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The fourth power? Women in media and in the journalistic profession – equality contexts

Abstract

Starting from the mid-nineteenth century, along with technological progress and the pursuit of equality between women and men, the processes of feminization of the press market has intensified. The issue of gender equality and the separation of powers in the media sector is closely related to the activity of women in the public sphere. These days, despite the apparent equality in the media of mass communication, the participation of women in the key decision-making processes in the media, or their presence on the boards of media companies, remains lower than in the case of men. This paper deals with the concept of "the fourth power", relating it to the contemporary journalistic activity of women. The article spotlights the diverse dimensions of women's activities in the media and their real impact on the audience. In conclusion, the need for equal participation of women and men in media communication processes was accentuated.

Keywords: women, media, power, gender equality.

Czwarta władza? Kobiety w mediach i zawodzie dziennikarskim – konteksty równościowe

Począwszy od połowy XIX wieku, wraz z postępem technicznym i dążeniem do równouprawnienia kobiet i mężczyzn, nasilały się procesy feminizacji rynku prasowego. Zagadnienie równości płci i podziału władzy w sektorze mediów pozostaje w ścisłej relacji z aktywnością kobiet w przestrzeni publicznej. Współcześnie, mimo pozornej równości w środkach masowego komunikowania, udział kobiet w procesach podejmowania kluczowych decyzji w mediach, czy ich obecność w zarządach spółek medialnych pozostają niższe niż w przypadku mężczyzn. W tekście poruszono problematykę pojęcia „czwartej władzy”, odnosząc je do współczesnej aktywności dziennikarskiej kobiet. W artykule zwrócono uwagę na zróżnicowane wymiary działań kobiet w mediach i ich realny wpływ na odbiorców. W podsumowaniu podkreślono potrzebę równego udziału kobiet i mężczyzn w procesach komunikacji medialnej.

Słowa kluczowe: kobiety, media, władza, równość płci.

Introduction

With the emergence of demands for the equal rights of women in the mid-nineteenth century and the systematic growth of their presence in public life, the processes of feminization of the press market intensified – initially in the printed press, and in the last half-century also in the sphere of radio and television broadcasting. Not only have the media of mass communication and the journalistic profession changed, but also the position and role of women in these areas. Despite the apparent gender equality in the media and the fact that modern media markets in the world are structurally dominated by women, their participation in key decision-making processes in the media is still much lower than in the case of men. Again and again the editorial press offices both in Europe and outside of Europe are in the minority, where the policy based on gender equality is implemented, taking into account such ratings as: gender proportions in decision-making processes in the media, the presence of women in supervisory boards and management boards of media companies, or the issue of promoting measures to prevent gender discrimination in editorial offices. Women still face stereotypes in the journalistic profession and are constantly assessed. Their attractive appearance often becomes the overriding criterion of professionalism. A woman is much more likely to be employed as a local journalist in a newspaper, or a presenter on a TV news program, than as an investigative journalist, editor-in-chief or producer of the program. Much less often compared to men, women appear as pundits or commentators in media relations, and the analysis of topics discussed in the media shows that there is no equality in this matter and women are less likely to be entrusted with the production of materials stereotypically related with men (armed conflicts, issues with regard to economics, science, etc.).

Sketching out the text issues related to the equal participation of women and men in the media and the issue of real power in this area by the female gender results from the fact that in the era of progress and development of media based on digital communication techniques, it is still a far cry from achieving the full gender equality in the media of mass communication. It is still a current and endless area of scientific exploration. It is worth noting that despite the great interest in the above-mentioned issue, both Polish and foreign literature on the subject lacks comprehensive media studies or political studies devoted to this issue. Although there are some viewpoints that the changes in the media are going in a direction favourable for women and in a sense that they are not sometimes noticeable by women themselves, there is still much to be done in the equality issue. The issue of gender equality is closely related to the activity of women in the public sphere. Equality between women and men is one of the European Union's fundamental rights, common principles and core values. The gender equality is understood as the principle of fair treatment in all areas of social life, and equal opportunities for the development of women and men should be a priority. The reasons for the inequality in the media between the sexes should be looked for in the area of exercising power. Women want to exercise power in various areas

of socio-political life, including the media, and thus learn the meaning of the benefits and sacrifices associated with it. The motives of their actions or the methods of exercising power do not differ in this respect from male activity. However, taking into account the necessity to combine many roles by women – parental, family or professional, the chances of achieving professional aspirations in the case of the female gender are not always possible. Thus, strengthening the strong position of women in the media of mass communication is a kind of political act related to power and decision-making.

