

Stereotypical or Non-typical?

Women in Polish TV Series:
Their Image, Presence
and Context of Appearance

Radosław Sojak
Andrzej Meler
Beata Królicka

WYDAWNICTWO NAUKOWE
UNIwersYTETU
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Preface

Montesquieu's separation of powers involved three types of power but nowadays we must add a fourth, equally powerful one: the media. The progress that is happening right before our very eyes is enormous in this area as well, perhaps surpassing others. Its advantage is better access to knowledge, information and the whole area of culture while the disadvantage is that we are fed various content and values, which are unfavourable or contrary to the good of humanity. In addition to its educational, informational and entertainment role, the media also serve to uphold the freedom of the individual. Women's rights constitute a special case.

In September 1995, the Fourth World UN Conference on Women was held in Beijing. At the end, 189 UN member states, including Poland, signed the Beijing Declaration and adopted the Platform for Action. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action have identified 12 key areas for elevating the status of women. Within these areas, international organisations, national governments and other public and private

entities should take actions aimed at securing the full and equal participation of women in private and public life.

It is no wonder that one of these areas is the media. Let's quote Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)2 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member States, which confirms that pluralism and diversity are the foundation of a democratic society and the development of public debate.¹ On the other hand, Recommendation CM/Rec (2013)1 indicates that the media should reflect the actuality of women and men in all their diversity, and the avant-garde of this process should include public media, which are *a barometer of social cohesion and integration of all people*.²

Eliminating undesirable attitudes as well as discriminatory content from public debate is served by the directive laid down in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive³ to introduce EU regulations and tools that will effectively eliminate hate content, also on grounds of gender, from audiovisual media services (television programmes and audiovisual media services on request).

Thus, the National Broadcasting Council (NBC) under the provisions of national law, i.e. the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and the Broadcasting Act, effectively uses such solutions and tools to provide an example by issuing decisions on the imposition of fines on broadcasters violating human dignity or the prohibition of discrimination.

However, in addition to strictly imperious powers, the key tool used by the NBC to regulate the framework of public debate in terms

¹ Recommendation CM/Rec (2007)2 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member States on media pluralism and diversity of media content.

² Recommendation CM/Rec (2013)1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member States on gender equality and media.

³ According to Art. 6 of the Directive 2010/13 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States regarding the provision of audiovisual media services, OJ EU L 95/1, Member States shall ensure that audiovisual media services provided by media service providers under their jurisdiction do not contain any content inciting hatred on the basis of race, gender, religion or nationality. Moreover, under Art. 7 of the above directive Member States must ensure that commercial communications do not contain or promote any discriminatory content based on gender, race or ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

of equality is regular and independent monitoring. Qualitative and quantitative research activities commissioned and carried out by the NBC provide indicators to measure – in accordance with the UN, the Council of Europe and EU documents – gender equality in the media, in particular the presence and presentation of women on the screen.

NBC regularly transmits the results of its monitoring to various institutions, such as the Ombudsman, and through the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to relevant European or UN bodies.⁴

This book contains a brief overview of research projects carried out at the request of the NBC on the presence of women in public debate (e.g. as experts, journalist programme anchors or representatives of political parties) and their image in reality TV programmes; however, its core part constitutes the comprehensive analysis by academic staff of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (UMK) regarding the image of female characters in the most popular Polish TV series.

The NBC decided to carry out this study for two reasons. First, there is agreement among European regulators that one of the key areas for shaping social perceptions about gender, besides news services and sports broadcasts, is television entertainment, including popular series and feature films. Second, as part of the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services, an advisory body to the European Commission, last year saw the development of uniform indicators for EU Member States that measure the presence of women in various types of programmes, in particular regarding the aforementioned films and series. The data obtained as a result of analyses carried out using the criteria recommended by the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services are to be implemented by European regulators to build

⁴ For example, in 2017–2019, the National Broadcasting Council provided the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment with a contributory list of data to the draft of the Prime Minister on implementing and making mandatory in Poland the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*. The data list included the National Broadcasting Council proceedings on monitoring and related complaints regarding the promotion of degrading sexual content and content related to violence in broadcasting. In 2018, representatives of the National Broadcasting Council met with a delegation of the UN Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice.

databases on the position and participation of women in media discourse and to ensure comparability of collected results among individual countries.

Considering the results of the analysis carried out by the NCU sociologists, I am confident about the place of Polish women in this ranking.

Enjoy the book!

Witold Kołodziejski
President of the National
Broadcasting Council



Selected Activities of the National Broadcasting Council for Equality and Combating Harmful Stereotypes in the European Context

The duty to ensure pluralism in the means of social communication and the diversity of the content presented through them arises from a number of legal acts, recommendations, resolutions, treaties and agreements on an international, European and, finally, national level.¹ They emphasise that pluralism and diversity of media content is necessary for the functioning of a democratic society, supporting the development of public debate and exchanging and exploring various opinions formulated by various social groups. To this end, the media should, on the one hand, reflect reality as fully as possible, including

¹ For example, in the European Convention on Human Rights, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Statute of the Council of Europe, the Beijing Declaration, and in the recommendations and declarations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, e.g. in Recommendation CM/Rec (2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers for member states on media pluralism and transparency regarding media ownership, Recommendation Rec (2007) 2 of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to member states on media pluralism and diversification of programme content, Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of November 14, 2018 amending the directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States regarding the provision of audiovisual media services (Directive on audiovisual media services) due to changes in the market situation as well as at the level of national legislation: in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, Directive about audiovisual services media and the Act of December 29, 1992 on radio and television.

opinions and views operating within a given society, but on the other – due to its huge scope and opinion-forming nature – shape and promote appropriate model behaviours and positive attitudes and fight harmful stereotypes and any unequal treatment.

The Image of Women in Light of Monitoring in Europe

One of the more frequently observed examples of discrimination in the audiovisual services sector is gender-based discrimination. In practice, it takes various shapes and forms of socially undesirable behaviour, although, according to research and monitoring carried out in this area, the most common examples of gender-discriminatory behaviour include the phenomenon of under-representation of women on television programmes.² According to research conducted on gender representation in selected genres of television programmes, gender parity was maintained only in dramatised forms of TV, such as para-documentary programmes and soap operas.³ In the remaining types of broadcasts, a significant advantage of the men appearing in the monitored broadcasts in relation to women was noticeable; in particular, this concerned journalistic⁴ and sports broadcasts⁵ as well

² Research carried out by the French audiovisual market regulator Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (CSA) showed that the share of women in the total broadcasting time of TV programs is 42%, while in the highest viewing hours this share was further reduced to 29% (<http://www.csa.fr/Etudes-et-publications/Les-autres-rapports/La-representation-des-femmes-a-latelevision-et-a-la-radio-Exercice-2017>).

³ The research was conducted in 2016 by the broadcaster of TV Channel 4, *Treating Men and Women Equally on TV*, C4 Gender Research, 2016, http://www.channel4.com/media/documents/corporate/C4GENDERRESEARCH_2016.pdf. Similar results were reported in its 2016 report by the public Italian broadcaster RAI, Radiotelevisione Italiana, http://www.rai.it/dl/docs/MONITOR_DONNE_ANNO_2015.pdf.

⁴ Shown as a two-month monitoring analysis carried out by the Czech regulatory authority (RRTV) covering journalistic programmes distributed under two programmes of the public broadcaster and two programmes broadcast by the largest private broadcasters (<http://en.genderstudies.cz/>). According to this monitoring, in the journalistic broadcasts in the period examined, only 10% were women out of 200 invited guests.

⁵ According to a study by the Croatian counterpart of the National Broadcasting Council (NBC), the Agency for Electronic Media (AEM), which included the three most

as news services.⁶ In such broadcasts, men rather than women more frequently were used as anchors and were also more often invited to participate as guests; consequently, they also had much more time and opportunity to present, through the mass media, their opinions and views.⁷ The lack of support for the balanced participation of women and men in electronic media is also evident in the insufficient promotion and presentation of sports competitions where women participate – some analyses indicate that content on the subject of women’s sports takes only 4% of the time of TV sports spots.⁸

Research and monitoring carried out by a number of regulators of the audiovisual market in individual European countries showed another worrying trend. It concerns the relationship between the age of women on television and the time and frequency of their presentation. According to monitoring by the UK regulatory authority (Office of Communications – Ofcom), women over 55 have a significantly lower exposure in the media than women of a younger age.⁹ The age group most frequently represented on TV is between 12 and 19 years old.¹⁰ A similar trend can be observed in commercial communications. According to a 2017

watched state television channels (HRT-HTV1, RTL Televizija, Nova TV), the ratio of content devoted exclusively to men’s sport in the analysed period in sports news, amounted to (depending on the program) from 79.33% to 92.6%, *Recommendations for better coverage of women’s sports in electronic media. Women and media*, Agency For Electronic Media (AEM), Zagreb 2019.

⁶ Monitoring carried out by the Catalan regulatory authority, Consell de l’Audiovisual de Catalunya (CAC) showed that women’s news coverage was only 27%, (*Presence and representation of women in information programmes* (<https://www.cac.cat/actualitat/les-dones-suposen-273-del-temps-paraula-els-informatius-les-radios-i->). The same results were obtained by Radiotelevisione Italiana (http://www.rai.it/dl/docs/MONITOR_DONNE_ANNO_2015.pdf) and the global media monitoring developed by the Global Media Monitoring Project, which showed that only 29% of news on news sites is dedicated to women (www.whomakesthenews.org).

⁷ Cf. <http://en.genderstudies.cz/> – according to this monitoring, in one of the analysed television programmes, in all programmes dealing with current topics from political, social or economic life, only one woman appeared out of 31 guests.

⁸ See: *Recommendations for better coverage of women’s sports in electronic media...*

⁹ Cf. https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/59333/psb_diversity_report.pdf.

¹⁰ More in the report prepared by the Czech regulatory authority RRTV – <http://en.genderstudies.cz/>.

study, TV commercials most often showed women between the ages of 18 and 30.¹¹

In addition to quantitative research on the participation and representation of women in individual television genres, a series of cyclical or individual qualitative analyses were simultaneously carried out, addressing the issue of how to present women in social communication media.¹² According to these studies, the image of women painted by the media still carries numerous stereotypes regarding social and cultural patterns of behaviour. The image of women depicted on television is mostly non-objective, based on false premises and diminishing skills and their predispositions in many areas of social and professional life.¹³

According to this perception, long embedded in the social awareness of the recipients, women are typified as more emotional and empathic, who do not have mathematical, logical or technical skills. Therefore, they are predestined for caring work related to children, which does not require strict thinking, making difficult decisions or team management.¹⁴ Research and analysis of content conducted in this area also showed that the way women are portrayed in the media strengthens the image of women as mainly subordinates rather than leaders.¹⁵ Women also appeared less frequently on the screen as experts in a given field or as representatives of the world of science.¹⁶ Much less time (only 17%) was allocated to women for science and technology statements.¹⁷ If they

¹¹ As shown in monitoring of the Macedonian regulatory authority (AAAMS) – <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Collecton-2012-2016.pdf>.

¹² Such qualitative research (cyclical or unitary) is currently carried out by 18 bodies regulating the audiovisual market in EU countries.

¹³ Research conducted by the Italian public television broadcaster RAI – Radiotelevisione Italiana showed that in the monitored period women were stereotypically represented in 16% of audiovisual materials (http://www.rai.it/dl/docs/MONITOR_DONNE_ANNO_2015.pdf).

¹⁴ See A. Graff, *World without women*, Warsaw 2011, pp. 35–36.

¹⁵ See <http://en.genderstudies.cz>.

¹⁶ More in the report by the French regulatory authority (CSA) – <http://www.csa.fr/Etudes-et-publications/Les-autres-rapports/La-representation-des-femmes-a-latelevision-et-a-la-radio-Exercice-2017>.

¹⁷ Report prepared by the Catalan regulatory authority (CAC) *Presence and representation of women in information programmes*, <https://www.cac.cat/actualitat/les-dones-suposen-273-del-temps-paraula-els-informatius-les-radios-i->

already had the opportunity to present their opinion in some areas, it was assessed by the researchers as usually less controversial and easier to perceive.¹⁸ Moreover, based on the monitoring carried out, it was found that women presented on TV programmes were less often presented with their full names and data on their profession or education, compared to men.¹⁹

The message from the media, shown by the qualitative research, strengthens the stereotype that some areas and professions are more suitable for men. Therefore, in TV series and films, women mainly play the role of mothers, home carers focused on raising children and family, for whom development, professional or in a scientific career is of secondary importance. This trend is even more evident in television advertising. According to recent data, in as many as 42% of the analysed advertising messages, women were presented in a stereotypical²⁰ manner, based on the two most-used images of women functioning in marketing communication: either as mothers/carers/housewives or as supermodels. Men, on the other hand, appeared in advertisements in various roles and professions usually consistent with the promoted service or product, and were presented as professionals and specialists in a given field, often as authorities; their image was primarily used to present the advantages of the advertised product²¹ and emphasise its functionality.

¹⁸ Research by the Italian television broadcaster public programme RAI – Radiotelevisione Italiana (http://www.rai.it/dl/docs/MONITOR_DONNE_ANNO_2015.pdf).

¹⁹ Monitoring carried on by the organisation Equalisters in Sweden, Equalisters/Rättviseförmedlingen report, <https://rattviseformedlingen.se/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Rattvisaren-in-English.pdf>.

²⁰ Research published by ASA (Advertising Standards Authority), <https://www.asa.org.uk/genderresearch.html>, Gender Diversity in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation Television Programmes', Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (CSA), presentation to EPRA, May 2018.

²¹ *Sexist stereotypes in adverts in the Mediterranean area*, a report by Mediterranean Network of Regulators (MNRA/RIRM)-www.rirm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Etude-stereotypes-de-genre-PUBLICITE2016_FRANCAIS_FRENCH-1.pdf, published by the Belgian regulatory authority (CSA) in 2018; report *Diversity and Equality Barometer 2017: Commercial Communication* (<https://www.csa.be/document/barometre-diversite-et-egalite-2017-communication-commerciale-2/>); report *Gender Research*, developed by the Advertising Standards Authority w 2017 r. (<https://www.asa.org.uk/genderresearch.html>); report developed by the French regulatory authority (CSA)

The stereotypical approach of the media can also be found in relation to so-called female topics – it appears mainly in the context of consumer advice or violence.²²

Image of Women in the National Broadcasting Council's Research

The National Broadcasting Council (hereinafter: NBC), based on the provisions of the Act of 29 February 1992 on radio and television, also monitors the participation and presentation of women in the social communication media and the image of women created by the media. The above-mentioned activities undertaken in this respect by the NBC – including those issued by the President of the NBC (as a result of complaints from the public or ex officio, based on monitoring) are administrative decisions to impose a fine on media service providers²³ – result in particular from the standards provided in Art. 18(1) of the said Act establishing a ban on broadcasting on television and radio programmes broadcasts or other broadcasts that contain discriminatory content, including on the grounds of gender.²⁴ A similar prohibition, in

Representation of women in television advertising (<https://www.csa.fr/Informer/Collections-du-CSA/Thema-Toutes-les-etudes-realisees-ou-co-realisees-par-le-CSA-sur-des-themes-specifiques/Les-etudes-du-CSA/Image-des-femmes-dans-la-publicite-televisee-les-decalages-et-stereotypes-persistent>).

²² Research on how to present and inform about cases of gender-based violence on television programmes was carried out by the Croatian Electronic Media Council (AEM). The research involved three public TV programmes (Nova TV, RTL Hrvatska and HRT) and analysed the content broadcast between 1 March and 31 May 2018, *Analysis of the Media Treatment of Gender Violence in Croatia in Programmes of Three National TV Broadcasters. Women and Media*, Agency For Electronic Media (AEM), Zagreb 2018; a similar study was carried out by the Mediterranean Network of Regulators (MNRA/RIRM) – <http://www.rirm.org/en/jd/>. Further monitoring of the frequency of scenes of violence against women in TV programmes has been announced by the Greek regulatory authority (NCRTV) in cooperation with the Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) and the Portuguese regulator (ERC) regarding the participation and presentation of domestic violence in major news releases.

