

VI Congress of the Polish Communication Association “Media and Society in the Age of Platforms, Algorithms and Data”

GDAŃSK, POLAND, SEPTEMBER 22–24, 2022

The VI Congress of the Polish Communication Association (PCA) was held in Gdańsk on September 22–24, 2022. The conference entitled “Media and Society in the Age of Platforms, Algorithms and Data” was organized by the Institute of Media, Journalism and Communication, the University of Gdańsk, in cooperation with the PCA.

More than 250 speeches were delivered by media scholars, practitioners, and experts from the media industry and from various (Polish and European) research centers. The program included 50+ thematic panels, three plenary sessions and a round-table discussion. Through reference to the conference theme, participants shared their research on the media concerning the ongoing development of information technologies, algorithms and data that goes beyond the theories and research perspectives typical of the digital and linear revolution. Another significant game-changer was the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, as it showed the power of platforms, challenged journalistic ethics, media organization strategies and interpersonal relations, including replacing face-to-face communication with network communication.

DAY 1

The first day of the VI Congress took place in the European Solidarity Center, the event’s co-organizer. The opening session was hosted by Sławomir Siezieniewski, Polish TV journalist. The welcoming speeches were given by Basil Kerski (the ECS Director), Piotr Stepnowski (the Rector of the University of Gdańsk), Iwona Hofman (the President of the Executive Committee of the Polish Communication Association), Piotr Borawski (the Deputy Mayor for entrepreneurship and climate protection,) and Michał Harciarek (the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Gdańsk). The PhD Dissertation Award in 2020 was granted

to Kinga Adamczewska (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), while the 2021 PhD Dissertation Award was granted to Katarzyna Pagacz (Jagiellonian University in Kraków). The opening session further acknowledged Urszula Doliwa (University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn) – the winner of 2022 edition of the Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award. Finally, Karolina Wojtal (University of Warsaw) received the 2022 Award in Medi@stery for the best MA thesis in Poland’s media studies.

Photo 1. Kinga Adamczewska (left) received the PhD Dissertation Award.



Photo by: Beata Użarowska (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)

Honorary memberships of the Polish Communication Association were granted to Hanna Machińska (Deputy Commissioner for Human Rights, University of Warsaw), Teresa Sasińska-Klas (Jagiellonian University in Kraków), and Janusz W. Adamowski (University of Warsaw). The opening session celebrated the 40th anniversary of the scholarly career of Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska – the President of PCA from 2008–2013, and the Editor-in-Chief of the “Central European Journal of Communication” from 2008–2019. Michał Głowacki and Agnieszka Stępińska – the Editors of CEJC – further announced dedication of the Spring 2022 issue to Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska. The Congress honored the memory of the late outstanding media researchers: Piotr Francuz, Marian Gierula, Jerzy Mikułowski-Pomorski and Zbigniew Oniszczyk.

Photo 2. Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska celebrates the 40th anniversary of her scholarly career with Iwona Hofman, the current President of the Executive Committee of the Polish Communication Association. European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk, September 22, 2022.



Photo by: Beata Użarowska (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)

The first plenary session was chaired by Michał Głowacki (University of Warsaw). The keynote speaker Graham Murdock (Loughborough University) delivered his contribution entitled “Hidden Abodes: Digital Lives and Distant Others”. The second plenary, chaired by Ewa Nowak-Teter (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin), included the keynote speech given by Göran Bolin (Södertörn University) on “Data Value: Dynamics of Value Generation in Data Capitalism”. The first day of the Congress ended with a gala dinner at the Artus Court on Długi Targ street, hosted by the Mayor of the City of Gdańsk.

Photo 3. Meeting of the Forum of Young Media and Communication Scholars, one of the 21 sections of the Polish Communication Association, during the VI Congress of the PCA. The young scholars were joined by Iwona Hofman (right). Gdańsk, September 23, 2022.



Photo by: Beata Użarowska (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)

DAY 2

The second day began with meetings of 21 research sections of the Polish Communication Association. The meetings in the research groups were followed by the plenary session entitled “Media Freedom and Democracy in the Age of Platforms and Data”. The session was chaired by Göran Bolin; it presented the indicative findings from the European Union-funded research project MEDIADELCOM (Horizon 2020). Ilva Skulte (Rīga Stradiņš University) spoke about press freedom in post-socialist Latvia, while Halliki Harro-Loit (University of Tartu) presented findings on the perception of free media in Estonia. The presentation on the protection of “justice” in the Hungarian law system was delivered by Gabor Polyak, from Mertek Media Monitor – a Hungarian NGO dealing with press freedom issues. Polish researchers were represented by Katarzyna Gajlewicz-Korab, Jacek Mikucki and Łukasz Szurmiński (University of Warsaw), in discussing the critical junctures for media freedom in Poland. The round-table discussion ended with a presentation of the “Central European Journal of Communication” and its role in sharing and promoting research and its impact on Media Freedom and Democracy. The CEJC Editors spoke about three highly interwoven foundations of media and democracy research, alongside the scholarly values concerning the impact on media policies and self-regulation.

