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Austrian news coverage of Poland during the Polish EU presidency in 2011

Introduction

Does the EU presidency offer the potential for the country holding this position to change its image among the other member states of the European Union? Does the 6-month period of the presidency draw more attention to the country holding the position, not only because it hosts a number of EU events and meetings, but also because it is the actor in charge of defining the directions of EU policy for the given period? And beyond this political dimension, what are the other dimensions in which the respective country is observed throughout its presidency, and does the overall frame of perception change during the term of office? Against the backdrop of those guiding research questions of this special issue of the *Central European Political Studies*, Austrian news coverage of Poland was identified and analyzed during the term of the Polish EU presidency in 2011. The results of this content analysis are subsequently briefly discussed and elaborated against the country-specific societal context of this news coverage.

The Austrian media sample

For the case of Austria, we analyzed Austrian news coverage for the time frame between June 15, 2011, and January 15, 2012, focusing, however, on the core periods [1] June 15–July 31, 2011, [2] September 1–October 15, 2011, and [3] December 1, 2011–January 15, 2012. The sample included two daily quality newspapers (*Die Presse*, *Der Standard*) and one daily tabloid newspaper (*Kronenzeitung*). All three newspapers are nationally available and have the largest distribution rates in Austria (Hans-Bredow-Institut für Medienforschung, 2009; World Editors Fo-

rum/World Association of Newspapers, 2009). In addition to that, the leading weekly news magazine (*Profil*) was analyzed. All articles were searched¹ and acquired from online databases and were saved as digital files (PDF format). For acquiring the articles, we used the digital archives *Press Display* and *wiso Presse*, both accessible via the Austrian National Library.

For each newspaper/weekly magazine and analyzed publication day, the whole newspaper edition was searched and all journalistic materials (e.g., news items comments, reportages, editorials) were included. If a newspaper had Sunday editions, those were also included in the analysis. We did not include 'local' news articles in the sample, if those local sections vary between the local editions of newspapers. This also applies to sports articles only found in regional editions of the newspapers, which then were also not included in the sample (except for when in *Kronenzeitung* they are published in the Vienna edition), since it cannot be fully distinguished whether those are national or regional sports stories. Last but not least, we did not include sports news items that simply consisted of results tables; if sports results were presented, the text had to include at least one additional full sentence.

We carried out a pre-test analysis for 60 articles, coded by three coders, for a general test of the correct use and understanding of the codebook. Subsequently, we did an intercoder reliability test.² The intercoder reliability test was again carried out after the analysis was completed.³ In the following, for the general description only, the total numbers are presented, i.e. for each analytical variable the total numbers including all analyzed print media are presented. Furthermore, all calculations and numbers presented in this paper are in percentages (share of the Austrian sample that was analyzed). This form of presentation allows for better

¹ To identify relevant articles and based on the project instructions, we used the search keywords *Polen, Polens, Pole, Polin, Polinnen, polnisch, polnische, polnischer, polnisches, polnischem, and polnischen*.

² Using Holsti's coefficient of reliability (calculated with PRAM); coefficients for the coded variables ranked between .956 and .711, with the exception of XII. Topic 1–3 where the coefficient was below 0.4 for all three variables.

³ Using Holsti's coefficient of reliability (calculated with PRAM); coefficients for the coded variables ranked between .967 and .767, again with the exception of XII. Topic 1–3 where the coefficient was below 0.4 for all three variables. Thus we excluded these variables from a comparative analysis.

comparison of the results and their relevancies with the other country samples in this special issue of the *Central European Political Studies*.

Austrian news coverage of Poland during the Polish EU presidency in 2011

The overall publication output

Altogether, we identified 795 news items (i.e. newspaper articles) in the Austrian print media analyzed for the focused on time frame. As Table 1 outlines, we identified most articles in the quality daily newspaper *Die Presse*, followed by the second quality daily newspaper of our sample, *Der Standard*. Compared to that, the daily tabloid, *Kronenzeitung*, provided the smallest amount of articles referring to Poland. In the weekly newsmagazine *Profil* altogether 40 articles were identified that included references to Poland. References to the EU presidency were only identified in 57 of those articles relating to Poland in some way. That only adds up to 7.2 percent of the overall sample.