²³ Also, the Decision of the President of the National Broadcasting Council No. DM-6-2018 of 21 March 2018, or Decision of the President of the National Broadcasting Council No. DM-28-2018 of 19 September 2018.

²⁴ Art. 18. 1. of the Act of 29 December 1992 on Radio and Television Broadcasting (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 361) states that programmes or other broadcasts may

relation to programmes and broadcasts provided as part of audiovisual media services on demand, has been formulated in Art. 47h.²⁵ The issue of unequal treatment based on gender is also regulated in the section regulating the standards established for commercial communications. According to Art. 16b(3)(2) of the Broadcasting Act, commercial communication (i.e. advertising, indication of the sponsor, product placement, self-promotion or teleshopping) may not contain content discriminatory on grounds of gender.²⁶ In turn, in Art. 6(2)(5) of the Broadcasting Act, the National Broadcasting Council emphasised the organisation and conduct of research on the content disseminated by media service providers and the reception of this content.²⁷

The National Broadcasting Council's project carried out in 2013–2015, aimed at analysing selected broadcasts and services disseminated during election and referendum campaigns run in these years, was an opportunity to trace the presence and roles in which women most often appear in television materials. As part of this research, additional quantitative proportions and qualitative factors differentiating the selection and self-presentation of guests of both genders were commissioned by the National Broadcasting Council. The list was based on quantitative indicators of exposure (active, passive and total) plus party affiliation and guest status (candidate in elections, politician, expert), as well as qualitative analyses of all verified programmes. The first electoral monitoring carried out under the above-mentioned indicators of the project, included journalistic broadcasts disseminated by public and private television broadcasters during the election campaign to the European

not promote activities contrary to the law, the Polish *raison d'État* as well as attitudes and views contrary to morality and social good, and in particular may not contain content that incites hatred or discriminates on the basis of race, disability, sex, religion or nationality.

²⁵ Based on Art. 47h of the Broadcasting Act, broadcasts provided as part of on-demand audiovisual media services may not contain content that incites hatred or discriminates on the grounds of race, disability, gender, religion or nationality.

²⁶ Paragraph 3(2) of Art. 16b of the Broadcasting Act provides that commercial communications may not: contain content that discriminates on the basis of race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

²⁷ According to Art. 6(2)(5) of the Broadcasting Act, the legislator included in the catalogue of tasks of the National Broadcasting Council, the organisation of content research and the reception of media services.

Parliament in 2014.²⁸ This analysis of the image and presence of women in journalistic broadcasts showed that at the quantitative level there was a clear dominance of men among guests invited to broadcast in each from the following roles – candidates, experts and other politicians commenting on the election process – both in terms of exposure and frequency of appearances in broadcasts. The proportion of women to men invited to participate in the broadcast was 14% against 86%, respectively. There was also a noticeable lack of women’s representation on some election committees. On the other hand, the analysis of women’s share among journalists acting as anchors of monitored programmes was quite favourable: 55% female appearances as programme anchors were used compared with 45% males. The professionalism and strength of the image presented by journalists in the analysed journalistic programmes were also highly rated.²⁹

The same results were obtained by the research team monitoring the role and image of women appearing in journalistic programmes broadcast on TV during the 2014 local government election campaign.³⁰ This monitoring, like the previous one, showed a clear advantage of men among guests invited to the programmes.³¹ Men more often performed in each of the analysed roles: both as candidates, experts, and in the so-called ‘other political roles’ commenting on the election process.³² At the same time, television information services were also monitored for the first time as part of this research project.³³ The analysis carried

²⁸ *Election monitoring of television journalistic programmes. European Parliament elections 2014. Summary report*, study commissioned by the National Broadcasting Council, preparation of the report: MTRResearch Gackowski & Łączyński, June 2014.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 108.

³⁰ *Election monitoring of television journalistic programmes. Local government elections in 2014. Summary report. Nationwide section*, study commissioned by the National Broadcasting Council, preparation of the report: MTRResearch Gackowski & Łączyński, December 2014.

³¹ The ratio of women guests to men invited to participate in the analysed programmes was identical as in the monitoring of programmes broadcast during the campaign to the EP, i.e. 14% to 86%.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 110.

³³ This monitoring covered services broadcast during the seven days preceding the election silence (8–14 November 2014) and one of its goals was to analyse the participation of women in this type of broadcast.

out for the aforementioned issues showed that, compared to current affairs programmes, the share of women as main characters of news sites is higher by as much as 11% and equals 25% of the presentation time for all main characters.³⁴

Subsequent monitoring, which raised the topic of the women's presence in the media, also concerned programmes broadcast during the election campaign. This time, however, it was devoted to the presidential election that took place in 2015. Election monitoring covered two rounds of elections, in which the participation of women and the manner of their presentation in journalistic broadcasts³⁵ and on television news services was analysed.³⁶ A study of journalistic programmes broadcast during the election campaign conducted in the first round of elections, in terms of presentation and image of women, showed that at the level of those broadcasters the ratio of women is close to parity. At the same time, the share of women as anchors was the lowest of those examined so far – only 44% of broadcasts. Moreover, the researchers pointed out that in the case of invitees asked to participate in journalistic programmes, far-reaching under-representation of women is visible; their participation among all guests, depending on the programmes audited,

³⁴ *Election monitoring of television news programmes. Local government elections in 2014. Summary report. Nationwide section*, study commissioned by the National Broadcasting Council, preparation of the report: MTRResearch Gackowski & Łączyński, December 2014, p. 42.

³⁵ *Election monitoring of television journalistic programmes. Presidential elections in 2015. Summary report. Nationwide programmes round I*, study commissioned by the National Broadcasting Council, prepared by the coordinating and development team: T. Gackowski, M. Łączyński; *Election monitoring of television journalistic programmes. Presidential elections in 2015. Summary report. Nationwide programmes round II*, study commissioned by the National Broadcasting Council, prepared by the coordinating and development team: T. Gackowski, M. Łączyński.

³⁶ *Election monitoring of television news programmes. Presidential elections in 2015. Summary report. Nationwide TV programmes round I*, study commissioned by the National Broadcasting Council, prepared by the coordinating and development team: T. Gackowski, M. Łączyński; *Election monitoring of television news programmes. Presidential elections in 2015. Summary report. Nationwide programmes round II*, study commissioned by the National Broadcasting Council, prepared by the coordinating and development team: T. Gackowski, M. Łączyński.

was 14% to 18%.³⁷ Election monitoring in the second round of elections only confirmed this worrying trend.³⁸

The above-mentioned research was continued in the scope of the content of television information broadcasts issued as part of the campaign for the nationwide referendum in 2015.³⁹ Compared to, for example, data from local and presidential elections, one could notice a higher exposure of women appearing as guests of the programme. The duration of women's presence was 29.1%, and the share of female guests in the surveyed material was 22.3%. In this case, the high presence of women was largely due to the exposure of the leaders of both major political parties.⁴⁰

The report completing this large NBC project concerning the study of participation and time devoted to the presence of women in current affairs programmes and news services during election and referendum campaigns, was the election monitoring of television information services, disseminated as part of the campaign by parliamentary elections.⁴¹

³⁷ *Election monitoring of television journalistic programmes. Presidential elections in 2015. Summary report. Nationwide programmes round I...*, p. 69.

³⁸ In the period under review, for the first time, an imbalance was noted in the proportions of those who conducted programmes for men: they conducted as many as 61.9% of programmes (women 38.9% respectively). At the guests' level, the proportion of women was even lower than in the first round of the election, as it amounted to only 12% (see: *Election monitoring of TV journalistic programmes. Presidential election 2015. Summary report. Nationwide programmes round II...*, p. 73). The quantitative results of the analysis of women's presence in news services confirmed the low exposure of women in such programmes: the turnout of this exposure was 18% (in the local government campaign, for comparison, it amounted to 25%) and the time share of women was calculated at 14% (below the turnout). Compared to the campaign conducted in connection with the first round of elections, the survey covering the second round of elections recorded both a slight increase in the share of women in the analysed materials (from 18% to 22%) and the time of this exposure, from 14% to 15% (see *Election monitoring of TV news programmes. Presidential election 2015. Summary report. Nationwide TV stations round II...*, p. 40).

³⁹ *Election monitoring of television journalistic programmes. Referendum on 6 September, Summary report. Nationwide TV programmes.* Study commissioned by the National Broadcasting Council, prepared by the coordinating and development team: T. Gackowski, M. Łączyński.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

⁴¹ *Election monitoring of television news programmes. Polish Parliament elections 2015. Summary report. Nationwide TV programmes.* Study commissioned by the National

According to this monitoring, the share of women as the main characters of the surveyed news services was almost 29%, while the time devoted to the presence of women in these materials was set at 37%. This high index, as compared to previous studies, seems to be a derivative of women's choice as anchors of the three largest election committees.⁴²

Regardless of the type of campaigns or the genres of the programmes studied, both the percentage share of women presented in these audio-visual materials and the time devoted to their exposure is far from parity, which should be part of public debate to ensure pluralism and diversity in presenting views, opinions and attitudes. The share of women acting as anchors in the monitored period did not exceed 12% in journalistic broadcasts disseminated during the campaign conducted as part of the second round of presidential elections, but was up to 29% in television news services broadcast during the parliamentary election campaign. The time slots of presenting women in current affairs broadcasts were only slightly better: from 14% in the first round of presidential elections rising to 37% in parliamentary elections. This indicator was the best for women anchoring the analysed programmes – in journalistic programmes it rose to 38.9%, during round II of the presidential election campaign and up to 55% in broadcasts during the EP campaign. The research also showed two clear trends at the qualitative level: first – in areas such as rhetorical strategies, the way of interacting, the manner in which disputes are conducted, and the subject of statements, there is a unification of male and female behaviour patterns, and second, there are no significant indicators of discrimination or differentiation of journalists' behaviour due to the gender affiliation of guests invited to a television studio.

The next analysis commissioned by the National Broadcasting Council aimed to examine the stereotypes about women disseminated through selected television genres. This study covered two series of matrimonial reality-show programmes.⁴³ According to the research-

Broadcasting Council, prepared by the coordinating and development team: T. Gackowski, M. Łączyński.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 39.

⁴³ B. Łaciak, *The image of a woman in reality shows*. Analysis of the first edition of the programme *Farmer wants a wife* and *Who will marry my son*, a survey commissioned by the National Broadcasting Council.

ers, the image of a woman emerging from the monitored programmes was stereotypical, simplified and even chauvinistic, emphasising the privileged male position and a subordinate female status. The analysis showed that outlined in the above-mentioned cycles, the social and cultural role of women was limited to being a wife, mother and caretaker of the home. Regardless of age, origin, social status or education, the main ambition and desire of these women was to get married as soon as possible and run a household. To this end, the main characters of the broadcast tried to present the following advantages and skills to the candidates for husband/fiancé and their families: diligence, readiness to undertake various jobs at home and on the farm, culinary skills, and an absolutely submissive attitude.⁴⁴ Thus, women carried out all orders and tasks, even the most difficult or absurd ones, complimented men, tried to get closer to them, offered to spend the night together, etc. At the same time, they controlled the actions of female competitors, engaged in intrigue, ratted on rivals and tried to win the affection of their loved ones, especially mothers, at all costs.

Another stereotype enhanced and emphasised by these programmes was the image of the mother-in-law – the possessive mother with a *mamma's boy* for a son, critical of every woman he is interested in, testing all candidates for daughter-in-law. The formulas of both broadcasts encouraged the main character to enter the role of mother-in-law at the lowest level of coarseness; their opinions and comments to the candidates for daughter-in-law were often explicit, unambiguous and full of malice. They concerned both the appearance, origin and age, as well as the girls' way of speaking and intelligence. They subjected them to various tests ranging from typical housework (e.g. window cleaning, cooking and babysitting), through farm work (weeding gardens, taking care of animals and cultivating fields), to organising future free time for the mother-in-law. All these situations and statements of future mothers-in-law testified to the treatment of the participants as objects, checking on them as if they were minors and presenting themselves as experts in assessing their character. The main characters of the series also had very stereotypical expectations of daughters-in-law and equally traditional and conservative ideas about the role of women in

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

a relationship. Mothers would like to see their sons marry an attractive, but modest woman who would carry out household chores, care for her husband, but respect the mother-in-law, subordinate herself to the man and his needs, and give up her aspirations and growth for the pleasure of having a home and family.

Moreover, the programme ‘Who will marry my son?’ presented a stereotypical, harmful and false image of women and girls from Ukraine. They were portrayed as coming from the provinces and very poor families, lacking both social skills and good manners. They were all intimidated, depressed and surprised by the elegance, splendour and luxury encountered in Poland.⁴⁵ At the same time, their arrival in a foreign country was dictated only by the desire to marry and obtain Polish citizenship and thus improve their financial status.

In both series, the message about women’s behaviour regarding eroticism and carnality was also very traditional. In terms of women, it was primarily an area of evaluation and discipline – their behaviour, dress, hairstyle, body and ways of adorning it were assessed as erotic, provocative, inappropriate and unseemly, while no such assessment was applied to men. The author of the analysis also drew attention to one more important element: the overwhelming majority of situations and emotions in these broadcasts were staged, with one exception: some of the main characters of the programme ‘Farmer wants a wife’ found it difficult to cope with emotions, let-downs and disappointments. Some main characters said directly that they were ridiculed, and their feelings were toyed with. After the broadcast, they had a sense of rejection, and also had to face various, most often negative reactions in their environment, in addition to not very favourable comments on the Internet.⁴⁶

Complementing this series of studies was the analysis of para-documentary broadcasts carried out by NBC in terms of the vision of the world, presented in selected series of this genre (according to its division into moral, criminal and judicial, medical, touching on the topic of love and betrayal).⁴⁷ The main purpose of monitoring was to analyse the

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 33.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 39.

⁴⁷ *The world presented in para-documentary broadcasts, with particular emphasis on the family model*, the National Broadcasting Council Bureau Monitoring Department, 2019–2020.

subject of individual series of para-documentary programmes in the context of the family model presented in them, including interpersonal relationships, values, social and moral standards, as well as the images of women and men. The image of a woman that emerged as a result of analysing the above para-documents was not consistent and unambiguous. The most important cultural stereotypes concerning women and men were noted in the verified series. Women were shown as emotional and sensitive mothers, focused on the family, children, and material matters related to raising the family, and on building parental, family and partner relationships. Men, on the other hand, were more focused on professional growth, following their passions and maintaining social and friendly relationships. A significant overrepresentation in the materials analysed were women raising children alone, with the image of single mothers being overwhelmingly positive; their resourcefulness, diligence, ingenuity, courage and protectiveness were emphasised. At the same time, in a number of audited programmes, especially in medical and crime-related para-documentaries, the main characters were often successful women working in a corporation or running their own businesses, action-oriented, living healthy, active and lively social lives. In the above-mentioned cycles, the image of a woman inexperienced in life, not working but dependent on her husband, or a divorcee dependent on the father of her children, or as a woman manipulating men was less often present.

Recommendations of the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services

The above research and analyses, conducted by or on behalf of the NBC in the area of women's participation in individual genres of programmes and the manner of their presentation were also, in addition to research conducted by other regulatory authorities of EU Member States, the subject of discussions specially created as part of the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA⁴⁸) subgroup 4 – 'Gender

⁴⁸ The ERGA was established in 2014 by the European Commission. The members of the ERGA are the heads of the regulatory authorities of the EU Member States. The tasks

Diversity'. The European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services, the EC advisory body in the field of audiovisual media services, appointed the above-mentioned subgroup to discuss practical aspects related to the implementation, in national law, of the provisions of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, which prohibits gender discrimination. At the same time, subgroup 4, in which representatives of 17 regulators are involved, was conceived as a forum for exchanging initiatives and experiences on gender equality and combating exclusion.

