, closeness to Russia and dependence on their oil resources.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to describe and compare how the Polish and Norwegian daily newspapers were covering the 2003 Iraq war and to see the results of the research in the light of Hallin and Mancini's Three Models of Media Systems. Of the four aspects of a media system, the political parallelism was regarded as relevant in this comparative analysis. The analysis focuses on following aspects of the press coverage: foreign reports, explicit moral evaluation of the war, Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush; the choice of sources of information and newspaper's own approach to the role of media in the war.

There is no doubt that the political parallelism is high both in Poland and Norway. It seems though, that the form of political parallelism is sufficiently different in the two countries to make one hesitate before assigning Poland to the Corporatist Democratic Model together with Norway.

The comparative analysis of the press coverage of 2003 war in Iraq shows that the Polish media system resembles in few aspects the Polarised Pluralistic one. A good example is GW going to extremes with advocating for contradictory opinions as well as using quite vivid and emotional style of writing. The strong position of the Catholic Church expressed in Polish newspapers by a frequent presence of Church representatives as moral guides commenting on the Iraq conflict points again towards the Polarised Pluralistic Model. There is also striking dichotomy within the Polish newspapers when it comes to the line separating a publicist from a reporter. This situation can easily result in the readers' confusion. It is, however, giving them a whole spectrum of meanings and opinions to choose from.

The advocacy traditions are common for both countries and the analysis showed the anti-war tendencies in Norwegian newspapers and the pro-war tendencies in Polish newspapers. The big difference was, however, that the Norwegian mainstream newspapers spoke with one voice, while the Polish ones supplied their readers with a diversity of meanings and opinions. It is however important to highlight, that Rzeczpospolita was often more similar to the

Norwegian newspapers than to *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Since *Rzeczpospolita* had a Norwegian owner at the time, it opens the possibilities to research into the influence of media owners on the political parallelism in the media systems in transition.

The level of political parallelism seems also higher within the Polish media system compared with the Norwegian, taking into consideration the Norwegian and Polish newspapers' interest in the broader political context of the conflict and its impact on the European politics. The foreign reports and the choice of subjects and information sources confirm that while Norway concentrated only on three political hotspots: the U.S., the Middle East and Norway, the analysed Polish newspapers supplied their readers with relatively rich coverage of the European context of the Iraq conflict.

This paper showed that as Norway represents the Corporatist Democratic Model, Polish media system seems to be unstable and still in transition, somewhere between the Corporatist Democratic Model and the Polarised Pluralistic Model and even Liberal Model. Let us hope the research project "Comparing Media Systems" will result in establishing the direction the Polish media system is going into.

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