Table 1

Austrian data sample

Austrian print media	Number of articles	Percentages ⁴
<i>Der Standard</i> (daily quality newspaper)	241 (20*)	30.3 (35.1)
<i>Die Presse</i> (daily quality newspaper)	284 (28)	35.7 (49.1)
<i>Kronenzeitung</i> (daily tabloid newspaper)	230 (6)	28.9 (10.5)
<i>Profil</i> (weekly newsmagazine)	40 (3)	5.0 (5.3)
Total sample size	795 (57)	100.0 (7.2)

* Articles with references to Poland AND the EU presidency.

Distinguishing between the time periods before, during and after the Polish EU presidency, we can see in Table 2 that the share of the overall publication output does not change significantly with the beginning of the presidency on July 1, 2011. Rather the opposite effect can be observed: whereas in the pre-presidency period approximately 8.0 percent of the

⁴ Percentages refer to the share of the overall sample.

overall number of articles with references to Poland in the analyzed Austrian news media related to the presidency, during the Polish presidency, the share of those articles dropped to only 7.0 percent of the total sample in that period. After the end of the Polish presidency, the share increased again slightly to 7.4 percent.

Table 2

Do the articles relate to the presidency of the EU?

	Reference to the EU presidency	No reference to the EU presidency
Pre-presidency	8.0*	92.0
During presidency	7.0	93.0
Post-presidency	7.4	92.6
% of total sample	7.2	92.8

* In % of all articles identified per time period.

The same observation was made for the average news coverage per publication day distinguished according to the three time periods. When we define the arithmetic mean for the number of identified articles before, during and after the presidency, we see that the news attention for Poland in general remains rather stable and unaffected by the Polish EU presidency.

Before and during the Polish EU presidency, an average of six articles per publication day included references to Poland; after the presidency ended, the number declined slightly to five articles per publication day. Thus, no significant increase in the news coverage of Poland during the Polish presidency was observed in the Austrian print media sample. The same was observed for articles that also related to the EU presidency in some way. Before the Polish EU presidency, an average of 0.6 articles per publication day included references to Poland and the EU presidency. During the presidency, this share declined to an average of 0.4 articles and after the presidency to 0.3 articles per publication day.

Thus, overall, the news attention towards Poland did not significantly increase with the country's takeover of the presidency. Also, the results already indicate that the Austrian news perspective may not be centrally shaped by this role; over 90 percent of articles do not relate to it when taking Poland into view. This observation will be analyzed in more detail at a later point when the thematic areas of the news coverage are discussed.

However, another observation we made throughout the analysis was that in some articles in the Austrian sample, the connection between Poland and the country being the current holder of the presidency of the EU is not explicitly mentioned. Instead, this connection could only be derived from the context or topic of the article, for instance, when a meeting of EU officials took place in Poland due to the fact that Poland was holding the presidency at the time. In other cases, one newspaper would explicitly relate Poland to the presidency in such a context, while another only reported on the meeting without giving this information.

News trends throughout the term of the Polish EU presidency

When we look at the trend of the overall news coverage in the analyzed Austrian print media throughout the total timeframe of the analysis (in absolute numbers of articles, for all analyzed media together), we see that the news coverage was not balanced and consistent. We identified fluctuations and certain high peaks of news coverage (i.e. days/weeks that showed an increased number of articles relating to Poland, or to Poland as well as the presidency).

Regarding the overall news coverage of Poland, we identified ten high peaks in the Austrian news media sample. Even though the news coverage of Poland does increase in the days before the start of the presidency (peaks 1 and 2), more significant peaks were identified in the middle of the presidency (peaks 5 and 7). This supports the observation outlined previously, namely that the presidency did not have a significant impact on the general level of attention paid to Poland. When looking at the topics actually focused on in the articles of those peak times, this observation is confirmed (Table 3), showing that the increased attention is not mainly based on the impact of the presidency.