As a result of the subgroup's activity and data obtained from members on cases of gender discrimination, confirmed by regulatory bodies, and qualitative and quantitative research on the exposure and presentation of women in electronic media, recommendations collected in a catalogue of good practices have been developed for the audiovisual sector in terms of gender equality and prevention of exclusion, as have common criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the application of the above practices – so-called gender equality rates. Recommendations and indicators covered both audiovisual media service providers and advertisers and regulators of the audiovisual market. In the case of audiovisual service providers, recommendations included the determination of indicators measuring the presence of women (e.g. as experts) in specific types of programmes, with particular emphasis on those broadcast during prime time, as well as creating databases on experts and supporting anti-discrimination initiatives and campaigns combating harmful stereotypes and violence related to gender. In turn, the advertising market should develop and implement codes for non-stereotypical and diverse presentation of women in commercial communications. On the other hand, in relation to the authorities regulating the audiovisual services sector, the purpose of co-organising annual fora for the exchange of best practices in the area of gender equality and the resulting diversity of views, opinions and attitudes presented in the media, indicate the need for qualitative and quantitative research on gender representation on screen.

of the ERGA are to advise the European Commission on matters relating to electronic media and their regulation and to facilitate cooperation between the members of the Group.

In addition to examining the ratio of women and men in different genres of television programmes, monitoring should also be continued regarding the timing of statements by representatives of both sexes. Members of the 'Gender Diversity' subgroup also noted that in previous analyses, conducted by regulatory authorities of the media services market, too little space has hitherto been devoted to advertising research in the context of the phenomenon of unequal treatment based on gender and discriminatory stereotypes embedded through these communications. In particular, such analyses should include data on the participation of both sexes in advertisements, voice-over voices divided into female and male, linking a given gender with individual product categories and gender stereotypes used to promote specific goods or services. The greatest emphasis, however, was placed on developing detailed indicators for future analysis of screenplays of films and series produced for the needs of television or audiovisual media services on demand, in terms of maintaining the principle of gender equality. According to these criteria, as part of their monitoring and analysis, research teams are required to verify the participation of female and male fictional characters in film and television scripts, the proportion of participation due to the gender of certain types of characters, taking into account their significance for the film or series, division into main and secondary characters, and finally – gender stereotypes presented in these materials.

It should be emphasised that the above recommendations and indicators are not legally binding directives; they are only intended to consistently raise awareness among electronic market players about the need to take action to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination. They are also the first attempt – at the EU level – to standardise research in this area, by indicating the most common indicators for measuring the presence and image of women on the screen.

*Agnieszka Wąsowska, PhD
Director, Monitoring Department
National Broadcasting Council*

Introduction

At first glance, the research task we are tackling on the following pages is not overly complicated. Attempts to reconstruct the image of women in contemporary Polish TV series are neither a methodologically non-standard task, nor one dissimilar to those undertaken in the past. A closer look, however, reveals that it immediately triggers at least two theoretical problems of an unusual nature. The first is the issue of impact. After all, we study images of people, organisations, institutions, brands, etc., because we assume (often silently) that these images have an impact on social reality. However, deciphering the nature of this impact is one of the more complex research issues. Shortly after the cinema was created, and almost in parallel with it becoming a mass medium, a sociological reflection on its impact on people also appeared (see Wejbert-Wąsiewicz, 2018). And as we stand today, literature on the impact of media content on its recipients may be the subject of a separate study (see e.g. Briggs, 2012).

The second research problem concerns social change. August Comte, who postulated the emergence of sociology as a systematic science, predicted that the new field of knowledge would consist of two basic sections: social statics and dynamics. The father of sociology assumed that the two 'lungs' should develop in parallel, but symmetrically – researchers must, in his view, devote as much attention to answering the question of are what the facts as to trying to establish the rules of social changeability. However, the research practice quickly verified these demands. It turned out that describing what is already there is a much less complicated task than trying to reconstruct complex social processes, not to mention predicting future states of society. From our perspective, the key question in this context is to what extent

the media are changing the 'non-media' social reality, and to what extent they are merely a reflection of bottom-up transformations (see Bogunia-Borowska, 2012). This, in turn, sends us back to the area of the fundamental theoretical matter of the distinction between spontaneous and controlled components of social processes (Sztompka, 2005).

Issues related to the media image of women in the context of their social position and changing cultural patterns of femininity and masculinity focus, as in a lens, both theoretical problems outlined above. The experience of all waves of feminism and movements fighting for women's empowerment shows that formal (legal) change is only a prelude to social change (Renzetti & Curran, 2008). The latter often happens many years after the former and is not without additional incentives. This is most likely because every mechanism of real social change is stretched out in a delicate balance between the introduction of new elements into culture and the acceptance of those that already exist (Zybertowicz, 1995: 304–306).

Among the key elements of cultural experience that determine social change we have stereotypes (and management thereof). Gender stereotypes are ubiquitous, forming a kind of matrix that shapes the image of ourselves, our bodies, gender identity, competence and motivation, as well as social and professional roles.

All this, however, does not change the fact that the complexity of social life on the one hand and the limited capabilities of our cognitive apparatuses on the other hand most probably condemn us to functioning on the basis of various stereotypes. The entire research tradition associated with the notion of the 'cognitive miser' suggests that the relevant research questions are not how to remove stereotypes, but how to influence them and change their content (Drogosz, 2002; Kurcz, 1994). That is why the **key objective of this work is to answer the question: To what extent do contemporary Polish TV series try to change stereotypes about women and to what extent do they preserve them?**

It is only possible to give answer to the above question after all layers of analysis have been put together at the end. We reach that point in following steps. We start by formulating a theoretical and methodological framework with detailed explanation of the coding procedure. We treat this together as coding procedure needed calibration and some

exercise of coding team with software used.¹ At the same time, using brain storming procedure the coding team formulated a preliminary list of social and cultural contexts of exposition of protagonists as well as the list of possible stereotypes concerning women. All above information has been gathered in chapter one. Chapter two consists of the most general analysis of the female characters' exposition in the whole sample. It is followed by chapters three to six that share the structure and are devoted to the detailed analysis of each of genres represented in the sample. Readers interested in comparison between genres may skip this part and jump to the last chapter – 'Comparative analysis – conclusions'. It contains the summary of results with comparative collation on social and cultural contexts of female characters' exposition and identified stereotypes on women.

¹ Apart from the authors themselves, a team of encoders – students of Polish studies, media studies, and sociology – participated in the research process. These were Oliwia Balcerzak, Antonina Fryś, Patrycja Kowalewska, Małgorzata Sojak, and Krzysztof Sokołowski, whom we would like to thank for their great commitment and very well done work.

Chapter 1

Methodology and Theoretical Background

Research Material

The objective set out in the introduction was operationalised in terms of the presence and presentation of fictional female characters in the series broadcast by the three largest television stations on the Polish television market: TVP, TVN and Polsat. Eight series representing four thematic types were covered by the monitoring.¹

In our sample, drama series (soap operas) are represented by ‘M Jak Miłość’ [L for Love] and ‘Pierwsza Miłość’ [First Love]. The series ‘M Jak Miłość’ has been aired on TVP2 since 2000. By May 2020, 1522 episodes had been broadcast.² The following episodes from series 19 were analysed: 1416–1420, 1422–1423, 1426–1428. The series ‘Pierwsza Miłość’ has been aired on Polsat since 2004. In April 2020 the last, 3057th episode of series 16 was aired.³ The analysis covered episodes 2832–2841 from series 15.

¹ The research was ordered by National Broadcasting Council which predefined the sample for the analysis as well as some methodological aspects of the study – especially those pertaining to exposition analysis.

² <https://mjakmilosc.vod.tvp.pl/>

³ <https://www.polsat.pl/serial/pierwsza-milosc/>

Our research sample also comprised two historical series, both produced by TVP.⁴ The first one, entitled ‘Korona Królów’ [Crown of Kings], has been aired on TVP1 since 2018. In May 2020, viewers could see episode 376, ending series 3.⁵ The analysis covered episodes 180–189 of series 2. The second of the historical drama series, ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’ [War Girls], has been aired since March 2017, also on TVP1. Series 3 ended in December 2019 with episode 39.⁶ Our analysis included episodes 17–26 from series 2.

In our sample, crime drama series are represented by two TVN productions. The first one, entitled ‘Diagnoza’ [Diagnosis], was broadcast between 2017–2019 (in four series). The viewers could watch a total of 52 episodes.⁷ Our analysis covered episodes 2–9 and 12–13 of series 1. The second of the crime dramas, ‘Pułapka’ [Trap], was aired in two series between 2018 and 2019.⁸ Episodes 1–6 from series 1 were analysed in the study.

The review of female personas is completed by the heroines of comedy series. In our study, this category is represented by ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’ [Girls from Lviv] shown on TVP1 and ‘Przyjaciółki’ [Friends] aired on Polsat. The first one was broadcast from September 2015 to December 2019 on TVP1. The viewers could see a total of 52 episodes in four series.⁹ In our study we analysed episodes 30–39 episodes from series 3. The second series, ‘Przyjaciółki’, has been aired since 2012. One hundred eighty-two episodes in 15 series were aired until May 2020.¹⁰ We analysed episodes 149–158 from series 13.

All of the above-mentioned series were very popular among viewers, the average episode of most of them was watched by over a million people, and in the case of ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’ this number even reached over two million. The audience of the most popular of the

⁴ We cannot contrast series within this genre produced by public and private broadcasters. This could probably constitute an impulse to discuss the reasons for the low interest in historical dramas by non-public TV stations.

⁵ <https://vod.tvp.pl/website/korona-krolow,34807622>

⁶ <https://vod.tvp.pl/website/wojenne-dziewczyny,28767487>

⁷ <https://player.pl/seriele-online/diagnoza-odcinki,6186>

⁸ <https://www.tvn.pl/seriele/pulapka,21,pc>

⁹ <https://vod.tvp.pl/website/dziewczyny-ze-lwowa,21383287>

¹⁰ <https://www.polsat.pl/serial/przyjaciolki/>

analysed series, ‘M Jak Miłość’, oscillated around five million.¹¹ Such high viewing figures are particularly important in the context of their potential impact on both the consolidation of stereotypes and the design of social change.

However, empirical material is only a starting point for the analysis. It cannot be performed without an appropriate theoretical framework that determines the meanings assigned to the individual elements of the empirical material. We may probably consider that in the case of symbolic content, the number of possible interpretative variants will asymptotically move towards infinity. This does not mean, however, that these options are equiponderant. Some of them (probably the overwhelming majority) can be considered erroneous/false, while others inadequate in view of the analytical objectives set.

In the case of the present analysis, the key organising role is played on the one hand by the socio-cultural contexts that give meaning to the actions of fictional characters presented in the series, and on the other hand by gender stereotypes present in contemporary culture. None of the lists presented below has any pretence to stand as complete (the process of their completion and stratification could probably also be infinitely long). However, in a systematic confrontation with empirical material they proved sufficient to achieve the intended analytical objectives.

Situational Contexts of the Exposure of the Characters

One of the key aspects of interpretation of everyday life highlighted in sociology from Erving Goffman to ethnomethodology is framing or contextualisation (Czyżewski, 2010). Words, gestures, actions receive meanings that are understandable in specific contexts constituting the basic interpretative resource for both the actors and the audience.

¹¹ The average viewership of one episode of each of the analysed series according to the Nielsen Audience telemetric measurement was: ‘M Jak Miłość’ – 4.9 million viewers (Kurdupski, 2020c); ‘Pierwsza Miłość’ – 1.4 million viewers (Kurdupski, 2020a); ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’ – 1.65 million viewers (Kurdupski, 2019a); ‘Przyjaciółki’ – 1.44 million viewers (bcz, 2020); ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’ – 2.26 million viewers (Kurdupski, 2019c); ‘Korona Królów’ – 1.36 million viewers (Kurdupski, 2020b); ‘Diagnoza’ – 1.42 million viewers (Kurdupski, 2019d); ‘Pułapka’ – 1.19 million viewers (Kurdupski, 2019b).

Therefore, the recreation of the image of women in the analysed series must start with the setting of contexts in which female characters take significant actions. It is worth capturing the importance of this issue. Even a completely passive exposure of a character in a context that defines certain social expectations is an important message confirming or denying those expectations.

One of the basic distinctions helping to classify interpretative contexts relates to the division into the private and public spheres. And although this division works well in the analysis of real behaviour, it loses some usefulness in the case of television series. Indeed, genre requirements significantly reduce the exposure of purely private situations. For the sake of the narrative order, however, let us assume that the division between the private and the public is not clear, but more of a continuum. This will allow us to organise the contexts of exposure of the characters distinguished for the purpose of the analysis, from the most public ones, through more personal, to intimate ones.

The first of the contexts we distinguished includes scenes related to **professional work**. These are not only scenes concerning work itself (although such scenes were of course assigned to this category), but above all those that take place in the workplace, and the professional activity of the characters is important for the plot and their behaviour. Research has shown that the profession performed is still crucial for determining one's social position, and equality in the workplace and discussions on the different degrees of feminisation of individual professions are at the centre of many contemporary debates on the position and role of women (see Domański, 1995; Gawrycka et al., 2007; Janicka, 1995; Titkow, 2003).

In public spaces, non-professional **physical and sporting activity** is also usually carried out. It constitutes another interpretative context that we identified. The role of physical activity in maintaining physical and mental health is emphasised in various ways in contemporary culture and is an important element of the multifaceted educational activities of the state, e.g. in the context of combating obesity or heart disease (PRS 2020). Sport is also becoming an important factor defining lifestyles and shaping fashion (Borowiec & Lignowska, 2012; Stempień, 2018). This category comprises scenes in which the characters engage in some kind of activity related to sports and recreation (e.g. running, attending the gym), regardless of whether the dialogue touches upon sports at all.

Health scenes most often take place in medical facilities, but this context also includes cases of attending to or dressing wounds of participants in armed conflicts in historical drama series, as well as talks about health held elsewhere. We considered the health context to be potentially important because of the alleged hidden educational function of some series (Godzic, 2004: 39) and their use, confirmed in the literature, to promote desired patterns of preventive behaviour (see Łaciak, 2013: 162–168, 324–329).

In order to make it possible to record a relatively full range of behaviours in public space, we also decided to separate the context of broadly understood **social activity**. What we meant here was primarily civic activity reaching beyond neighbourly self-help – mainly of a voluntary or quasi-political nature (e.g. charity, related to local or corporate self-organisation, social movements, professional self-governments and low-level local government).

Owing to the presence of historical drama series in the sample, we also distinguished the context of **armed conflict**. It encompasses scenes of combat resulting from war, the use of weapons to settle private quarrels and military operations. This category also includes scenes of interrogation of members of underground military formations from World War II.¹²

The public space also includes two other contexts we have distinguished – **participation in culture** and **shopping**. The latter is unlikely to require any comment. Analysed many times and in classic works, consumer culture (e.g. Baudrillard, 2006; Ritzer, 2004) is one of the basic analytical resources for the interpretation of contemporary times. The ease and ubiquity of buying suggests that also in TV series (especially the non-historical ones), buying and consumer decision-making activities should take up a lot of space. This theme is also important for the image of women – research shows that most of the daily consumer decisions are made by women and they determine the spending of the majority of family budgets (MAM, 2018). In connection with the commercialisation of culture, the notion of consuming culture has also started gaining ground.

¹² At the initial stage of preparing the research we assumed that there would be a need to distinguish also the context related to the participation of fictional characters in known historical events. However, it turned out that such scenes were not found in the empirical material and, as a result, the category was not included.

Lifestyles are defined, among other things, by patterns of participation in culture – an issue that has been systematically analysed in sociology at least since Pierre Bourdieu’s classic studies (2005).