Power or influence – a few remarks from the history of the impact of mass media

Today, few may doubt that the mass media have the ability to create human attitudes and behaviours as well as do impose a system of certain values or shape political preferences, including elections. However, debate about the political significance of this influence is continuously pending.¹ In order to look at the issue of the position of women in the media, however, one should refer to the key term, which is "power". This concept is very broad in meaning, manifests itself in various forms and is usually associated in common perception with coercion, force and inequality. Power can be both a goal of competition and a means of achieving something. Both in everyday language and in scientific terminology, there will be often very diverse terms of this concept referring to numerous areas of social activities (the power of nature, the power of money, parental power, public power, political power, state power, media power). The issue of power is taken up on the basis of various disciplines. Thus, in the natural sciences and social psychology, following in the footsteps of Aristotle, the phenomenon of power is explained by the need for an individual to belong to a group and obedience to authorities.

In the cultural approach, it is believed that differences in political behaviour and models of exercising power are the result of a culture instilled in people. On the other hand, in political science, power is understood as an asymmetric social relationship or function in the socio-political system. In this approach, a central role is played by the political power, prior to the state power, which is a special type of power and appears when at least one of its subjects has a real possibility of making socially important decisions regulating the behaviour of large human communities and the real chance of applying

¹ A. Heywood, *Politologia*, trans. B. Maliszewska, M. Masojć, N. Orłowska, D. Stasiak, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 257. The author points out that many competing theories have arisen on this subject, including models: pluralist, dominant ideology, market and elite values. Contrary to the pluralist scheme presenting the media as a market of ideas, in which a broad social discussion takes place, the model of elite values focuses on the mechanism of controlling media activities in the feminist approach where the advantage of men among experienced journalists and broadcasters is still evident. The aforementioned state of affairs is explained by the confrontational style of interviews and political debates conducted by journalists and presenters.

state coercion.² Among the numerous ways of defining power on a socio-political basis, the broadest concept of power is associated with the influence and control of behaviour. It is worth mentioning, however, that the terms "power" and "influence" can be equated or clearly separated, and finally "influence" can be seen as a category broader than "power". In the latter approach, therefore, power is a kind of influence. The term "media power" refers to the overall potential of the media, as opposed to impact, which includes the effects of media activity.

In this text, the author is inclined to this interpretation of the concept of "power", defining women's power in the media as the possibility of influencing media recipients and making key decisions in the media sector. The title concept of "the fourth power" is associated with the appearance of the opinion-forming press in the 19th century, which was characterized by freedom of political opinion and independence from the state and interest groups. From this epoch comes the term referring to journalists (but not yet female journalists) shaping public opinion, "the fourth state". The term refers to the Montesquieu's tripartite division of power and arises from the liberal concept of freedom of the press, which was the fruit of the Enlightenment, unlike the liberal philosophy, which rejected any control. Nowadays, in the social concept of media responsibility it is assumed that mass media creates an instrument of power control, and should also be the subject to social control at the same time. As Maciej Hówiecki points out, journalists, according to the aforementioned concept, are obliged to be responsible for the consequences of their activities towards society and fulfil their mission, which consists not only of transmitting information, but also creating public discourses, integrating, educating and discharging disputes.³ According to the principle formulated in the past by the famous publisher Joseph Pulitzer, truth and objectivity alone in journalistic work are not enough. The media must participate in solving social problems and serve ideas that need protection for the public good. It is also worth noting that over the years the approach to the scale of the impact of mass media has changed; from a strong influence in the 1920s and 30s of the last century, related mainly to the observation of the mechanisms of propaganda, through a limited influence associated with the presence of opinion leaders and cultural norms (1940s) to moderate one, where starting from the 1960s, the role of recipients in communication processes and the benefits they derive from using media finally have been brought into a day light.

While it was noticed fairly early that mass media exerted influence, there were constant attempts to assess the scale of this phenomenon and the possibility of using mass media by recipients. The original question: What the media do to people? This took the form of: What do people do with the media and how do they use it to meet their own needs, including exercising power? In this context, it is no longer assumed that the media will have a simple and direct influence on women's lives, but that women actively use and interpret media broadcastings according to their expectations. Not only

² J. Sobczak, *Podstawy wiedzy o państwie i prawie*, Agencja eSeM, Poznań 2002, p. 51–52.