Table 3

Trigger events and topics during publication peaks

Peak 1	22/25 Jul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – studies on job market – Austria (and comparisons with Europe) – airplane crash in Russia (comparison with 2010 airplane crash, when the Polish President and other government officials died) – Polish EU Presidency term
Peak 2	01/02 Jul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – economy news (Austrian involvement in Eastern Europe, different branches) – sport news (different events) – Polish EU Presidency term

Peak 3	16 Jul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – economy news (Austrian involvement in Eastern Europe, different branches) – sport news (different events) – thunderstorm in Poland
Peak 4	3 Sep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sport news (EURO2012 qualification matches) – EU politics (meeting of the EU countries' foreign ministers in Danzig)
Peak 5	16–19 Sep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – EU politics (meeting of EU countries' finance ministers in Breslau/Poland, negotiations over stability laws and budget security due to financial crisis) – sport news (European Volleyball Championship)
Peak 6	1 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – economy news (Expo Real 2011, International Trade Fair for Business Real Estates and Investments in Munich) – EU politics (summit meeting of the Eastern Partnership of the EU in Warsaw)
Peak 7	7–12 Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – internal politics (parliamentary elections in Poland, 9 Oct) – cultural news (conflict with Polish parish priest in Austrian Catholic community) – sport news (EURO2012 qualification matches)
Peak 8	3 Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sport news (EURO2012 qualification matches and preparations)
Peak 9	9/10 Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – EU politics (EU summit meeting on the reform of the Eurozone in Brussels) – sport news (different events)
Peak 10	5 Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – economy news (different topics) – sport news (different events)

The fluctuation of articles in the Austrian sample that also included references to the presidency of the EU supports this observation. Here, only two high peaks can be identified, the first peak being on June 29, 2011 – two days before the official start of the Polish presidency, with articles mainly focusing on that specific topic, and the second peak on July 7, 2011 – with articles focusing on the inauguration speech of the Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk. At the same time, during the presidency there are also longer phases (e.g., in December) with no news coverage of the presidency where Poland is taken into view.

Placement and layout of the news items

As shown in Table 4, altogether the majority of articles with references to Poland were placed within the newspaper/newsmagazine edition. Only 1.5 percent of the articles were placed on the front page (1.4 percent) or on the front page with a continuation inside the newspaper (0.1 percent). When we look only at the articles including references to the Polish presidency, the distribution is identical: overall 98.2 percent of those articles

were found within the newspaper edition; slightly more (1.8 percent) were placed on the front page.

Table 4

Placement of articles relating to Poland

Placed on ...	Front page	Front page and continued	Other page
Pre-presidency	–	–	100.0*
During presidency	1.8	0.2	98.1
Post-presidency	–	–	100.0
% of total sample	1.4	0.1	98.5

* In % of all articles identified per time period.

When distinguishing between the different time periods, we see that the number of front page articles increases slightly during the Polish presidency, but drops again to zero afterwards. However, only 0.2 percent of the articles on the front page during the presidency include references to the presidency itself. Again, the majority of articles were placed within the newspaper edition throughout the time frame of the analysis. Thus, even though the number of front page articles increases, one has to be careful with drawing the conclusion here that Poland altogether moved to the center of the Austrian news agenda.

The majority of articles with references to Poland are news articles, followed by reportages (Table 5). For articles with both references to Poland and to the presidency, another significant category is columns, followed by interviews. Table 5 also outlines that the number of simple news articles decreased significantly throughout the time frame of the analysis for articles including references to Poland. In contrast to that, the number of more complex reportages only increases after the end of the Polish presidency, while columns, interviews and letters to the editor increase during the presidency.

Table 5

Genre of articles relating to Poland

Genres	News	Reportage	Column	Commentary	Guest contribution	Interview	Letter to editor
Pre-presidency	58.0	28.0	4.0	–	1.0	1.0	–
During presidency	45.0	29.0	6.7	0.3	1.6	4.3	2.1
Post-presidency	38.2	36.8	2.9	–	1.5	–	–
% of total sample	46.0	29.6	6.0	0.3	1.5	3.5	1.6

The same tendency can be observed when we look only at articles with additional presidency references. Here we see a steady decrease of simple news articles over time, an increase of columns and interviews during the presidency, and a sharp increase of more complex news reports after the Polish presidency is completed. This may indicate that those more complex articles could provide a deeper reflection on the Polish presidency's performance as well. Altogether, as regards the Austrian sample we can summarize that the news coverage throughout the presidency did not become more complex (e.g., indicated by news reports); but it did shift to more variety in the usage of text genres, and here especially in opinion texts.