Because of the presence of crime dramas in the sample, a separate context of **criminal activities** was distinguished, involving scenes depicting illegal activities. It is worth noting that this context was difficult to separate and distinguish from the context related to professional activity. First, because many illegal activities were undertaken by the protagonists during their normal professional activity (especially in the series ‘Diagnoza’); second, because all scenes related to police officers and prosecutors conducting investigations were quite consistently assigned to professional activity.

Moving towards contexts that blur the boundaries between what is private and what is public, we first encounter scenes related to broadly understood **sociability**. This thread includes scenes of meetings and conversations conducted using a light and rather neutral emotional tone. They can be social-type meetings (e.g. guests’ visit, a party, etc.) but also accidental meetings of the characters on the street or at home, during which small talk is conducted.

Owing to the focus on the image of women, a separate context of **childcare** was also singled out. This concerns scenes in which adults take on roles related to raising and taking care of children (e.g. preparing meals, sending children to school, going on walks with them, or simply talking to them). It should be noted here that the sample did not include any series that would make children the leading characters, let alone one that would focus the plot on the interaction between adults and children.¹³ Therefore, it can be assumed that the analysis of this context will allow us to determine the proportions of this kind of activity in the depicted image of women in a rather undisturbed way.

Because of the historical contexts (though not only them), it was decided that a separate context related to **planning and engaging in intrigues** is provided. We expected such storylines especially in the context of court intrigues from ‘Korona Królów’, but also in a slightly

¹³ Polish TV stations have important representatives in this genre, such as ‘Rodzina Zastępcza’ [Foster Family] or ‘Tata, a Marcin Powiedział’ [Dad, Martin Said].

more contemporary context in scenes related to manipulation in the workplace.

Moving further towards the pole of private space, we distinguished the contexts of **housekeeping**. These are mainly household chores that are usually carried out by a single person or in the company of the closest family members at most (e.g. cleaning, minor repairs, preparation of daily meals, etc.).

The most private of the distinguished contexts was defined as **relationships, feelings, liaisons**. They include scenes directly related to cultivating emotional and intimate relationships and talking about clearly emotive functions. All scenes with romantic, erotic, and sexual overtones belong here.

Regardless of the above list, contexts of individual scenes are a variable posing a challenge in analytical terms. Many series show simultaneous or intertwined plots – the same scene can be placed in a professional context and relate to the relationship and emotions of the characters. Coding all possible contexts included in a scene would lead to assigning it several contexts from the above-mentioned list, which would yield scarce analytical value. In this situation, we adopted the principle that we code the context which stands out most and to the greatest extent determines the characters' behaviour at a given time. However, we should not forget that in the vast majority of cases, the main context, which was presented in the conclusions, is accompanied by other threads.

Stereotypes about Women

Stereotypes are simplified thought constructs generally referring to a community and shared by a group of people. Although the concept itself does not have negative connotations, a large portion of research on stereotypes concerns the issue of prejudice (Boksański, 1997) which occurs when an idealised image of one's own community (autostereotype) is contrasted with a negative and exaggerated image of a foreign community, e.g. an ethnic or sexual minority (Sztompka, 2020: 295). Research on stereotypes, undertaken within the framework of various disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, and linguistics is often conducted using the questionnaire method. Such questionnaires

contain a set of attributes that can be assigned to a given community (Bokszański, 1997; Kurcz, 1994).

Generalisations in the form of stereotypes are typically characterised by high durability and perform specific functions. One of the most important is to simplify complex social reality by assigning its elements to a specific category and characterising them in a predefined set of characteristics (Kurcz, 1994).

In the case of gender stereotypes, the simplified image refers to a given gender (women or men) or a subgroup within it. As research has shown, gender stereotypes are characterised by a multilevel structure, within which certain concentrations of stereotyped characteristics can be distinguished. Stereotypes attribute certain characteristics to women and men on the basis of more general categories, such as personality traits, social roles, appearance or occupation (Mandal, 2004: 17–20).

Gender stereotypes in a given culture play an essential role in both individual and social dimensions. They influence the formation of gender identity, perception of oneself and one's body. Women more often than men show a lack of satisfaction with their own bodies, which in turn results in lower overall self-esteem (Mandal, 2004: 35–41; see Kochan-Wójcik, 2003). In pursuit of an 'ideal' appearance, they act in ways that often have a negative impact on their physical health. Attempts to match the stereotypical image of the female body also result in mental problems in the form of depression, eating disorders or prescription drug abuse. The location of the sense of control and the style of attribution are also acquired in accordance with the prevailing gender stereotypes. Compared to men, women are more often characterised by an external sense of control, resulting in a sense of helplessness. Blaming oneself for failures, typical of the feminine attribution style, leads to a lack of self-confidence and a sense of undeserved success. In the process of socialisation, social and professional roles typical for a given gender are assimilated in cultural messages, which influence both the shape of personal life, e.g. friendships, erotic relations (Mandal, 2004), and professional career (Domański, 1995).

To identify stereotypical images of women in the series analysed, we used a previously prepared list, which includes stereotypes of a different nature and origin. This is because it was composed of various stereotypical social roles, personal patterns, cultural myths, or archetypes

that are commonplace. All of them were connected by the fact that they portrayed women through the prism of a certain simplified set of traits or by sharpening one dominant trait of character. In this sense, it can be said that we used a methodological tool somewhat similar to the classic Weberian ideal type. To a certain extent, this freed us from the dominant pejorative colouring of the word *stereotype*. Hence our assumption that one of the mechanisms of the social impact of stereotypes is the fact that the viewer easily finds their reference both to other cultural texts and to everyday experience.

The set of stereotypes used in our research can be classified into three categories, namely, those referring to 1) social roles; 2) physical and mental characteristics and sexuality; and 3) professional work.

1) Stereotypes Relating to Social Role

The **Polish mother** is a stereotypical image of a woman deeply rooted in Polish culture and history; she devotes herself to family life, and thinks highly of traditional values such as homeland and faith. The sources of the stereotype can be traced back to the end of the 18th century. After the collapse of the Polish state, women were made co-responsible for the future fate of their homeland, and their contribution to the restoration of statehood was to be expressed in motherhood and the patriotic upbringing of children (Walczevska, 2000: 53). The dedication to higher values was connected, on the one hand, with neglecting one's own needs and, on the other hand, with the exclusion of an emancipatory component. The stereotype itself functioned in various historical periods (Titkow, 1995). Nowadays, the term 'Polish mother' in a common sense means a woman who takes care of the house and children. It is also used with irony or contempt for a woman overburdened with household chores, not taking care of her own needs and appearance, and therefore in a sense closer to a *hausfrau*.

The stereotype of the **goddess of hearth and home**, close to the Polish mother, suggests the dominant influence of the woman on maintaining the continuity and unity of the family. The notion of a priestess as the guardian of the *sacrum* implies the sanctity of family, marriage, and motherhood.

A woman whose life revolves around family and home matters, including raising children, shopping, preparing meals, washing and

cleaning is sometimes called a **hausfrau**. The stereotype, with clearly negative connotations, contains an image of a woman subordinated to a man, restrained, neglected and mentally restricted. The neutral or positive equivalent of a hausfrau is the **homemaker**. The term is also used to refer to women who are professionally engaged in private home management.

The stereotype of a **matron** usually refers to an experienced mature woman among women or head of the family. In ancient Rome, the term itself meant a married woman with a good reputation. The matron is therefore a mother or grandmother who exercises power over the family. She is a role model, authority and a mentor for younger women.

A **stepmother** is a non-biological mother, e.g. the second wife or partner of the father in relation to the children of her partner (stepchildren). The stereotype of a stepmother is negative, and in line with it she treats her husband's (partner's) children badly or worse than her own. The stereotype includes both the stepmother's jealousy for the attention of her husband or partner devoted to his children from a previous relationship, and the issue of competition for property to which stepsons or stepdaughters are entitled. The stereotype of a stepmother is deeply rooted historically and established in culture, e.g. in fairy tales (Jakubiec, 2007). Historically, the prevalence of stepmothers was associated with high mortality rates among women during childbirth or the postpartum period and repeated marriages by widowers. Nowadays, due to the spread of non-traditional family forms, a stepmother can simply be the father's second wife or partner, and her appearance in the family does not have to be caused by the death of the biological mother.

The stereotype of a **rebellious teenager** refers to a girl in her adolescence who has problems in her relationships with her environment, especially with her parents and teachers. A rebellious teenager has frequent mood swings, she feels lonely and misunderstood. She cannot or does not want to comply with the rules and norms of the adult world but seeks acceptance and authority in a group of her peers. She sometimes undertakes risky behaviour bordering on crime.

A **mother-in-law** is the mother of a wife or husband. This term is also used to describe the mother of a regular partner, as well as of a boyfriend/girlfriend. In the latter case, it has a somewhat playful meaning. The stereotypical mother-in-law is perceived as a person interfering in

the life of the spouses, often (as the mother of the husband) distrustful towards her daughter-in-law and jealous of the son's feelings. The stereotype includes such typical mother-in-law behaviour as criticism of the way the home is run and children brought up by her daughter-in-law or competition for her son's time and attention (see Sapia-Drewniak, 2011).

The two following stereotypes concern the elderly and are in a way opposite to each other.

The stereotype of a **grandmother**, who by definition is a woman with grandchildren, is deeply rooted in the traditional social role – an elderly person, often a widow, helping to raise grandchildren (children of a daughter or son). A stereotypical grandmother is a warm and caring person and is often more patient and understanding towards her grandchildren than their parents. The grandmother stereotype includes housekeeping: cooking, baking, sewing, and needlework. Her interests focus on family and neighbours. The grandmother looks and dresses in a manner appropriate to her age and passing time.

The opposite of a grandmother is an **active senior**. This relatively new stereotype has emerged in connection with changes in the family and some traditional social roles, as well as with the state's promotion of the activation of pensioners in various areas of social life (see Zalewska, 2013). An elderly woman, often retired, but still full of energy, enjoying life, who does not have to or want to devote time to her children or grandchildren, can focus on herself and her needs. Active seniors are therefore involved in gardening, developing their interests, having a varied social and cultural life, attending third age university lectures, travelling, doing age-appropriate physical activities and carrying out social activities. The stereotype of the active senior is disseminated by the media, whose recipients are women. This is related to the statistically longer life expectancy of women, as well as the promotion of an active lifestyle for seniors in modern society.

2) Stereotypes Concerning Physical and Mental Characteristics and Sexuality

Stereotypically, a woman is attributed a **greater emotionality** than a man. This stereotype is based on a dichotomy of the heart and mind. A woman is therefore more sensitive and tender than a man, who in turn

is stereotypically described as more rational (Mandal, 2004: 17). In the positive version, a woman's feelings are deeper, she is more sensitive, empathic, more willing to help. In the negative variant, a woman's emotionality may manifest itself as hypersensitivity or border on hysteria. Her reactions can therefore be unpredictable and unreasonable.

The stereotype of the **female angel** or **ideal woman** was reflected in the worship shown to women by both medieval knights and romantics. This image is the result, on the one hand, of the reverence shown to the Holy Mother, and on the other hand, of the characteristics attributed to women, that is, their greater sensitivity, tendency to sacrifice, and forgiveness. The idealisation of the woman made her to be seen as a virgin (like Our Lady) or asexual or non-corporeal (like an angel).

The opposite of a woman angel is either a *femme fatale*, a bimbo or a Snow Queen.

The first of those stereotypes, i.e. **femme fatale**, emphasises both the sexual attractiveness of women and their destructive power and demonic nature. The stereotype refers to a woman who is very sexually attractive and seductive, generally young (though not a teenager). However, it is primarily a woman who leads a man to perdition, such as divorce, loss of property or position, or even death. A *femme fatale* is enveloped in an aura of mystery and sensuality. This stereotype was and is reproduced in painting, literature and film. In the latter, such a woman is called a **vamp**, a term which indicates negative connotations of the stereotype (Janion, 2002; Pitera, 1989). The attribution of **tendencies for manipulation and intrigue** to women also dwells on the stereotypical negative side of female nature.

The stereotype emphasising a woman's sexuality on the one hand, and reflecting her limited intellectual abilities on the other, is the so-called **bimbo** or **blonde** (see Karwatowska & Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2006). This stereotype, therefore, refers to a young woman, very physically attractive, usually with blonde hair, who emphasises her sexual qualities and is treated by men as a sexual object. The stereotype sometimes includes provocative make-up and trashy dressing. Physical attraction does not go hand in hand with intellect. Stereotypically, a bimbo's behaviour is either provocative or infantile when around men, with an occasional show of helplessness. She uses her attractiveness to manipulate men. She is interested in wealthy men with high social status.

The opposite of a sensitive and empathic woman is one that is cold, calculating, heartless, sometimes even cruel, eager for power and wealth, manipulating men and using them for her purposes. This stereotype was named the **Snow Queen** in our research, on the one hand by reference to Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales and, on the other, by one of the heroines of the analysed films.¹⁴

A woman's stereotypical weakness and indecision and her dependence on a man are embodied in the so-called **ivy**. This is a helpless woman, requiring the presence of a man, and looking for support in him. She weaves around her partner like an ivy around a tree, appropriates and incapacitates him.

The sexuality and physical appearance of a woman is associated with the stereotype of an **asexual buddy**. Owing to gender-stereotyped social roles and gender-specific entertainment and leisure activities, it is difficult for men and women to maintain friendly relations. Such relationships are also generally treated with suspicion by their environment (Mandal, 2004: 115). However, if a girl (woman) is not very attractive physically or does not expose her attractiveness (femininity) by dress or behaviour, she can be treated as a buddy.

Stereotypical perceptions of women may see them as **atechnical**. This stereotype refers to the alleged lower proficiency of women in the use of technical devices. This includes the stereotype of a woman as a poor driver (worse than a man) (see Chłosta-Zielonka & Matusiak-Kempa, 2015) or her inability to make small repairs at home.

In the traditional stereotypical image of a woman, her **lesser physical strength** and **stamina** are sometimes depicted. The fact that women are **less interested in sport**, both active and passive, is also emphasised. This stereotype also includes the division into 'male' and 'female' sports (see Stempień, 2014). A woman, on the other hand, has a greater ability than a man to perform many tasks at once, and her **multitasking** is especially useful in running a home and caring for children.

3) Stereotypes Related to Professional Work

In this category, we distinguished only one stereotype; however, it occurs in two variants.

¹⁴ This refers to Bogna Mróz [the surname means *frost*], the heroine of 'Diagnosis'.

A relatively new stereotype, the emergence of which is related to the increasing success of women in the professional field, is the **successful career woman**. She achieves success in this field on par with a man, becoming his professional partner and often a rival. This stereotype is perpetuated by TV series, women's magazines, guides and blogs. In Poland, the image of a businesswoman was disseminated by the media, especially the women's press, just after the political transformation (Dukaczewska, 1995). The successful career woman in the series is portrayed in a professional setting, in prestigious professions (e.g. lawyer, doctor, architect) or running her own business. She is financially independent, travels and knows foreign languages. She is confident, well-dressed, and her apartment (house) and car reflect her high professional position. Professional work is an important element of her life. Professional success sometimes becomes a cause of problems in private (family) life or vice versa – it can be a result of loneliness, e.g. in the case of a professionally accomplished single (Czernecka, 2011: 129–143).

A successful woman with a ruined personal life is therefore a negative variant of a career woman. Stereotypically, she is a mature but not old woman who has paid for her professional success with a lousy private life (e.g. divorce) or has never started a family, is childless and loneliness is a grave problem for her. A successful woman with a bad personal life can relieve her problems with alcohol abuse or by surrounding herself with status symbols that are supposed to compensate for missing relationships.

The above list of stereotypes of women is obviously incomplete; it is worth noting, however, that when we started the study, we also took into account the following stereotypical figures: a housekeeper, a perfect housewife, an assertive/aggressive activist, a rural woman, a local woman, a stranger in town who moves to the countryside, looking for tranquillity. These stereotypes were either not identified in the monitoring samples or referred to episodic characters.