³ M. Hówiecki, *Media – Władza – Świadomość społeczna*, Ośrodek Szkolenia i Analiz Programowych TVP S.A., Warszawa 1997, p. 45.

how women perceive the media have changed, but also the media themselves. We are witnessing the new, mobile and digital forms related to the Internet, while traditional media have not disappeared. They are constantly changing. Marshall McLuhan's assertion that the medium is the message is becoming extremely relevant. We live "in" the media and "through" the media, often no longer able to distinguish them as separate factors in life⁴.

What is more, the new media are changing the situation of reception and the nature of the audience. As it has already been noted, recipients become media users. The interchangeability of roles of participants and interactivity have already become integral features of communication processes. Additionally, technological changes are related to the processes of convergence, i.e. the penetration of various media sectors. The following phenomena are also part of the picture of these changes: commercialization, decentralization, personalization (addressing messages to specific people) and asynchrony (messages can be stored and received at any time) of the media.

As Denis McQuail points out, the concept of "power" is difficult to define unequivocally and this does not only apply to the power of the media.⁵ The researcher claims that when defining the power of the media, one can use a behavioural way of reasoning, consistent with the stimulus-reaction scheme (power corresponds to the probability of achieving the intended goal) or sociological, referring to the interpretation of power according to Max Weber, for whom power means a chance to carry out his will with the possibility of coercion. At the same time, D. McQuail points out that the second variant is more appropriate to describe the impact of the media, because exerting influence requires cooperation on the part of the recipients. Moreover, the power of the media (communicative power), which is symbolic in nature, differs from other types of power because it involves the use of non-material factors, such as: trust, emotions, and rationality. "For many reasons, the media interact more by defining situations and defining reality, providing information, and selectively focusing attention (including enhancing certain images and ideas) than by persuading and encouraging action."⁶

Nowadays, the statement that the media has power means that they compete with other entities in the public sphere for influence. According to John Street, the question of who has the power in the media means, first of all, who controls the media and its content, and what consequences this fact generates.⁷ Simultaneously, as J. Street indicates that the power of the media is not a monolith, it appears in many forms

⁴ L. Van Zoonen, *Foreword* [in:] *The Politics of Being a Woman*, eds. H. Savigny, H. Warner, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2015, p. 11.

⁵ D. McQuail, *Teoria komunikowania masowego*, trans. M. Bucholc, A. Szulżycka, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 455.

⁶ *Ibidem*, s. 455.

⁷ J. Street, *Mass media, polityka, demokracja*, trans. T.D. Lubański, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2006, p. 197.

and influences in various ways. By classifying various types of media power, the author distinguishes between discursive power, access power, and resource power.⁸

The first is based on the obvious statement that knowledge gives power. The media does not dictate people how to think, but they certainly decide what to think, i.e. they create a list of topics that are discussed and those that are ignored by the mass media. Thus, the discursive power focuses on emphasizing certain topics in the media and creating social reality. The access power, on the other hand, relates to the control of information sources and issues discussed, the statements of message participants and the ways of presenting news through the processes of inclusion or exclusion. In the last meaning, the resource power is based on the influence media broadcasters can exert over the state system and governance.

In the discussion about the functions of the media, especially the informational ones, and the term "the fourth power", more and more often the concept of "the fifth power" appears on the horizon. This term is used to describe the excessive power of the media in democratic systems and their interference in the lives of citizens, often involving ethical abuse and illegal activities of journalists. As Peter J. Anderson states, this understanding of "the fourth power" destroys democracy instead of protecting it.⁹

The above-mentioned issues of media power are closely related to the growing activity of women in the political and media spheres, primarily by trying to demonstrate whether the principle of gender equality is implemented in the media sector and whether it has a real impact on press editorial offices and decision-making processes in the media by women.

Women in the media – dimensions of power

The participation of women in public life has evolved from the struggle for electoral rights and the reform of family law at the turn of the 20th century, through the efforts to equalize the gender position in the labour market in the 1960s and the departure of women from stereotypical roles, to the involvement of women in all areas of public life, as well as in the media field.