Table 6 summarizes the use of visual elements in the news coverage of Poland. Most articles do not include any visual images, and less than one third of the articles include one or more pictures. Other visual elements, mainly tables or maps, are rarely used.⁵

Table 6

Visual images in articles relating to Poland

Used images	Pictu- re(s)	Map(s)	Car- toon(s)	Table(s)	A few types	No visu- al ele- ments	Not deci- dable
Pre-presidency	35.0*	–	–	8.0	4.0	47.0	6.0
During presidency	28.4	1.0	0.5	1.9	2.2	36.0	30.0
Post-presidency	26.5	–	–	1.5	–	29.4	42.6
% of total sample	29.1	0.8	0.4	2.6	2.3	36.9	28.1

* In % of all articles identified per time period.

The use of pictures decreases throughout the analyzed timeframe, a tendency also observed for presidency-related articles. This trend is even more significant with regard to the use of tables. In the overall article sample, in the pre-presidency period, tables were found in 8.0 percent of all ar-

⁵ The large number of articles coded as 'not decidable' results from the problem that one of the online databases we used to retrieve the articles for the analysis does not provide visual elements published in the context of the news texts, due to copyright limitations. In some cases the captions of the visual images are included in the document; in other cases it is difficult to decide whether a text refers to a picture or whether it is part of the main text, due to the possibility that images are missing.

ticles that included references to Poland (1.0 percent in the share of articles that additionally also related to the presidency), while their usage dropped significantly during and after the Polish presidency. However, when looking more closely only at the average percentages of articles in which the used visual images themselves included references to Poland, we see that significant references to Poland were only made in visual images in the time periods before and during the Polish presidency; after the end of the presidency the share dropped significantly. More references to Poland were found in the tables used (mostly in tables that listed comparisons or rankings for a certain topic among EU member states), several types of visual elements, and during the presidency in every third map (mostly of Europe).

In articles also relating to the presidency, the use of pictures that also refer to Poland is more frequent. Before the Polish presidency, all pictures in those articles referred to Poland; during the presidency, 50.0 percent of the pictures did. However, pictures are the only visual image that included references to Poland, while the other visual images used did not include direct references to Poland.

Sources given in news coverage

When we looked at the sources provided in news coverage of Poland, we first of all distinguished between sources provided in news items and sources of opinion items. 81.9 percent of the identified articles with references to Poland are news items, 18.1 percent – opinion items (Table 7). With regard to articles also relating to the presidency, the share is slightly different; here, on average, fewer news items (75.4 percent) and more opinion items (24.6 percent) were found, indicating that, with regard to this topic, more evaluative content was published in the Austrian sample than on average when Poland was taken into view.

Table 7

Share of news and opinion material in articles relating to Poland and Poland and the presidency

	News items	Opinion items
Share in the total sample	81.9% (651 articles)	18.1% (144 articles)
Share in sample with references to the presidency	75.4% (43 articles)	24.6% (14 articles)

Table 8 lists the sources of information provided in the news material relating to Poland.⁶ A significantly high number of articles of the Austrian sample do not provide any news sources. 7.4 percent of articles give national news agencies as the source of their information (predominantly APA). The majority of articles list author names as the main source – which falls into the category ‘other sources’. When looking only at articles relating to the presidency, the category ‘other sources’ is similarly frequent (52.6 percent), while fewer articles with presidency references lack any sources (12.3 percent) or list foreign news agencies as their source (5.3 percent; e.g., *DPA Deutsche Presseagentur*, *AFP Agence France- -Presse*, *NTB Norsk Telegrambyra*).

Table 8

Sources in news material relating to Poland

Source of news material	In % of all news material
National news agency	7.4
Foreign international news agency	2.2
Other national media	0.2
Others (authors, etc.)	54.8
National and foreign news agencies	0.3
None	35.2

Finally, Table 9 shows that the majority of those authors are staff members of the respective newspaper or news magazine. Only a small share of authors are correspondents of the news organization, guest authors, etc. Compared to that, in presidency-related articles, the share of correspondents is significantly higher, i.e. one third of those specific articles are written by correspondents of the respective media organizations.