Stereotypes combine with each other both synchronously and diachronically. From a film art perspective, diachronic connections are an especially important element building the story, when, for example, in a critical situation, a *femme fatale* turns out to be a lost ivy, and a repressed hausfrau discovers in herself the makings of a strong successful

woman. Such measures are important in the context of shaping social change.

The identification of the presence and presentation of women in eight Polish TV series would be incomplete without taking into account the image of the family as presented in the analysed production.

Socio-demographic and cultural processes taking place in the Western world over the last few decades have led, on the one hand, to changes within the traditional family model and, on the other hand, to the emergence and/or spread of alternative models. The processes mentioned above include the widespread presence of women in the field of professional work, which is not only a source of income, but often an area of self-fulfilment; a decline in women's fertility rate; an increasingly older age for marriage; an increasingly older age for the birth of the first child; a rise in the divorce rate; a shorter duration of marriages; and an increase in social acceptance of informal and same-sex relationships (Slany, 2002; Szlendak, 2010).

The very definition of the family has also become a subject of discussion. Until several decades ago, the family was defined on the basis of its most widespread form at that time, i.e. the so-called nuclear family, comprising two parents (a woman and a man) and at least one child. Modern definitions of the family already take into account both its new or alternative forms and the fact that 'being a family' can be discretionary (Szendak, 2010: 94–96, 104–105).

In addition to the traditional, nuclear family, today there are alternative models, including cohabitation, lone parents with children, singles, gay or lesbian families, married couples without children by choice, friendships, and reconstructed families, with their variety – patchwork families, in which at least one of the children in the new relationship is not shared (Slany, 2002; Szlendak, 2010).

The division of responsibilities within the family is also changing. The increasing involvement of a woman (partner) in the professional field and her growing contribution to the family's income forces the husband (partner) to increase his share in raising children and housekeeping (Szendak, 2010: 423–432).

One of the challenges faced by modern families is labour migration, which results in many negative phenomena, especially the phenomenon of the so-called feminisation of migration, i.e. labour migration of

women who leave their children in the care of their husband or relatives (Szczygielska, 2013).

As research has shown, contemporary Polish drama series still present a traditional family model (often in an idealised form), but they are gradually beginning to give way to alternative models (see e.g. Arcimowicz, 2013; Kisielewska, 2009; Łaciak, 2013; Pawlak, 2010).

Coding Procedure

Below we will briefly present the most important stages of the research work that led us to our final conclusions. We had a total of over 49 hours of material to analyse, but the opening and closing credits were excluded from the analysis, so in further compilations we take into account a sample of 46 hours and 52 minutes (Table 1).

Table 1. Duration of Recordings in the Examined Sample

Genre	Title of the series	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Time (%)
Drama series – soap operas	‘M Jak Miłość’	7:11:15	15.33%
	‘Pierwsza Miłość’	5:03:38	10.79%
Historical drama series	‘Korona Królów’	3:47:42	8.09%
	‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’	6:47:31	14.48%
Crime dramas	‘Diagnoza’	6:05:58	13.01%
	‘Pułapka’	3:59:20	8.51%
Comedy series	‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’	6:52:13	14.65%
	‘Przyjaciółki’	7:06:14	15.15%
Total		46:53:51	100.00%

To attain the objectives set in this research project we had to apply multi-layered (**four levels**) coding to the film material. Watching individual episodes of the series in a special application, the encoders simultaneously coded specific fragments according to adopted assumptions with the help of solutions available in the software. At the same time, the message was studied in the visual and sound layers. Exposures of both sexes in these two layers could be both convergent (e.g. we see a woman

speaking on the screen) and non-convergent (e.g. we see only a group of women and we hear the voice of a man speaking to them).

In the visual layer (**level one**) each team member coded only what was displayed on the screen (leaving out the sound) and marked each appearance of a woman, a man, or combinations of the two (two women, two men, a pair, a homogeneous group, a mixed group). Owing to sociological significance, the configuration in which the characters were visible on the screen was divided into three basic types: (1) exposure of a single person; (2) exposure of a pair – dyad (Simmel, 1975: 157); and (3) exposure of a group of three or more people. At the same time, we consistently assumed that coding the visibility of a character on the screen requires that the viewer see the face or at least the profile of the character.

In the audio layer (**level two**), it was necessary to code the duration of the men and women speaking. The encoders listened to the same material and coded only what was heard (setting aside the video): a woman's statement, a man's statement, polyphony, or non-speech (everything that is not an articulate human expression).

The issue of audio coding seems clear for adults, but it is not entirely clear how to treat children when dividing the genders. In this study we adopted the general principle that children have gender and therefore are included as women or men in audio and video coding. In special situations, when the child's gender was undetermined (e.g. infant), 'other (including children)' codes appeared and then the exposure was not included in the exposure of either women or men, only in the total duration of the recording.

However, the above elements are only an introduction to an in-depth image analysis. Visual or sound exposures took place in the series against the background of defined social and cultural contexts. In the **third layer**, each episode was divided into contexts in which its action took place.

In addition to the above coding, scenes were also cross-sectionally assigned stereotypes (**level four**). While watching, the encoders marked places in the episodes containing an exemplification of stereotypes.

Finally, with the previously prepared cast of actors for each episode, the encoders marked the appearance of a given character in the given

episode. Thus, information was developed about the **frequency of female characters in the TV series, i.e. determining the number of male and female characters (broken down into lead and supporting) at the level of each episode.** As a result, our raw analytical material developed by the encoders consisted of four layers, as illustrated in Figure 1.

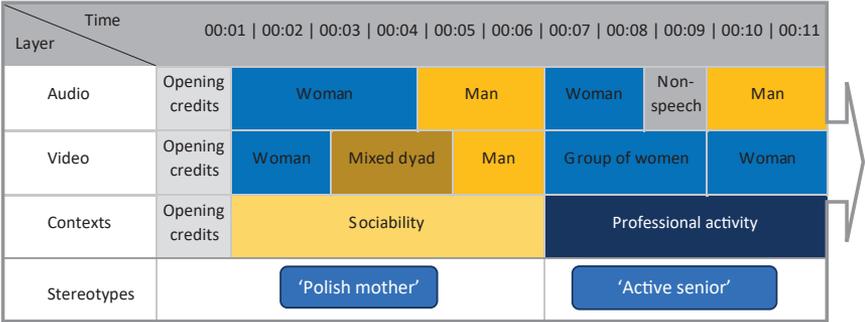


Figure 1. Layers of Encoding the Footage

The effects of the work in the application were subjected to statistical processing in which the audio and video coding were juxtaposed. We thus obtained quantitative data on several dimensions of exposure. The first of them is **active exposure of female characters in the series.** By that we mean an exposure in which a woman speaks during the individual scenes. We aggregated the time when female characters speak, regardless of whether they were shown on the screen or not. Similarly, we counted the time when male characters spoke. Apart from the statements of women and men, we distinguished such audio messages that were neither women’s nor men’s statements. We therefore computed the duration of polyphony and non-speech. Non-speech comprised scenes where there were no actors’ utterances. Most often this meant music or sounds of everyday life, e.g. street noise. As a result, we obtained the first key indicator for our study, i.e. the ratio of speaking time of women to that of men. This relation was expressed in this study as the quotient of women’s exposure time in relation to men’s exposure time, e.g. 1.22. Moreover, we calculated the percentage of the speaking time of women compared to the time of the whole recording.

The second dimension of analysis is **passive exposure**. By this we mean scenes where the characters are visible on the screen. In this stream of analysis, we measured the time when female (and analogously male) characters are visible on the screen but remain silent. We then computed the deriving indicators, i.e. the ratio of women's passive exposure to that of men (this ratio was expressed as the quotient of women's exposure time in relation to men's, e.g. 1.22) and the percentage of passive exposure time of women compared to the time of the whole recording.

The third dimension of exposure is the **percentage of passive and/or active exposure time of female characters in the individual plots of the series**, i.e. in which plots female characters are presented in an active way and in which in a passive way.

The qualitative analysis was based on notes and coding of existing stereotypes. It contains two layers. The first is a description of the **general pattern for the presentation** of the lead and supporting female characters in a given series and series from a given genre in general (dominant features of female characters, the nature of interaction with male characters, etc.). The other refers to the **relationship between the general pattern of presentation and stereotypes** regarding gender, social roles, and roles assigned to female characters by a given film convention (social, historical, criminal, comedy, etc.).

Prior to coding, a list of stereotypes was tentatively developed based on literature and expert knowledge, which the encoders marked and described at the time of coding. The list is presented in the previous section.

The stereotyping process is usually associated with social roles attributed to particular sexes. Owing to the diversity of the sample and the multitude of film genres represented, a systematic analysis of the social roles assigned to women would lead to overly general or non-specific conclusions. Given this situation, the only analytical solution was to include in the qualitative analysis the institutional context linking together many social roles (wife, mother, mistress, daughter, etc.). Because of the plot of most of the analysed films, this context is family life. This choice is additionally reinforced by the fact that in the whole sample, the most prevalent thematic plots are those related to relationships, interactions, feelings, and also sociability (in total over half of all contexts). Therefore, in the qualitative analysis for each group of series, there is also a brief description of the dominant family model.

Chapter 2

With Family and Friends – the General Image of Women in the Series

Let us start discussing the results of the research on the image of women in the Polish series with a general presentation of quantitative indicators (total and broken down by gender), including active exposure time, passive exposure time, configurations of character visibility on the screen and the context in which the action takes place. Once we analyse the time of exposure of women and men against particular contexts, we will be able to draw general conclusions concerning how gender roles are presented in the examined sample of the series.

Active Exposure in the Series

Active exposure means the time spent by men and women speaking, regardless of whether the character speaking is shown on the screen or not. As the polyphony is practically absent from the recordings, the active exposure is a disjointed variable, i.e. at the given moment, we can deal with either the active exposure of a woman or a man, or a lack of expression (non-speech). There were also marginal sounds made by babies, which were coded as 'other'. Because they make up a negligible

share of the quantitative analysis, in subsequent figures showing passive exposure in the types of series and individual series they were included in the ‘non-speech’ category.

In total, the active exposure of women, i.e. the time when women speak, was 17.5 hours, which accounted for 38% of the total duration of the action under analysis. Compared to the active exposure of men, the ratio was 1.19 times longer. At the most general level, therefore, we can say **that in the series sample studied, women were more clearly displayed than men, but this was not an overwhelming advantage** (Figure 2). As will be shown later in the report, the active exposure was not homogeneous throughout the entire sample series.

Interestingly, nearly one-third are fragments without people’s statements, i.e. music, silence or street noises. These fragments often play an important role in building tension, regulating the pace of action or additionally illustrating the internal states of the characters. Thus, they are relevant both from the perspective of the recipient and film art. However, as the purpose of this research is to analyse women’s images, non-speech will not be further analysed in detail.

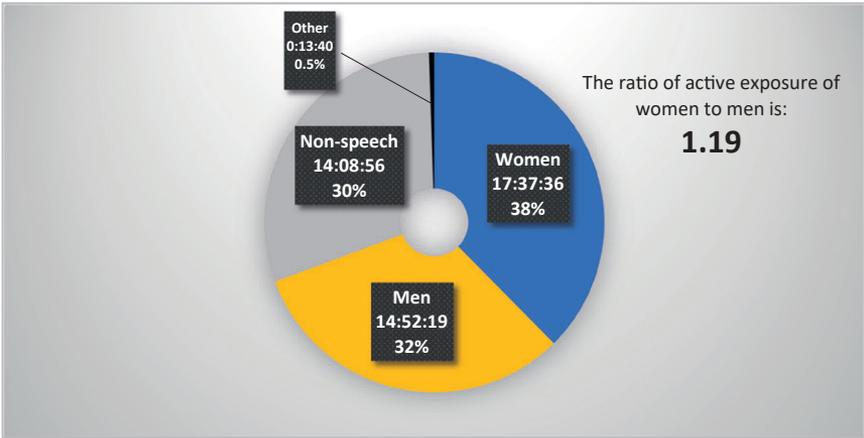


Figure 2. Active Exposure in the Sample

Passive Exposure in the Series

Passive exposure means the appearance of women or men on the screen without speaking. It is a methodologically different indicator from active exposure due to the possibility of men and women to be shown on the screen at the same time.

Women are also predominant in passive exposure. The ratio of passive exposure of women to men was 1.15. In total, the scenes in which women (in any configuration) were shown on the screen (regardless of whether they spoke or not) took 67% of the entire recording time, while the corresponding share of men was 58%. The remaining 5% of recordings are taken up by scenes in which we do not see any humans (Figure 3). Therefore, we can argue that **the analysis of passive exposure supports the conclusion suggested above on the advantage of women's exposure in the series analysed** – an advantage that is both clear and non-overwhelming.

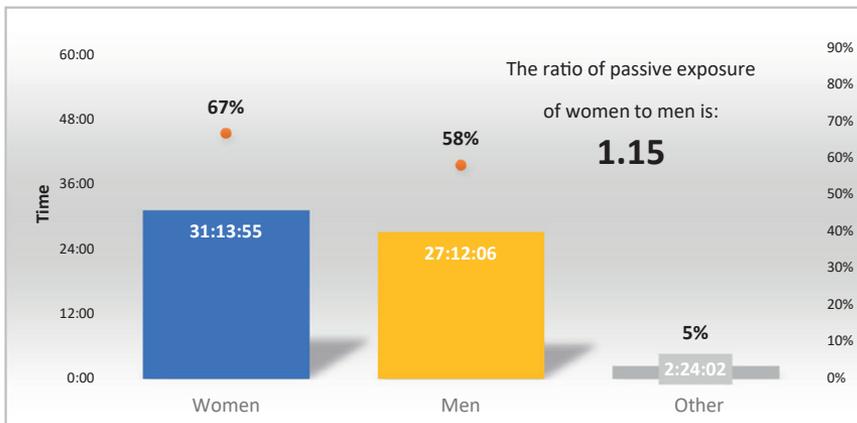


Figure 3. Passive Exposure in the Sample

Women and men are presented in the series in various configurations. More often than not we deal with a scene in which we see a single woman (26% of all recording time). Two more configurations, which occurred more or less equally, are a scene with the man alone (21%) and a scene with a mixed dyad, i.e. two people of different sexes (20%). In general, is

it notable that the scenes with one person shown on the screen (woman or man – 47%) and group scenes (dyads and groups – 48%) take up the same amount of time (Figure 4).

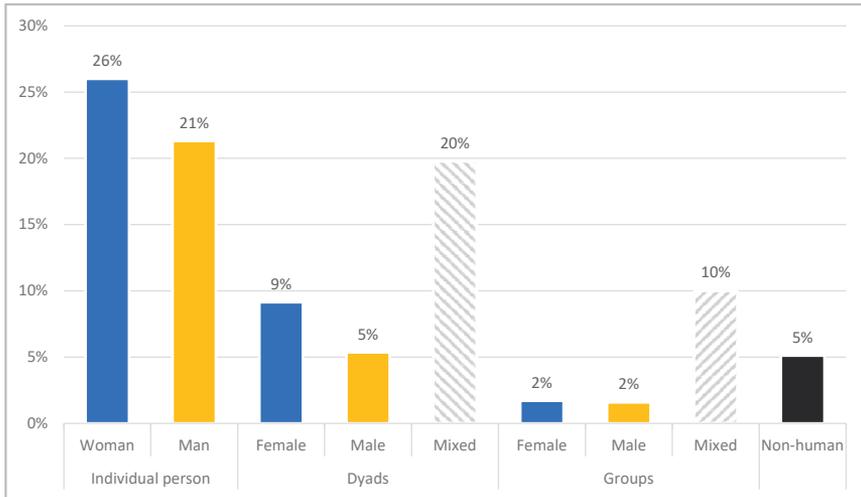


Figure 4. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen

Contexts in the Series

The plot of the analysed series is most often set in the context of relationships and emotions associated with them (29%). Another type of context against which events happen is sociability (26%), i.e. scenes where ordinary conversations are held, sometimes scheduled as social events and sometimes reproducing casual daily encounters. The third context in which the series' actions are embedded is the professional plot (15%), which means in practice that a large number of scenes occur in the workplace of the characters or directly relate to their work. Intrigue and health are contexts that can be less readily found in almost every series. We also have plots which, although noticeable in the general analysis of all recordings, in practice are limited to selected series of a particular type. These include the criminal context, which mainly appears in two crime dramas and armed conflict, which we see almost exclusively in 'Wojenne Dziewczyny' (Figure 5).