Photo 4. Michał Głowacki and Agnieszka Stępińska, editors of the “Central European Journal of Communication”, deliver a speech on “Researching Media Freedom and Democracy: The Case of *Central European Journal of Communication*”. Gdańsk, September 23, 2022.

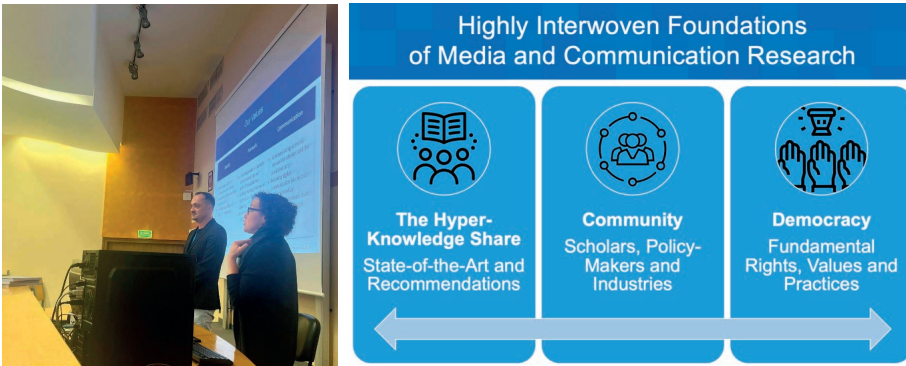


Photo by: Dagmara Sidyk-Furman (University of Warsaw)

The first round of parallel thematic sessions was dedicated to religious communication, propaganda studies, manipulation and health communication (both in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the invasion of Ukraine). The second round of parallel sessions included research shared on the relationship between media and politics, new Public Relations practices and the concept of the network society. The afternoon round-table discussion focused on the

positioning of the communication and media studies discipline in Polish science. The session was chaired by Iwona Hofman, who was joined by Urszula Doliwa, Michał Drożdż (The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków), Sławomir Gawroński (University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów) and Jadwiga Woźniak-Kasparek (University of Warsaw). As a result of the deliberations, a proposal was initiated to submit to Błażej Skoczeń, chairman of the Committee for Science Evaluation, with postulates regarding stabilizing the scoring of journals in disciplines and increasing the share of monographs in filling publication slots.

One of the most important events on the second day of the Congress was the General Assembly of the Polish Communication Association. During the meeting, the association's authorities were elected: the President and members of the Executive Committee as well as the Revision Committee. As a result of the PCA members' votes, Iwona Hofman remained the President of the Executive Committee of the Polish Communication Association, while Michał Głowacki was re-elected as the Editor-in-Chief of the "Central European Journal of Communication". During the General Assembly, new activities of the association were also established, as it was an opportunity to reflect upon the current stage of the autonomy of our discipline's research, as the PCA is to face new duties and responsibilities, one being the task of mapping future research and community orientations.

The second day of the Congress ended with a conference dinner at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Gdańsk, during which participants had the opportunity to listen to the concert of the University of Gdańsk's vocal studio.

DAY 3

The last day of the Congress began with two final rounds of parallel sessions, during which the focus was on the age of algorithms, media ethics and media literacy. One of the morning sessions was chaired by Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska and looked at media accountability and self-regulation with speeches by Susanne Fenger (Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism in Dortmund), Halliki Harro-Loit, and Michał Kuś (University of Wrocław). The second international morning session was devoted to the Polish case of media accountability – it was moderated by Isabella Kurkowski (Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism in Dortmund), who was joined by Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Damian Flisak (Ringier Axel Springer Polska), Michał Chlebowski (TVN Warner Bros. Discovery), Michał Kuś, and Adam Szynol (University of Wrocław). The accompanying discussion was attended by Polish scholars, media managers, journalism unions and ethical councils' representatives, who continued their discussions in the afternoon workshop in Sopot.

Photo 5. Speakers during the “Media Accountability and Self-regulation: The Global Perspective” parallel session (left to right, top to bottom): Susanne Fengler (online screen), Halliki Harro-Loit, Michał Kuś and the session’s chair, Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska. Gdańsk, September 24, 2022.



Photo by: Dagmara Sidyk-Furman (University of Warsaw)

The closing ceremony was led by Iwona Hofman, who made a substantive summary of the past three days and thanked the guests for their participation. Małgorzata Łosiewicz (University of Gdańsk), the chairwoman of the local organizing committee of the VI PCA Congress, received warm congratulations for the hospitality and unifying atmosphere of the event. Finally, the host of the VII Congress of the Polish Communication Association was announced; the PCA Congress in 2025 will be organized by the University of Silesia in Katowice.

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