Table 9

Share of author types in news material relating to Poland

Author types in news material	Share of all articles giving authors as sources (in %)
Correspondent of news organization	13.7
Staff member of news organization	85.4
Other (e.g. guest author)	0.8

⁶ The variables analyzed in this section are only illustrated for the overall timeframe of the analysis, arguing that if newspapers have a specific habit of dealing with the revealing of their news sources, this should be a permanent procedure that is not affected by the content of the news coverage.

Table 10 lists the origin of the author of the opinion items as they are provided by the respective newspapers. Here, again we find a significant number of articles in which no authors/sources are given. However, the majority of opinion items are written by journalists. The category 'citizen' mainly refers to opinion pieces contributed by readers in the form of letters to the editor. Only 1.4 percent of contributions are editorial texts. Altogether, the author sources in opinion material are rather varied.

Table 10

Author sources in opinion material relating to Poland

Author types in opinion material	In % of all opinion material
Editorial staff	1.4
Journalist	53.5
National politician	1.4
Foreign politician	2.1
National expert	4.9
Foreign expert	2.1
Citizen	9.0
No author source given	22.9
Other	2.8

However, when we only look at those opinion items that are also presidency-related, we find less variety in the author sources. The vast majority of those opinion items were written by journalists (78.6 percent); the rest equally give either foreign politicians or citizens as the author source, or in 3.0 percent of cases provide no author source. Thus, compared to the overall sample shares, fewer of those specific opinion items lack author sources.

Thematic areas of news coverage of Poland

When we look at the thematic areas reported on in the news coverage of Poland (Table 11), we see that a broad variety of thematic areas is covered. Most frequently addressed is the thematic area of sport, followed by international politics, economy, and culture.

Table 11

Thematic areas in articles relating to Poland

Dominant topics of the news articles ...	Pre-presidency	During presidency	Post-presidency	% of total sample
Internal politics	2.0*	8.1	4.4	7.0
International politics	14.0	18.3	10.3	17.1
Economy	21.0	14.5	14.7	15.3
Military and defense	–	0.8	–	0.6
Justice and crime	2.0	3.3	1.5	3.0
Culture	18.0	13.1	17.6	14.1
Social relations	9.0	5.6	2.9	5.8
Science and technology	1.0	0.5	–	0.5
Environment	4.0	0.6	1.5	1.1
Sport	19.0	30.3	38.2	29.6
Human interest	3.0	3.8	5.9	3.9
Accidents and disasters	5.0	0.5	1.5	1.1
Other	2.0	0.5	1.5	0.8

* In % of all articles identified per time period.

In the area of sport, articles mainly report on sports results, focus on specific teams, coaches or athletes, or cover championships, and here in particular the qualification matches for EURO 2012. In the context of international politics, articles focus on EU relations (e.g., negotiations about the global economic crisis and its impacts on the EU region), diplomatic visits, or inter-state negotiations and agreements. Articles in the area of economy focus on job market-related topics, comparing for instance the job market situation (unemployment rates) between EU countries, or the state of the economy in general. Again, a number of articles focus on the economic crisis and its impact on the economic situation in the EU region or specific EU countries. Other articles report on Austrian or other countries' investment in Eastern Europe. Finally, articles on the area of culture report on exhibitions, or review (Polish) art or artists, e.g. books, music, or performances. A second topic is religion, e.g., Polish clerics in Austria. A third central topic is history; those articles mainly center on the Second World War and frequently refer to Poland either as a place where the war took place, or via contemporary witnesses of that time.

When looking only at those articles that also relate to the EU presidency we see that besides the fact that the EU presidency is itself a topic

placed in the dimension of international (EU) politics, it is also mentioned or referred to in the context of internal politics, social relations, justice and crime, culture, or economy.

Including the time dimension, we see that the political dimension (internal as well as international politics) is particularly frequent during the period of the EU Polish presidency, while cultural topics form a larger share of the overall news coverage with references to Poland in the time periods before and after the presidency. We also see that the focus on sports-related topics increases steadily during the analyzed timeframe, reaching its peak in the two weeks after the presidency. Here, the sports news coverage of the upcoming EURO 2012 is the main trigger event for the increasing news coverage, since, during the timeframe of the analysis, several qualification matches took place. Other areas are not consistently relevant, but only in specific time periods, such as the Polish elections that took place in October 2011, which increased the news coverage of internal political topics during that period. In the pre-presidency period, social relations are another area focused on, with articles reporting on migration topics (asylum camps and integration in Austria) or education topics (results of the PISA study in European comparison).