The activity of women in media systems can be perceived today in two dimensions – active and passive. Each of these spheres and each of the roles – the sender or recipient of the media is still connected with overcoming the limitations concerning the equal participation of women, especially in decision-making processes in media organizations, and counteracting gender stereotypes.

This text aims to draw attention to a very important aspect of media participation of women – the changing position of women, despite the persistent limitations, and the transformation of the passive "consumers" of media content into engaged

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 198–201.

⁹ P.J. Anderson, *Konkurujące modele dziennikarstwa i demokracji* [in:] *Przyszłość dziennikarstwa w dojrzałych demokracjach*, eds. P.J. Anderson, G. Ward, trans. A. Piwnicka, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2010, p. 60.

participants of communication processes, aware of their needs. What is more, it is an attempt to answer the question whether the changing ways of using the media by women are the result of technological changes related to progress, or are they an expression of the aspirations of women themselves, as a result of the implementation of the principle of gender equality and the separation of powers?

On the one hand – the active dimension of participation, it is of key importance, first of all, to increase the professional activity of women by eliminating barriers of a different nature in various sectors of journalistic work, increasing the share of women in managerial positions in editorial offices and publishing departments, and in some countries also equalizing remuneration of journalistic work proportionally to the men's earnings and the implementation of an editorial policy devoid of discriminatory elements on the basis of gender.

On the other hand, the issue of the passive participation of women in the media is primarily related to their presence in communication processes and the roles of female recipients. This issue raises a lot of controversy and boils down in particular to the images of women in media coverage, broadcasts free from stereotypes, especially in the area of advertising, changing reception preferences and diverse motives of media use from a gender perspective. As the roles of men and women change, the decision-making, purchasing power, needs and expectations of individuals change. In the face of these transformations, however, a common tendency can be noticed, consisting in appropriating by both genders at a similar pace areas that are stereotypically assigned to women or men. Nevertheless, certain differences are noticeable in the communication tools that women use.

Women also show greater interest in messages originally addressed to men. The opposite tendency is also visible. The choice of "the male channels" by women is the result of a search for programs that are embedded in reality and not based on stereotypes. Women reach for such programs, from which they learn more not only about others, but also about themselves. The preferences in the reception of messages by the female sex are currently as diverse as the women themselves, which translates into the content of the media schedules. Understandably, the media are for them a source of information and learning about the world. As notably pointed out by Marianna Fotaki and Nancy Harding, popular culture provides resources for understanding and questioning ways of presenting women's power and leadership in a way that no other school textbooks show.¹⁰ The media, and in particular the feature films, too rarely show portraits of female leaders and ways of exercising power by women, and if at all, they are usually depicted in a negative way. However, there are films made by women that show various possibilities and ways of non-stereotypical portrayal of women in the context of exercising power in the various disciplines.

¹⁰ M. Fotaki, N. Harding, *Gender and the Organization. Women at Work in the 21st Century. Introduction: why feminism and why it is relevant (again) now?*, Routledge. Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York 2018, p. 26–27.

The contemporary image of the media reality, despite numerous activities aimed at the implementation of the gender equality policy, is characterized by asymmetry, expressed mainly in the unequal level of representation of women and men in the media. And it is not about the relatively significant presence of women employed in the media sectors, or the fact that they constitute the majority of graduates in journalism. In 2015, the average proportion of women employed in the EU media sector was around 40%, and women accounted for 68% of graduates in journalism and related fields.¹¹ Even so, according to the report of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), containing data from 2014–2016 from 29 European Union countries, the average share of women in decision-making processes in the media was only 32%.¹² According to the Institute's data, only one-third of supervisory board members in the public sector were women in the analysed period. As the above report shows, the percentage of women employed in the media increases with the decline in seniority. Older age and experience in many cases are often synonymous with the end of women's careers in the journalism profession. On the average, between 2014 and 2016, women accounted for 14% of Chief Executive Officers in media organizations in Europe, while the proportion more than doubled for junior positions. Similarly, a small representation of women, reaching only 20%, can be seen in decision-making bodies of media broadcasters and among CEOs in the United States.¹³