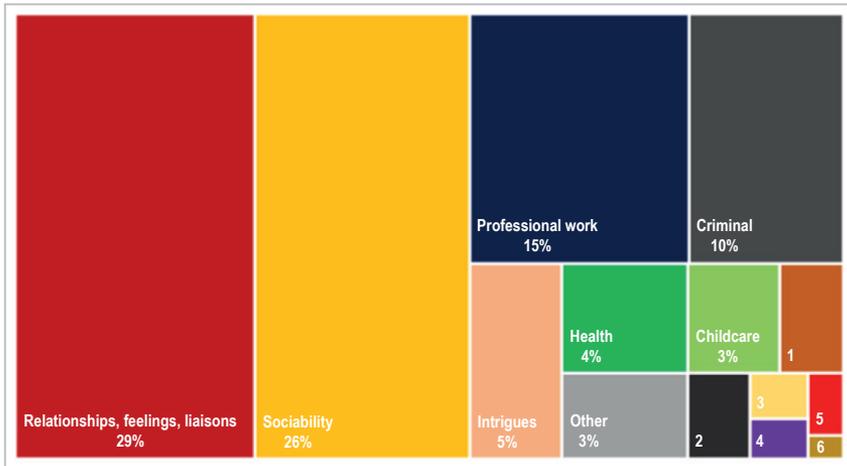


Figure 5. Context Share in the Total Recording Time

Note. 1 – Housekeeping (1.9%); 2 – Armed conflict (1.4%); 3 – Shopping (0.7%); 4 – Participation in culture (0.6%); 5 – Active leisure (0.6%); 6 – Social activity (0.2%)

The proportion of women's active exposure varies from 15% to 53% of the recording time depending on the context. Women have the highest share in the statements in scenes concerning childcare (53%), shopping (44%), sociability (43%), housekeeping (42%), and also in scenes concerning relationships, feelings, and liaisons (40%). In contexts related to professional work, health, participation in culture or armed conflict, men have a greater share of the utterances (Figure 6).

When it comes to passive exposure, we see women appearing more often in the two most popular contexts. Then, when it comes to work, crime or intrigue, women and men are exposed in a balanced way. In less exposed contexts, women still dominate in the area of housekeeping, children, shopping and active leisure. Men in passive exposure have been portrayed longer in the context of health, armed conflict, social activity and participation in culture. Such distribution of exposure mostly reproduces cultural intuitions, except for the following plots: criminal (surprisingly large proportion of women's exposures), intrigues (surprising balance) and active leisure (a slight advantage of women was not obvious) (Figure 7). **Therefore, it can be concluded that balancing**

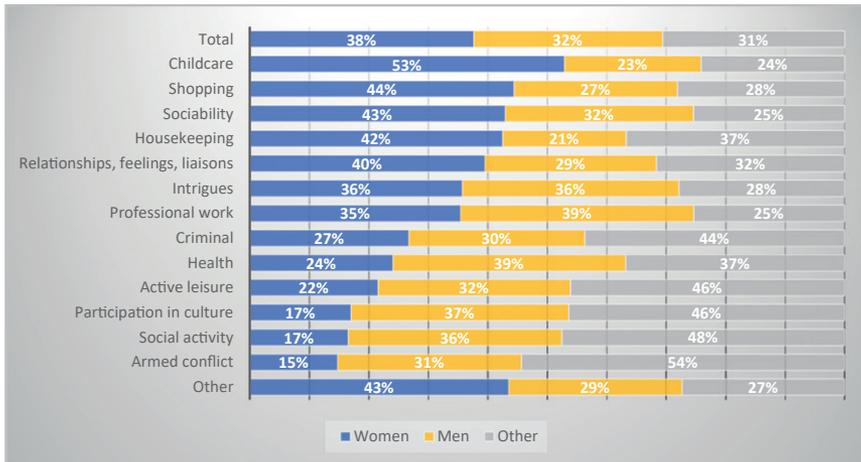


Figure 6. Active Exposure of Men and Women against the Backdrop of Contexts

the presentation of gender roles in contexts that may be considered masculine seems somewhat easier than introducing the clear exposure of men in contexts considered closer to feminine.

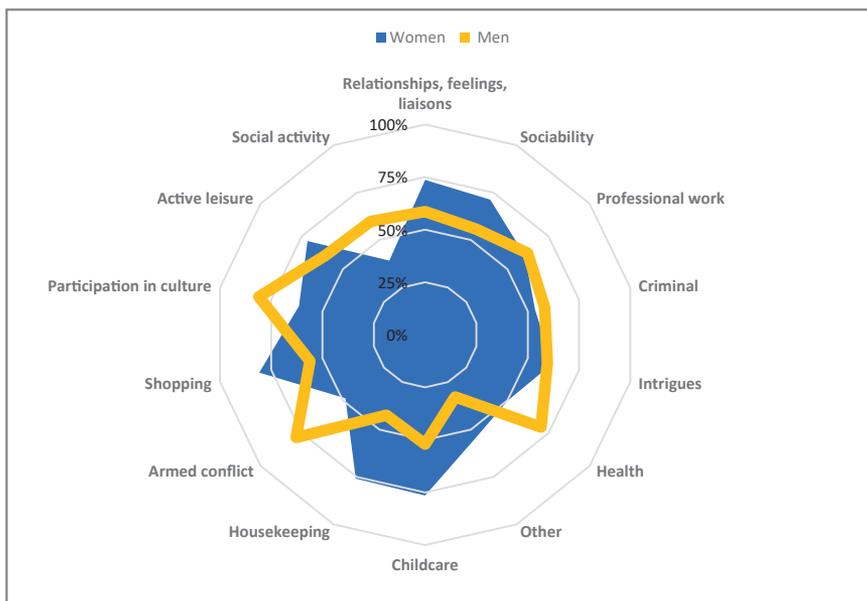


Figure 7. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts

Chapter 3

In the Search of Everyday Balance – Women in Drama Series (Soap Operas)

As a TV series genre, soap operas are characterised by topics generally covering emotional adventures and dramatic observations. The plots of soap operas revolve around the history of one family or several families, or a small community. This type of series is usually broadcast several times a week or every day, in short episodes. Typically, it has several hundred or more episodes. A characteristic feature of soap operas is also the openness of the plots (see Arcimowicz, 2013: 108–114).

Convention in Drama Series

‘**M Jak Miłość**’ and ‘**Pierwsza Miłość**’ display characteristics typical of soap operas. The first one presents the history of the multi-generational Mostowiak family. The protagonists are the senior members of the family – Barbara and Lucjan¹ Mostowiak – and their children and grandchildren. The series is set in Grabina, Lipnica, Gródek and Warsaw.² In turn, the multithreaded action of ‘**Pierwsza Miłość**’ has many protagonists, such as Maria Radosz and her subsequent partners, the Żukowski, Król

¹ Lucjan Mostowiak dies in episode 1329 of the series.

² See <https://mjakmilosc.vod.tvp.pl/>.

families, and others. The action of the soap opera takes place in the village of Wadlewo, located near Wrocław and in Wrocław itself.³

The distinction of main and supporting characters in both series can be problematic. The analysed sections are only a fragment of the whole, and the action dispersed to individual plots moves from one place to another. Therefore, not only the main characters' participation in individual plots was taken into account, but also the sum of the presence of individual characters in the entire material studied.

On average, 12 main and supporting characters appeared in a single episode of 'M Jak Miłość'. In the case of this series, defining characters as main or supporting is arbitrary, because the story is decentralised and at least in the sample tested there were no characters that would participate in all the plots. Considering the above reservation, we can conclude that the appearance of main and supporting female and male characters (treated as one set) is balanced (Table 2).

Table 2. Frequency of Character Exposure in 'M Jak Miłość' (Average per Episode)

Lead		Supporting		Combined
Women	Men	Women	Men	
2.3	1.0	4.2	5.0	12.0

'Pierwsza Miłość' also has a scattered story, which complicates the assignment of lead and supporting roles. However, it can be noted that out of an average of eight characters in one episode, women appear slightly more often in leading roles than men, while in the case of supporting characters, the male advantage is more than double (Table 3).

Table 3. Frequency of Character Exposure in 'Pierwsza Miłość' (Average per Episode)

Lead		Supporting		Combined
Women	Men	Women	Men	
2.4	1.7	1.4	3.1	8.0

³ See <https://www.polsat.pl/serial/pierwsza-milosc/>.

Stereotypes, Roles and Relations in Drama Series

When looking for serial stereotypes, the following characters of the series ‘M Jak Miłość’ were taken into account: Barbara Mostowiak, Maria Rogowska, Julia Kryszak and Agnieszka Makowska, as well as Krystyna Banach, Joanna Chodakowska, Zofia Kisiel, Sonia Krawczyk, Aneta Kryńska, Izabela Lewińska, Kalina Marczewska, Magdalena Marszałek, Marta Mostowiak, Urszula Mostowiak, Agata Rogowska, Katy Tatirszwili, Anna Waszkiewicz, Kinga Zduńska and Anna Żakowska.

In the ‘Pierwsza Miłość’, the following female characters were analysed: Sylwia Konecka, Kinga Kulczycka, Justyna Marczak, Dorota Marska, as well as Emilia Miedzianowska, Kalina Domańska and Pola.

In the soap ‘**M Jak Miłość**’, Barbara Mostowiak is the stereotypical grandma and goddess of hearth and home. She is the matriarch of the family; in the serial, we see her at home, in the kitchen, while cooking or baking, preparing food, or sitting at a table in the room, with a needle while sewing or sometimes walking around the area. She is accompanied by family members, usually daughter Marysia, granddaughter Basia or neighbour Zofia. Barbara Mostowiak is interested in family matters, cares for loved ones, is always warm and smiling, always hospitable, caring and willing to help. She is the one to listen when her granddaughter confides in her when she leaves her husband, and her neighbour looks to her for advice. She is sensitive and tactful. Guests are treated with a bowl of soup. She cherishes the memory of her late husband and regrets that he cannot participate in such important family celebrations as the baptism of her twin great-granddaughters.

A contrast to Barbara Mostowiak is the stereotype of an active senior: Zofia Kisielowa rides a bicycle, goes to the gym, dresses in bright colours and wears clothes not suited to her age. She is also accompanied by a much younger admirer. The man is a fraudster who has greatly abused Zofia’s trust, but when he proposes to her, she decides to give him another chance. Elected as a Grabina village administrator, she proves herself as an administrator, showing forcefulness in her actions for the benefit of the local community.

The lives of other women in the series, both middle-aged and slightly younger, focus on family and home matters. Caring for loved ones

is the dominant feature of soap opera characters. They worry about children, even those who are grown-ups (Marta Mostowiak) and care about partners.

Barbara Mostowiak's daughter (Maria Rogowska) is a younger counterpart of her mother. A grandmother as well, but also a mother of a minor daughter (Basia) and a happy wife. She works as a nurse and receptionist, like her mother, she is warm and caring, and her life revolves around family matters and work in an outpatient clinic.

The younger generation of women in the series try to form a life with partners and it is the emotional relationships (male–female) that mostly affect their conversation.

The heroines, especially the younger ones, are shown to be more emotional and sensitive than men. They react overly emotional, like Kinga Zduńska, who 'has a bad feeling', being in advanced pregnancy, or Urszula, arguing with her current boyfriend Bartek or slapping the ex-boyfriend who is still in love with her. Wounded or betrayed women leave men without a word and do not want to have any contact with them, like Julia or Natalia, and when abandoned by their beloved, fall into depression, like Ania Żakowska.

Women in love decide to confess to a man their love (Katia) or to invite him on a date (Sonia), contrary to the stereotype that it is a man who should do the courting and not vice versa. Women also use their feminine strengths to get the information they need (Joanna).

A negative stereotype of a female schemer and manipulative woman, taking revenge on her ex-partner, is personified by Ania Waszkiewicz and Aneta. Both of them push themselves on men already associated with other women, and both try to get them back.

Women are generally shown in peer relationships with men. They are their partners, friends, colleagues and bosses. However, there are also situations in which women experience physical violence in the family (Krystyna Banach), become a target for a paedophile (Basia) or a psychopathic former fiancé (Iza), and are also cheated and used financially (Zofia).

In the soap 'M Jak Miłość' there is an underlying current of inequality between a woman and a man. Bartek, who has no secondary education, has been imprisoned, feels unworthy of his partner and hesitates with the proposal.

However, the man is usually shown as a loyal partner and guardian. Generally, he is also more sensible than a woman. Kinga asks her husband to pay for catering for baptisms, and he comments that the cost is too high. The series also features the theme of an employee (Paweł Zduński) who is more forward-looking than his boss, who pays the insurance policy against her will, thanks to which she can receive an insurance refund when the transport is robbed. However, the series also features the sub-plot of a gambler (Michał Ostrowski), whose neighbour (Joanna) tries to reason with him.

Families and relationships with children are diverse. There are traditional families with many children (Kinga with her husband and four children), patchwork families (Marta Mostowiak with her ex-husband), and informal relationships. The series features the theme of difficult relations between a teenager and his mother – an erotic dancer. The son is ashamed of his mother's profession and a video with her act, shared by his school colleagues is the reason he runs away from home.

The soap *'Pierwsza Miłość'* occurs mainly in the context of professional work. Several female stereotypes can be distinguished in the plot. Sylwia Konecka is a successful woman, but her private life is not going well. Attractive and elegant, she is the editor-in-chief of the Yolo magazine and website. However, she has a difficult relationship with her daughter, whom she left as a child; she is single, undergoing psychotherapy and trying to deal with memories of her father.

The soap shows a stereotype of a woman addicted to a man, entwining him like ivy but possessive at the same time. In her relationship with Norbert, Pola wants to have total control over him, follows his every step and plans their life together without the awareness and consent of his partner. Presumably, she is mentally ill. When Norbert, after discovering folders with information about Pola's previous partner and about himself, collected by Pola, breaks up with a woman, she becomes dangerous. Pola's ex also had problems reconciling their breakup. He ran and hid his whereabouts, pretending to be missing.

Women in *'Pierwsza Miłość'* are enterprising, but doing business is not easy, especially when they are guided by their hearts and not their minds. Emilia, head of the newly created factory, who has fought against unemployment in the village, has a problem with one of the employees. Prompted by the investor, despite the resistance (the employee is

a friend, and working in the factory is her only source of income), she fires the woman, which results in a strike. Emilia first tries to negotiate, but when this does not bring results, she is not afraid to resort to more radical measures – she brings in new employees to frighten the strikers with the prospect of losing their jobs. Such a radical solution does not please her husband and father, who argue that the employees are neighbours from the same village. In addition, in the case of Dorota, the family does not help in running the business. Her father, employed as a bartender, turns out to be a source of constant problems in the bar (and incidentally – in relations with her partner). Because of problems with the law, he wears an electronic anklet, and his criminal past comes back to repeatedly haunt him.

Kinga Kulczycka breaks the stereotype of a woman who is weaker and less physically fit than a man. At the survival camp, not only does she match men for physical fitness, but she also challenges the trainer and gets into conflicts with him. Another ‘tough guy’ is Melka, a novice and uncompromising policewoman who is not afraid to oppose her boss. She gets involved in a domestic violence case in which an influential policeman is accused. The man intimidates his wife and Melka, who is involved in the case. However, the policewoman, despite the lack of support from her colleagues, gets hard evidence to stop the perpetrator’s actions. After the investigation, she is applauded at the police station by fellow policemen.