Regarding articles that also relate to the presidency, the only relevant thematic area – international politics – is only marginally accompanied by other thematic areas. Before the presidency, presidency-related topics were also identified in the areas of internal politics, economy, or culture, while during the term, EU presidency references were also identified in articles that covered topics of internal politics, justice and crime, or social relations. After the end of the Polish presidency, articles only focus on the position on the level of international politics. Thus, overall the presidency is predominantly referred to in the context of international politics. However, no exact statement can be made for the general thematic embedding of the presidency news coverage, since for the comparative analysis only those articles were included that also related to Poland.

Furthermore, it has to be noted that Poland was in many cases only of minor relevance in the respective articles. This means that Poland did not play a central role in the respective article but was, for instance, only one of several countries referred to as a comparison, when issues such as the PISA study or economic rankings of EU countries are reported on. In other cases, the articles did not have a focus on Poland, but actors that were reported on were simply mentioned to have Polish ancestors or origin (e.g. in sport-, history- or art-related articles). Finally, in the context

of sports articles, Poland is often simply mentioned as the place of a sports event.

Domestication – reference to Austria in news coverage of Poland

Regarding possible domestic references to Austria in articles relating to Poland, either by mentioning or discussing Austrian nationals in text or visual images, or by relating to an impact on Austria by whatever was reported on in the respective article, Table 12 lists the quantitative share of such domestic references.

Table 12

Domestic references to Austria

Domestic references to...	Austrian nationals	Austrian nationals and Austria in visual elements	Austrian nationals and the impact on Austria	Austrian nationals, the impact on Austria and Austria in visual elements	No reference to Austria
Pre-presidency	37.0*	1.0	21.0	7.0	34.0
During presidency	35.9	0.6	22.3	3.3	37.8
Post-presidency	39.7	2.9	13.2	–	44.1
% of total sample	36.4	0.9	21.4	3.5	37.9

* In % of all articles identified per time period.

Overall, about one third of articles relating to Poland do not include any references to Austria, followed by one third of articles where, besides Poland, also Austrian nationals are referred to. In every fifth article we find a combination of references to Austrian nationals and to the impacts of the issue discussed on Austria. Altogether, a significant number of articles are thus not solely foreign news coverage (on Poland), i.e. Poland is not the central but only the side-focus of the news coverage. Many articles actually focus on Austria, not only in the context of internal politics, but also with regard to economic issues, social aspects such as migration or education, or cultural topics, such as exhibition reviews or history.

When only looking at the share of domestic references in articles that also relate to the presidency, the majority of articles are, however, foreign news coverage, and include no reference to Austria (57.9 percent). In only every fifth one of those articles, we find references to Austrian nationals

and in 17.5 percent references to nationals and the impact of the respective issue on Austria are identified.

This share of domestic references to Austria remains relatively stable throughout the timeframe of the analysis. The share of articles referring to nationals or the impact of the respective issue on Austria as a country shrinks slightly in the post-presidency period, while altogether the number of articles with no domestication increases throughout the analyzed timeframe. This may indicate an overall shift of attention from Austrian topics when Poland is observed, towards a more outward focus on foreign issues (and Polish ones in particular). However, the declining focus on Austria in the context of the identified articles does not necessarily mean a stronger turn towards Poland, and thus an increasing focus on Poland due to the Polish presidency, but we could argue that articles on Poland become more 'distanced' from Austria. The increasing, solely foreign news coverage moves the respective topics, and thus also the countries in focus, away from the sphere of relevance for Austria itself.

With regard to the articles that also relate to the EU presidency, references to Austrian nationals increase slightly throughout and especially after the term of EU presidency, while before and during the term we also find a small number of articles that refer to impacts on Austria with regard to respective topics discussed. However, most significantly, the predominant non-reference to Austria remains stable throughout the timeframe, indicating that with regard to topics relating to the EU presidency and Poland, the overall focus of the Austrian news coverage is 'external'.