The phenomenon of "the glass ceiling", which is an invisible barrier hindering the advancement of women in their professional careers, becomes visible along with the rise of the position in the media. It should be noted, however, that nowadays, especially young female journalists, are very active in overcoming restrictions on the path of professional development, overcoming the so far low representation of women in areas of journalistic activity stereotypically perceived as male, such as: program productions, directing or covering correspondence from areas affected by the armed conflicts. Despite the tendency to align media systems around the world, the image of women's "media power" varies from country to country and is often determined by geographic, historical, and socio-political factors. Although in some countries women have a strong media presence and are employed in leadership positions proportionate to men (Scandinavian countries, Central and Eastern Europe), in most cases mass media remain a male domain. The data also show that women are more often employed and promoted in the public media sector than in the commercial sector.¹⁴ In various

¹¹ *Sprawozdanie w sprawie równouprawnienia płci w sektorze mediów w UE*, Parlament Europejski. Komisja Praw Kobiet i Równouprawnienia, 23.02.2018, <http://europarl.europa.eu>, (accessed on: 2.07.2020).

¹² *Gender Equality Index 2017. Measuring gender equality in the European Union 2005–2015, Report*, European Institute for Gender Equality, p. 50–51, <http://eige.europa.eu> (accessed on: 5.07.2020).

¹³ C.H. Palczewski, V. Pruijn DeFrancisco, D.D. McGeough, *Gender in Communication. A Critical Introduction*, Third Edition, Sage, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington, DC Melbourne 2019, p. 241.

¹⁴ *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States. Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organizations. Poland*, European

media, women are still presented in a stereotypical way – through the prism of attractive appearance or in roles accompanying men. Contrary to women, men are much more often shown in causative roles. The under-representation of women in the labour market is practically visible in most media sectors, especially at higher decision-making levels. Barriers to the equal participation of women in the labour market are related to direct and indirect forms of discrimination, such as the lack of access to mentoring and other forms of professional support, rigid structures of work organization in the editorial offices, or the insufficient social solutions ensuring childcare.¹⁵

Although, the results of recent analyses indicate that the level of women's representation in the political, economic and social spheres is improving, yet in a very slow and uneven way. Where the scale of female presence has built up in the last few years, it has not happened accidentally. The legal actions of the European Union and the regulations of the governments of individual countries stimulated the above changes. An example of this is the increased share of women on the boards of large companies throughout the European Union's community – the percentage of women increased from 16.6% in 2013 to 27.7% in 2019.¹⁶

In Poland, women occupy about 16% of seats on supervisory boards and 13% on the boards of listed companies. Only 6% of women perform the function of the presidents.¹⁷ In media organizations, the representation of women in decision-making positions decreases along with the increase in the rank of the editorial office. In the media sector, there are clear differences between public and private broadcasters in terms of their activities related to gender equality. In Poland, the trend in this respect is similar to the European trends.

The advantage of men in many sectors of journalistic activity is also revealed in the research by the American non-governmental organization called: Women's Media Center (WMC). The WMC's research, which oscillates not only around the content of the broadcasts made by men, but also the methods of narration during the media coverages, has been conducted systematically since 2005. The analysis of the Women's Media Center shows that the American media is dominated by a male perspective, especially in news programs, commentaries of political facts, political phenomena and processes, or election analysis. Unlike women, men are more often invited as pundits to evaluate socio-political, economic or science developments. The predominance

Institute for Gender Equality, Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg 2014, p. 8, <http://eige.europa.eu> (accessed on: 2.07.2020).

¹⁵ *Gender Equality in the Media Sector. Study for the FEMM Committee*, Policy Department C: Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs European Parliament, Brussels 2018, p. 15. <http://europarl.europa.eu> (accessed on: 5.08.2020).

¹⁶ *Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU member States. Area G – Women in power and decision-making: slow and uneven progress*, European Institute for Gender Equality, Vilnius 2020, <http://eige.europa.eu> (accessed on: 5.08.2020).