The stereotype of the Polish mother and goddess of hearth and home is broken in the series. In one episode where young parents (Kalina and Krystian) argue over childcare. Kalina wants to get out of the house for a while and the partner must stay with their daughter. In the discussion, the partners use various arguments. Kalina thinks that taking care of home and the child is also a job, while Krystian thinks that a mother should not party. After she comes back, the man is jealous but at the end the couple bury the hatchet.

Women are also excessively emotional, like Sylwia’s daughter Justyna Marczak. The girl interrupts her mother’s business meeting by throwing a fit. In one of the scenes, she seriously abuses alcohol.

Women in relationships are generally equal to men. We can even see, as confirmed by quantitative analysis, that the term ‘weaker sex’ in the case of ‘Pierwsza Miłość’ is more suited to men than women.

The series features various family patterns: traditional, reconstructed, cohabitation, and singles. There is an issue of domestic violence and lack of reaction in the environment. The thread of negotiating family roles and responsibilities becomes a cause of conflict between the young parents.

When analysing the stereotypes, roles and relationships in soap operas, we should primarily take into account that they are extremely long productions, which probably determines their content. To keep viewers' interest, the main characters must experience family, professional, criminal and personal crises at a frequency that is hardly realistic. In this context, one of the natural treatments is breaking stereotypes when creating characters. Therefore, in our conclusions, it is worth focusing on those stereotypes that soap operas do not break. First:

- the focus of women on domestic matters and their indicated partial lack of assertiveness at least in some professional matters;
- greater emotionality ascribed to women; and
- the focus on the need to build lasting emotional relationships.

Active Exposure in Drama Series

In the overall duration of these two series, women's statements occupy 36% of the time, which is just two percentage points more than the average for the entire sample – a difference that can be considered insignificant. However, the active exposure of men in both series is five percentage points higher than the average, which means that against the background of all the eight series, soap operas more often give voice to men in the literal sense. Considering that at the same time non-speech has a smaller than average share in soap operas, we can say that **in comparison to other series, soap operas are based more on the utterances of actors, with men speaking slightly more often** (Figure 8).

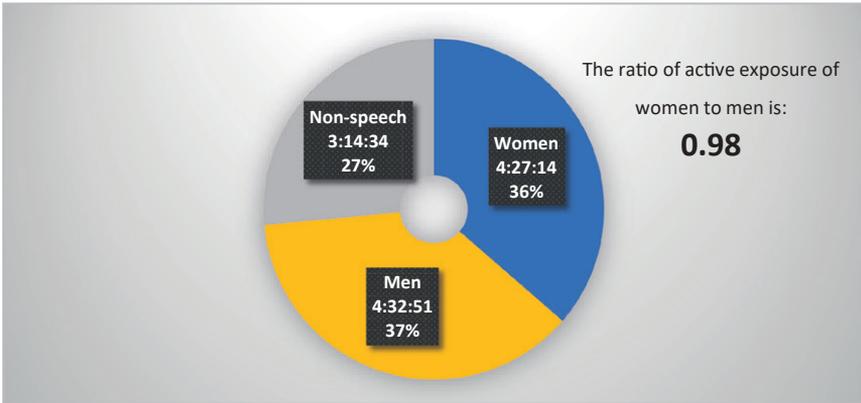


Figure 8. Active Exposure in Soap Operas

Active Exposure in ‘M Jak Miłość’

Of the two soap operas discussed, ‘M Jak Miłość’ is definitely more ‘feminine’. Women’s statements occupy 37% of the time, and the ratio of their share to the active exposure of men is 1.22 (Figure 9). In terms of passive exposure, ‘M Jak Miłość’ is closest to the average of the whole sample. Both the ratio of women to men and the non-speech share reflect the average parameters of the entire sample. Using survey terminology, it can be said that ‘M Jak miłość’ is an exemplification of the ‘average respondent’.

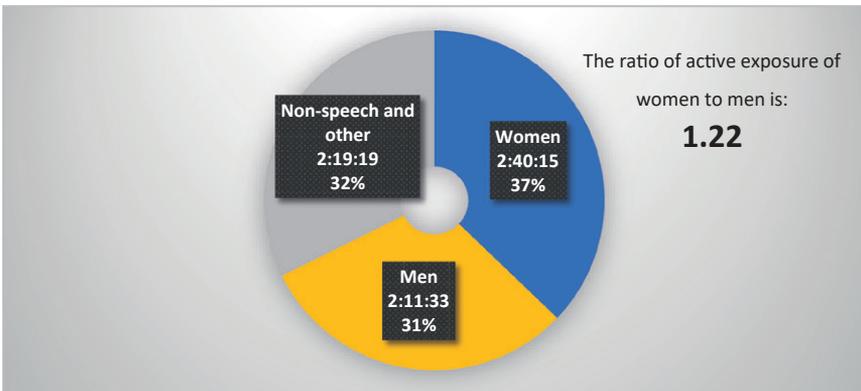


Figure 9. Active Exposure in ‘M Jak Miłość’

Active Exposure in ‘Pierwsza Miłość’

In ‘Pierwsza Miłość’, men speak much more and much longer than women. The share of men’s statements throughout the entire recording time is close to half (47%), while women’s utterances constitute slightly more than one-third (35%). This results in a ratio of active exposure of women to men equal to 0.76. In addition, in the series, the statements of the characters in general occupy 82%, while fragments without human speech occupy 18%, which is a relatively small proportion of non-speech as compared to the entire sample analysed (Figure 10). Such shares of active exposure make ‘Pierwsza Miłość’ a rather specific series, different from both the second representative of the genre, ‘M Jak Miłość’, and from most of the series in the sample. When we hear the male voice much more often in a series with *love* in the title, it can be considered to breach the stereotypical belief that women talk more about romantic feelings.

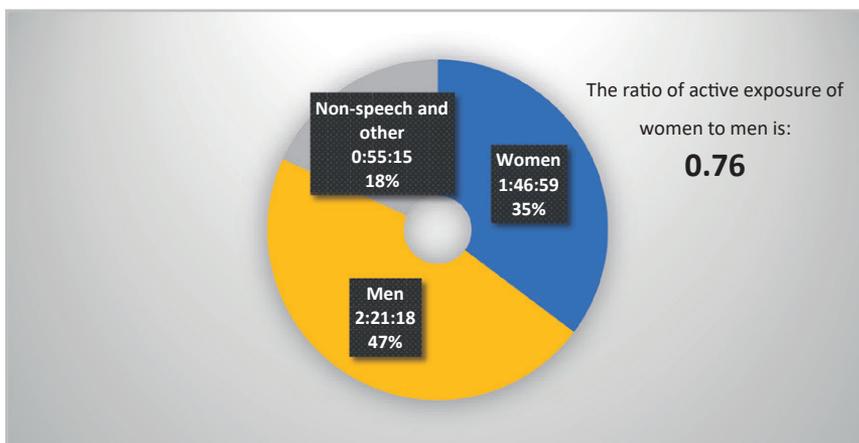


Figure 10. Active Exposure in ‘Pierwsza Miłość’

Passive Exposure in Drama Series

The duration of passive exposure of women and men in soap operas is very balanced, with a slight, rather insignificant advantage on the part of men. This leads to the conclusion that soap operas maintain

a consistent balance in the display of women and men (Figure 11). As we will see further in the study, this is not so obvious in other genres.

Looking at the detailed screen layout configurations of men and women, we will see that in soap operas the balance in presenting both sexes is not limited to general proportions. The time we see one woman on the screen is almost equal to the time of seeing one man (25% and 27%). The time when a male dyad is presented is equally shared with the time a female dyad is presented (6%). Groups of women take 1% of the time or the same as male dyads (Figure 12).

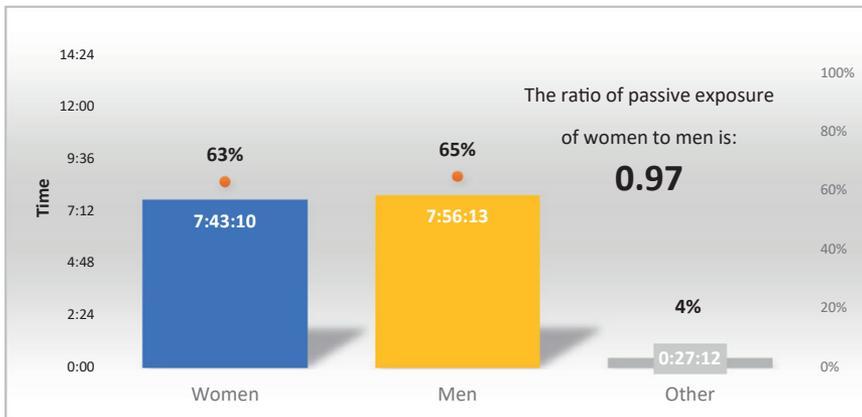


Figure 11. Passive Exposure in Soap Operas

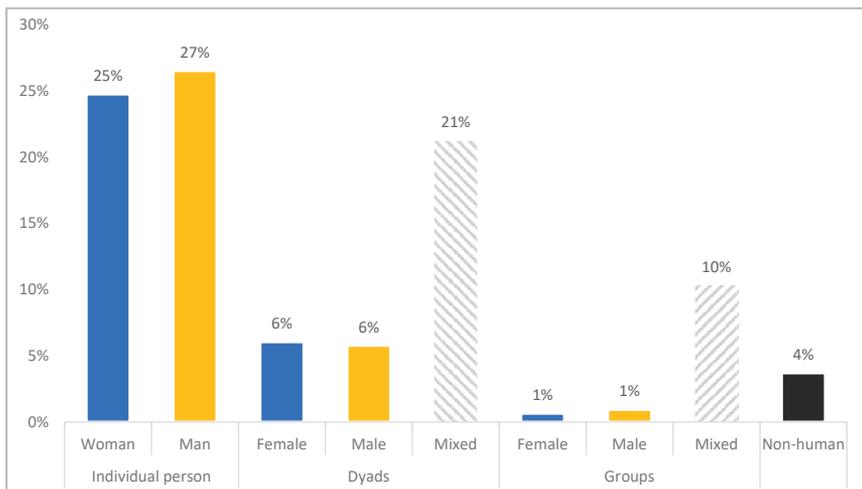


Figure 12. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in Soap Operas

Passive Exposure in ‘M Jak Miłość’

Contrary to active exposure in ‘M Jak Miłość’, with passive exposure the advantage of women is less pronounced. Women are shown for 68% of the time, while men for 64%, which gives a 1.06 ratio, and therefore a very even proportion (Figure 13). In this series, we are dealing with a situation where female roles are dominant in terms of dialogue as well as in the visual sphere, but with a smaller advantage in the latter case.

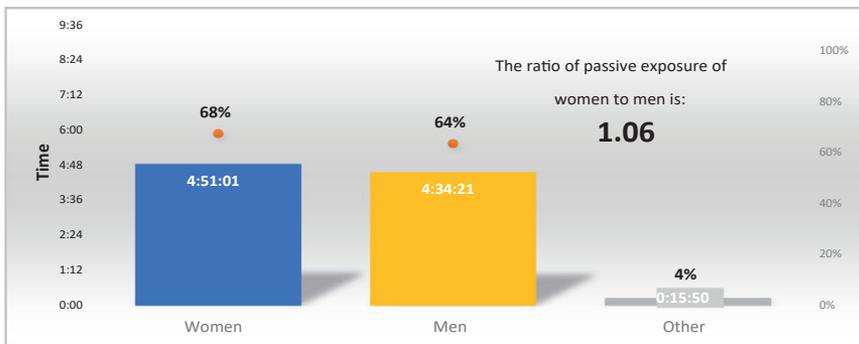


Figure 13. Passive Exposure in ‘M Jak Miłość’

It is worth noting that the advantage of women’s active exposure is also accompanied by the advantage of being present in the vision of women’s dyads (which occupy 8% of the time) over men’s dyads (6%) (Figure 14).

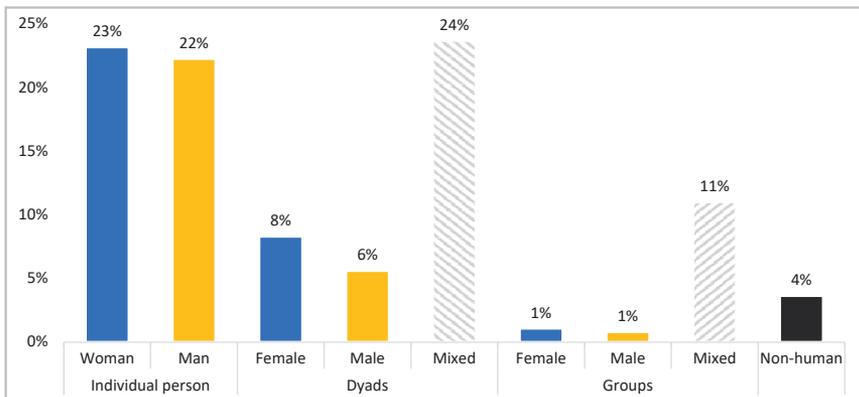


Figure 14. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in ‘M Jak Miłość’

Passive Exposure in 'Pierwsza Miłość'

Men in 'Pierwsza Miłość' dominate the visual sphere, just like in the audio layer. Their passive exposure takes 67% of the entire time and is ten percentage points longer than women's passive exposure. The resulting ratio of passive exposure of women to men is 0.85 (Figure 15).

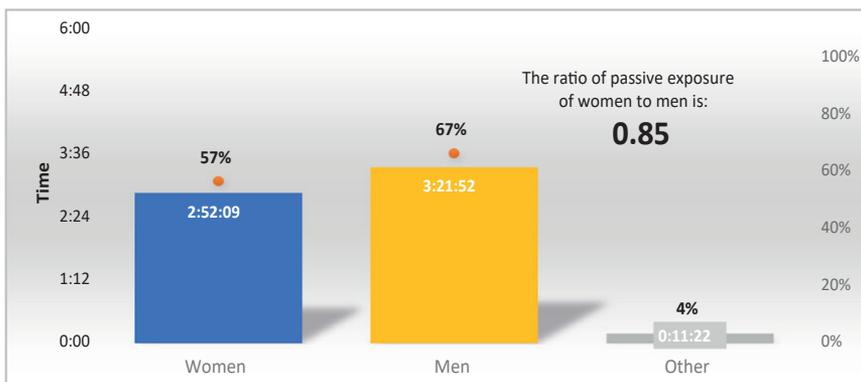


Figure 15. Passive Exposure in 'Pierwsza Miłość'

In 'Pierwsza Miłość', on the screen we will see a single man more often (32% of the time) than a single woman (27%). Twice as much time is occupied by men's dyads (6%) than women's (3%), and groups consisting exclusively of women hardly occur (Figure 16).

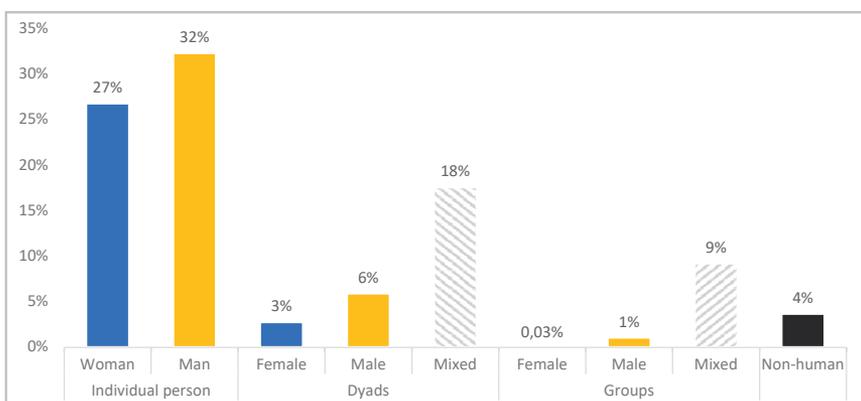


Figure 16. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in 'Pierwsza Miłość'

Contexts in Drama Series

Soap operas are dominated by plots about relationships, feelings, and liaisons (35%), and sociability (30%). These two contexts take up as much as two-thirds of screen time. Professional work comes next, occupying about one-fifth (22%) of the time. As it happens, 87% of the entire action takes place against these three contexts. None of the other contexts covers more than 3% of the entire recording time (Figure 17). Soap operas could be said to simply be trying to reflect the patterns of daily life in most of the society, apart from the relatively small share of time spent raising children.