The role of Poland in news coverage of the EU presidency

The last category to be introduced looks at the role that is ascribed to Poland in the Austrian news coverage of Poland in combination with the EU presidency (Table 13). We see that the majority of articles label Poland mainly in its role as an 'EU member state', while only 3.5 percent of the articles label the country as either a 'new EU member' or the 'host of a meeting'. This predominant ascription of the 'new EU member' role stems from the fact that Austrian articles often emphasize that Poland (as a rather new member state) is holding the EU presidency office for the first time.⁷

⁷ One additional role ascribed to Poland in the context of some articles (i.e. besides the main role as it was identified and listed in Graph 12) was that of Poland being a 'post-communist country'.

Table 13

Role of Poland in articles relating to the presidency of the EU

Role of Poland ...	EU member	New EU member	Host of a meeting	Other
Pre-presidency	87.5*	12.5	–	–
During presidency	88.6	2.3	4.5	4.5
Post-presidency	100.0	–	–	–
% of total sample	89.5	3.5	3.5	3.5

* In % of all articles identified per time period.

The ascription of the ‘EU member’ role increases steadily throughout the timeframe of the analysis, peaking in the period after the presidency of Poland ends, where all articles ascribe this role to Poland. In the pre-presidency period, the role as a ‘new EU member’ is also frequently ascribed (12.5 percent), but this ascription decreases significantly during the presidency. This indicates that at the beginning of the Polish presidency it may have been regarded as more necessary for Austrian print media to point out that Poland was a relatively young EU member state taking over the presidency for the first time. Finally, Poland being the host of an event is a role that appears only in the time period during the Polish presidency, which is mainly due to the fact that Poland hosted a number of EU-level summits and meetings as the holder of the presidency.

Discussion of results and conclusion

Altogether, the results of our analysis show that the term of the Polish EU presidency did not draw more attention to Poland in Austrian print media news, despite its being the host of a number of EU events and meetings. Also, the six-month period of the presidency did not lead to a significant increase in the complexity and composition of this news coverage and thus of the Polish image in the Austrian media. Thirdly, the fact that for this period Poland was also the actor in charge of defining the directions of the EU policy is rarely taken into view in the Austrian media. Furthermore, a brief look at the content of the news articles focusing on the EU presidency indicates that Poland and the EU presidency are predominantly not the central focus in those articles. Often, the news simply reportages about events or actions carried out in the scope of this position.

Thus, the relevance of Poland both in general and in EU presidency-related articles of Austrian news coverage is predominantly minor.

Nevertheless, when we look more closely at the evaluations of Poland made when the Polish EU presidency is taken into view, we see that the communicated perception is rather neutral or even positive. Only a few articles included explicitly negative or ambivalent evaluations. Thus, altogether the overall perception of Poland was not one-sided. Especially the positive pre-presidency evaluations of the country in the Austrian news coverage indicate rather positive expectations expressed towards the country's performance. Looking at the follow-up evaluations expressed throughout and after the presidency, those expectations were not disappointed, but they also did not lead to the increased relevance of and interest in Poland and Polish issues in the Austrian media perception.

However, this lack of focus on the Polish presidency does not necessarily stem from a failure in the political performance (and marketing) of Poland. Rather, it may be explained by other peculiarities of the overall Austrian perception – of Poland, but also of the EU. As previous international comparative studies on foreign news coverage have pointed out, in the recent decades we have seen a marginalization of the mass media's attention on foreign and international issues (Wouters, 2011; Brantner, 2009). Additionally, for the Austrian context, two other peculiarities can be pointed out that may shape the overall focus on Poland in the news coverage.

On the one hand, the lack of attention paid towards EU presidency-related issues in the news coverage of Poland does not necessarily have to be related to a lack of interest in Poland. Rather it may stem from the special relationship and attitudes Austria has towards the EU and EU-related issues. Having entered the EU only in 1995, Austria is a rather young member state and one of the 'EU-lightweights', not only regarding its population size but also its political standing. Due to that, since its accession the country has developed a rather ambivalent and skeptical position towards its own EU membership as well as to EU-related matters, which is also reflected in the focus of Austrian news coverage of Poland during the presidency (Brantner, 2009; Vitouch & Mayer, 2004). The European financial crisis (since 2009) has further increased this skepticism and was also a central topic of the news coverage throughout the timeframe of the Polish EU presidency.⁸ This focus pushed Poland as the presidency holder

⁸ One central topic was the on-going negotiations over the Greece bailout plan.

out of the limelight, while the Austrian media (and political debates) focused on EU-related topics in relation to Austria and to countries that are the EU leaders in the negotiations over bailout plans etc. (e.g., Germany, or France) (for similar results see Brantner, 2009).