¹⁷ P. Jabłoński, *Przywództwo w polskich molochach nie dla kobiet*, „Forbes” 10.12.2019, <http://forbes.pl/biznes/kobiety-w-najwiekszych-polskich-spolkach-prezeski-czlonkinie-rad-nadzorczych/4pv1rrp> (accessed on: 20.08.2020).

of the presence of men was also visible among the heroes of certain talk shows. Men appeared in large numbers even in social and maternity programs devoted to equal pay and birth control. Even the obituaries posted by press editorial offices mostly concerned farewells by the fellow male journalists.¹⁸ In the last Women's Media Center report from 2019, which surveyed 17.3% of American editorial offices, it was indicated that women constitute 41.7% of editorial staff.¹⁹ The research depicts that most of the news, especially for news agencies and prime-time TV programs, is done by the men. These proportions look slightly better in the case of the printed press and the Internet. And so, the values for the production and running of programs are: 37% for women and 63% for men in the main stubs of television news programs, with women being in the minority when it comes to presenting news, preparing correspondence and reporting activity – men report news almost twice as often in such networks as: ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS. The data on the presence of women and men show further: 41% and 49% in the printed press, 40% and 60% on the Internet, and 31% and 69% in news services, respectively.²⁰

None of the printed press titles achieved gender parity, and the greatest disproportions in this respect are noticeable in one of the more opinion-forming magazines, such as *USA Today*. Most of the men are authors of information on sports, new technologies and media, as well as international affairs and politics. Women, on the other hand, collected and comprised information on health, lifestyle and leisure. Of the websites, only HuffPost had achieved parity, and MSNBC and Vox moved closer to it. Most of the news outlets at Associated Press and Reuters targeted men. In the conclusion of the 2019 report, it can be read that the American media is dominated by men.²¹ It is very likely that in the near future, new technologies and digital progress will enable journalists to create more non-standard forms of work organization, consisting in writing, creating and reporting news in convenient and varied forms of journalistic activity.

The thesis about the symbolic annihilation of women in media reports, introduced into public discourse in the late 1970s by Gaye Tuchman, is no longer justified. However, in the content of the messages, therefore in the so-called passive dimension of the presence of women in the media, women are less visible than men, and if they appear, they are usually inscribed in stereotypical family and maternal roles. They are also usually shown to be less leadership, creative and courageous than men. Sexism and the objectification of the female body in media coverage also remain an issue. The phenomenon of *backlash*, that is the displacement of women from the media

¹⁸ Por. A. Balczyńska-Kosman, *Wielowymiarowość partycypacji kobiet w systemach medialnych a polityka równości*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe WNPiD UAM, Poznań 2017, p. 77–78. The paper draws attention to the results of the WMC reports from 2013 and 2014, devoted to the presence of women in American news programs.

¹⁹ *The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2019*, Women's Media Center WMC, p. 11, www.womensmediacenter.com (accessed on: 26.08.2020).

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 16–18.

²¹ *The Status of Women...*, *op. cit.*, p. 19–20.

sphere, has a broad context. As Katarzyna Bielska points out, the media to some extent reflect a reality that is defeminized.²² Therefore in this context media copy the symbolic absence and inequality of women in the public space.

Conclusion

The research on the issues of exercising power, and more specifically decision-making in the media by women and their role in the journalistic profession, reveal vertical and horizontal segregation in the labour market and in the journalistic profession. Despite the fact that many EU directives deal with the issue of prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex and promote equal treatment, they do not precisely define the mechanisms of enforcing these demands. It can be concluded that the contemporary position of women in the media and in the processes of mass communication, both in the European and global dimensions, oscillates between subjectivity and objectification. Women in the media are still a minority, especially in key decision-making processes in media organizations and content creation. So the women in the role of broadcasters are very often confronted with the male perspective of journalism, they speak less often as pundits, and more than men, due to their maternal and family responsibilities, also face an uncertain, competitive and sometimes ruthless professional market in this profession. On the other hand, media representations of women are too often burdened with stereotypical images that do not reflect the actual attitudes and behaviours of contemporary women and their activity in the socio-political sphere. New perceptive behaviours of women, expressing their aspirations for equality, are more and more visible in the different ways of using the media by the female sex, in the changing preferences of female recipients, as well as in the sphere of female-friendly advertising. However, in terms of the evolution of gender-equal media, there is still much to be done to speak of the symmetry of power between women and men in this area. It should also be emphasized that considerations about female and male power in contemporary media should not take the form of a conflict between the sexes, but only constitute a postulate of equal gender participation in media communication processes, to the benefit of both female authors and male authors, as well as the addressees and recipients of the media coverages.

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²² K. Bielska, *Gender w kinie i mediach oraz zarys polskiego backlashu* [in:] *Nieobecność kobiet w przestrzeni publicznej*, ed. M. Pataj, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2014, p. 115.

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