On the other hand, classic concepts of news geography point out that the media apply certain selection criteria in their definition of relevance in (foreign) news coverage. Those studies claim that the economic, social, political and geographic characteristics of a nation determine the amount of coverage one country receives in the media discourses of another. Additionally, historical relations, the index of economic development, the size of a country, cultural or geographic proximity, the language factor, elite status, or the availability of news sources are also crucial factors that influence newsworthiness (see especially Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Ostgaard, 1965; 1984; Staab, 1990; Rosengren, 1974; Stevenson & Cole, 1984; Chang & Lee, 1992; Wu, 2000; Weber, 2010; Wilke et al., 2012). With regard to the other frames of perception that have been identified as crucial dimensions in the Austrian news coverage of Poland, here, some of those factors apply, such as the close economic ties and networks of Austria in the CEE region, that economic relations that may explain enhanced news attention paid towards Poland with regard to economic topics. Furthermore, as Shoemaker & Cohen (2006) have illustrated, sports news items are a central thematic dimension of news coverage in many countries worldwide; thus the Austrian results are not an Austrian peculiarity (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006, pp. 37–39).

Thirdly, Austria also has other interrelations with Poland that become apparent in the news coverage. The strong focus on historical topics in particular can be explained by the long history of close Austrian-Polish relations – ranging from the first military conflicts on the periphery of both the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy in the 15th century, the military cooperation during the threat by the Ottoman empire and the defeat of the Ottomans outside of Vienna by the Polish king John III Sobieski in 1683 (Leitsch & Trawkowski, 1993 & 1997; Moritsch, 1996), to the – crucial – era of the First and Second World Wars. Due to the shared experience of having been a victim of German Nazi occupation, Poland is perceived as an ally, and after 1945, the relationship of Communist Poland with the neutral Austria was better than with most other Western states in Europe, and this close relationship has remained until today (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, 2005). At the same time, Austria also has a large community of immi-

grants with Polish origin, most of whom came to Austria in the course of the internal political conflicts (e.g., imposition of martial law, repression of the Solidarity movement) and worsening economic conditions in Poland in the early 1980s (Potkanski, 2011). Today, approximately 63,000 people of Polish origin reside in Austria (Statistik Austria, 2012). This relevance of Polish immigrants in the country reflects, for instance, in the focus on the thematic areas, such as culture, social relations, and justice and crime, in which a few actors of Polish origin in Austria were taken into view.

Thus, in the case of Austria, we can conclude that the EU presidency has not offered the opportunity for Poland to significantly change its image as an EU player in the Austrian media's perception. Furthermore, it also did not change the overall thematic focus of the Austrian news coverage of Poland, indicating that the overall frames of perceptions of Poland in the Austrian print media remained unaltered.

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Abstract

This paper summarizes the key features of the Austrian print media news coverage of Poland throughout the timeframe of the Polish presidency of the EU in 2011. Results stem from a quantitative content analysis of three daily newspapers and one news magazine that were analyzed over a timeframe of 7 months from June 2011 to January 2012. Having entered the EU only in 1995, Austria is a rather young member state and one of the 'EU-lightweights', regarding its population size but also its political standing. Since its accession the country has developed a rather ambivalent and skeptical position towards its own EU membership as well as to EU-related matters, which is also strongly reflected in the focus of the Austrian news coverage of EU-related issues. At the same time, Austrian-Polish relations have specific features not only in a political, but also in a social, economic and historical dimension. Both aspects are crucial to bear in mind when Austrian news coverage of Poland during the presidency is taken into view. The paper shows that the Polish EU presidency did not change the overall thematic focus of the Austrian news coverage of Poland. Austrian news coverage shifted towards a more EU-related dimension only temporarily and slightly, but overall, other frames of perception as well as characteristic news factors shaped the Austrian news coverage of Poland.