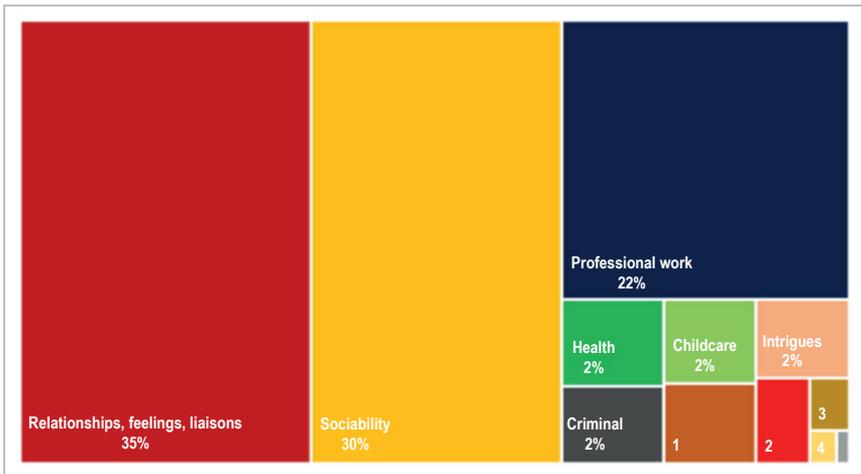


Figure 17. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in Soaps

Note. 1 – Housekeeping (2.0%); 2 – Active leisure (1.2%); 3 – Social activity (0.6%); 4 – Other (0.2%); 5 – Shopping (0.1%)

In the most important context, associated with stronger feelings and relationships, the speaking time of both genders is balanced, with a slight advantage of men (two percentage points). In the lighter threads (sociability), women are definitely predominant (by ten percentage points). In less popular contexts, there is a predominance of active exposure of women when caring for children (which is not surprising) and a predominance of active exposure of men in housekeeping (which is a certain violation of traditional cultural codes). In the least frequent

context, i.e. shopping, 65% of the time is occupied by women’s statements while only 17% by men’s (Figure 18).

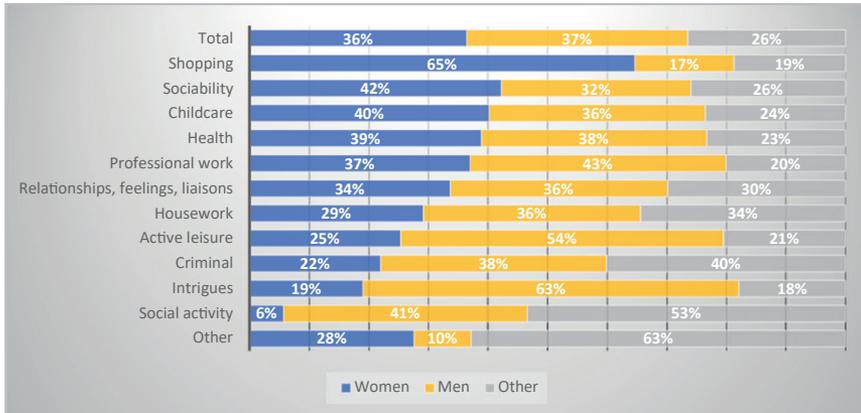


Figure 18. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in Soap Operas

The passive exposure of men and women in soap operas is fairly balanced in the dominant and minor collateral contexts. Contexts in which we have the advantage of one of the sexes, specifically men, are intrigues, criminal events and social activities (Figure 19).

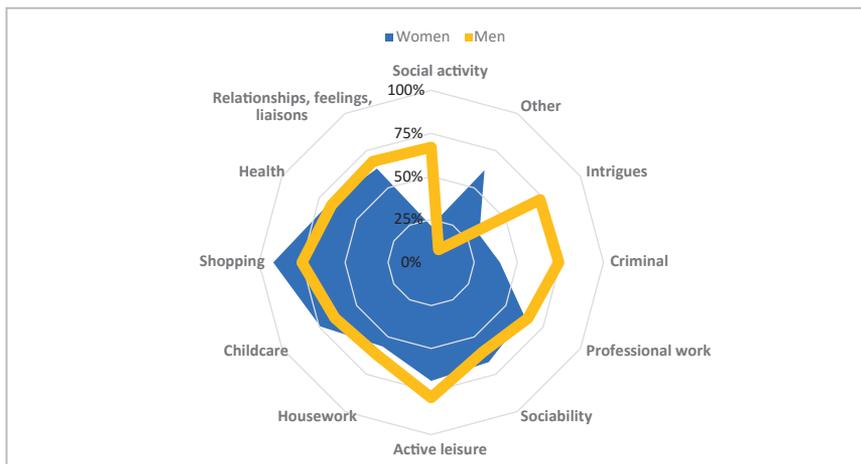


Figure 19. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in Soap Operas

Contexts in 'M Jak Miłość'

In 'M Jak Miłość', the action and dialogue take place against the backdrop of emotional plots, partner and family relationships (42%), and general sociability (41%). Thus, the two contexts together take just over four-fifths of the recording time. Professional work is in third place, but with only a 6% share. Combined, the contexts of housekeeping, childcare, and shopping have the same share, (6%). Generally, however, it is a series in which the main focus is on interpersonal relationships (Figure 20).

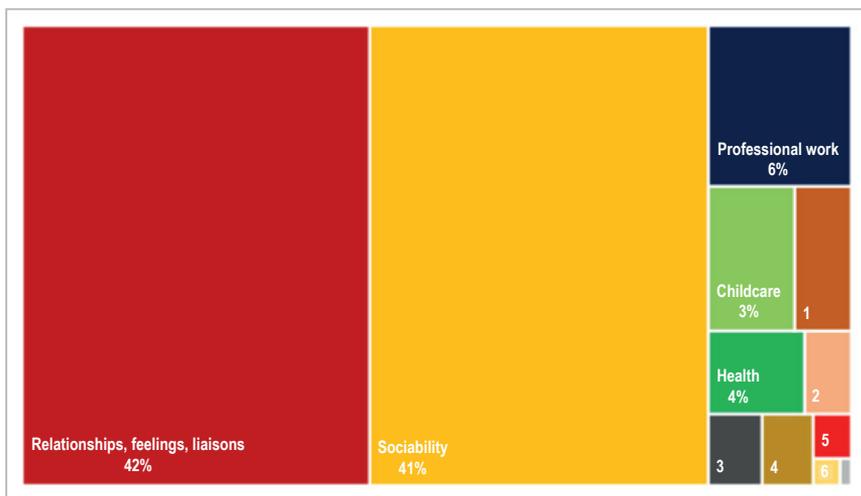


Figure 20. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in 'M Jak Miłość'

Note. 1 – Housekeeping (2.1%); 2 – Intrigues (1.0%); 3 – Criminal (1.0%); 4 – Social activity (0.9%); 5 – Active leisure (0.4%); 6 – Shopping (0.2%); 7 – Other (0.1%)

The fact that the series is so strongly dominated by relationships, feelings and liaisons, and sociability encourages us to have a more in-depth look at how active and passive exposure of women and men are presented in these contexts. In plots devoted to relationships, feelings and liaisons, women and men say more or less as much. On the other hand, in social plots, including everyday conversations, we hear women more often than men (45% compared to 29%) (Figure 21). Compared to other analysed series occurring in the present time, such proportions should be treated as in line with intuition.

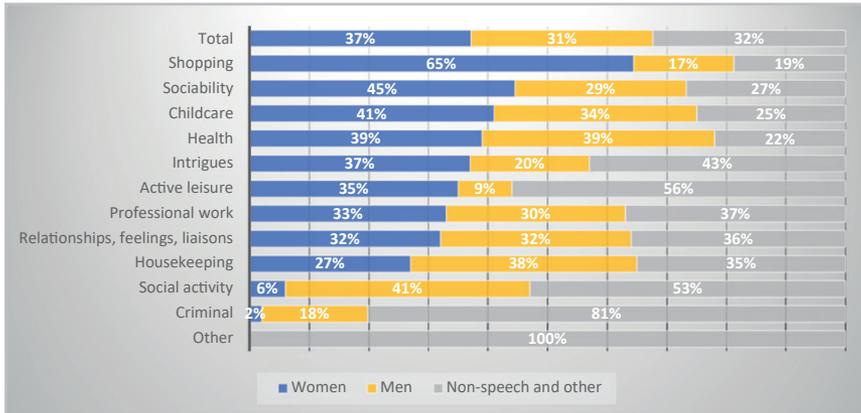


Figure 21. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in ‘M Jak Miłośc’

On the level of passive exposure, more pronounced differences occur only in the contexts less popular in this series: women are almost totally absent in criminal and social activities. These two plot types are almost completely built according to the passive exposure of men. At the same time, social activity is dominated by men, while crime scenes are rather ‘silent’ (Figure 22).

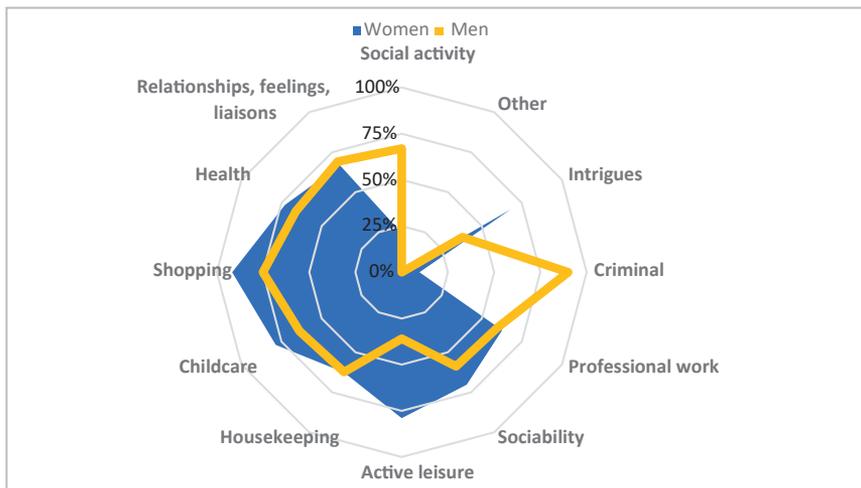


Figure 22. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in ‘M Jak Miłośc’

However, let us take a closer look at the second most popular thread in ‘M Jak Miłość’, i.e. sociability. While in this context women speak much more often, their advantage is significantly less in the visual sphere. We can, therefore, say that the characteristic feature of this series is the presence of social scenes with both men and women, in which women speak more often, but their statements in some parts are heard from outside the shot.

Contexts in ‘Pierwsza Miłość’

For the description of contexts in ‘Pierwsza Miłość’, let us remember once again the principle of coding the most explicit contexts mentioned at the beginning. It is obvious that in the series in which ‘love’ is placed in the title, we will have a lot of dialogue and scenes dedicated to relationships, feelings and liaisons. However, it is worth noting that many of these scenes were placed in various situations related to the work of the characters. The topic of professional work is the one that has been highlighted, but we should bear in mind that there are also other contexts behind it in the second and third plan or between the lines. In addition to the professional work, liaisons and sociability that dominate, in 86% of the series time we also have criminal plots, intrigue and health issues (Figure 23).

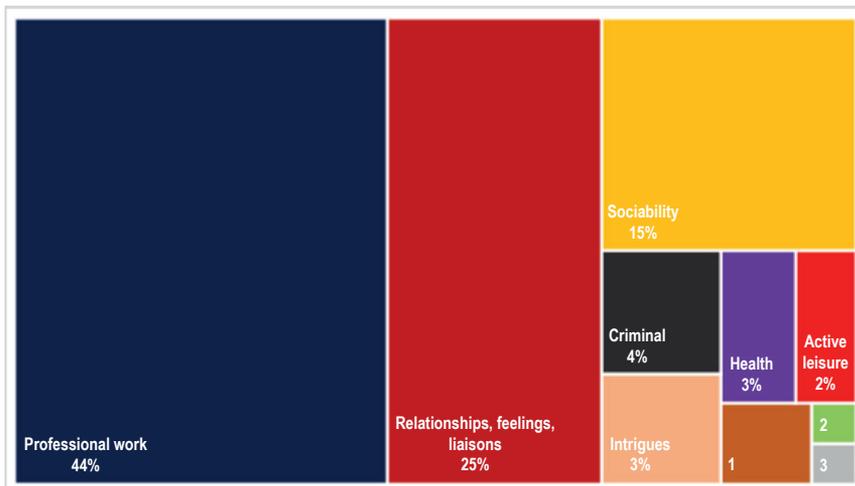


Figure 23. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in ‘Pierwsza Miłość’

Note. 1 – Housekeeping (1.9%); 2 – Childcare (0.5%); 3 – Other (0.5%)

The overall dominance of men in active exposure in this series translates into dominance in virtually all major themes. Only in the very peripheral theme of 'health', is the exposure of both sexes even, but it should be remembered that this theme is quantitatively irrelevant (Figure 24).

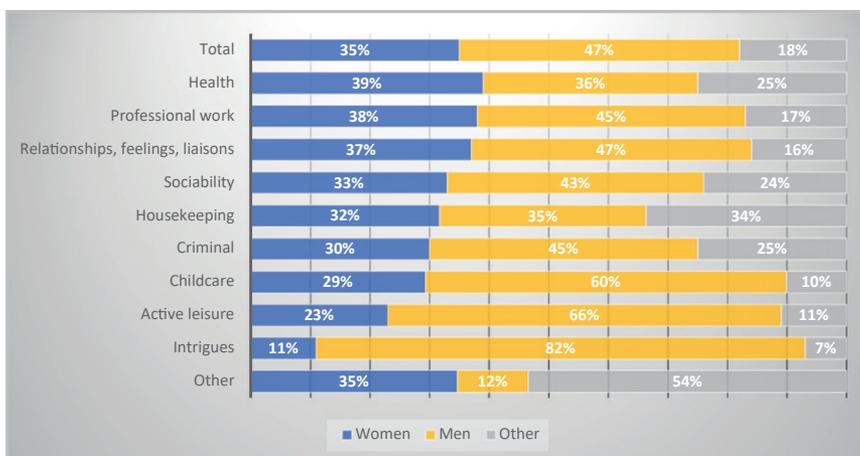


Figure 24. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in 'Pierwsza Miłość'

In the passive exposure we also see the advantage of men in most themes, but it is worth noting that in the most popular context of this series, i.e. professional work, the passive exposure of women and men is even (Figure 25). Thus if we deal with scenes where we see the same number of men and women, but men speak more, we can talk about the role of women having been reduced. In this series, this situation occurs both in relation to professional themes as well as feelings and relationships.

Comparing the two series, it can be said that 'M Jak Miłość' is more about women and 'Pierwsza Miłość' more about men. The subject matter of the two series can provide an explanation here. The first is dominated by family, emotional and social matters, and the action usually takes place in homes and apartments. In the second, professional plots prevail and we often see the characters in their workplace (editorial office, police station, hospital, factory, bar). Such an arrangement seems to confirm

the traditional, stereotypical division into female domestic space and male professional space.

In the two soap operas, the proportion of child or home care contexts is minimal, but, interestingly, in ‘Pierwsza Miłość’ men clearly outweigh women also in these traditionally female areas of activity.

If we can draw conclusions based on the analysis of the two series, then we should be tempted to conclude that the soap opera formula seems to give surprising flexibility in terms of gender exposure. The sample contains, on the one hand, a production with a predominance of women’s exposures, and on the other, a series with the highest exposure of men in the whole sample – and despite the fact that the title suggests a focus on relationships and liaisons, i.e. topics more likely attributed to women.

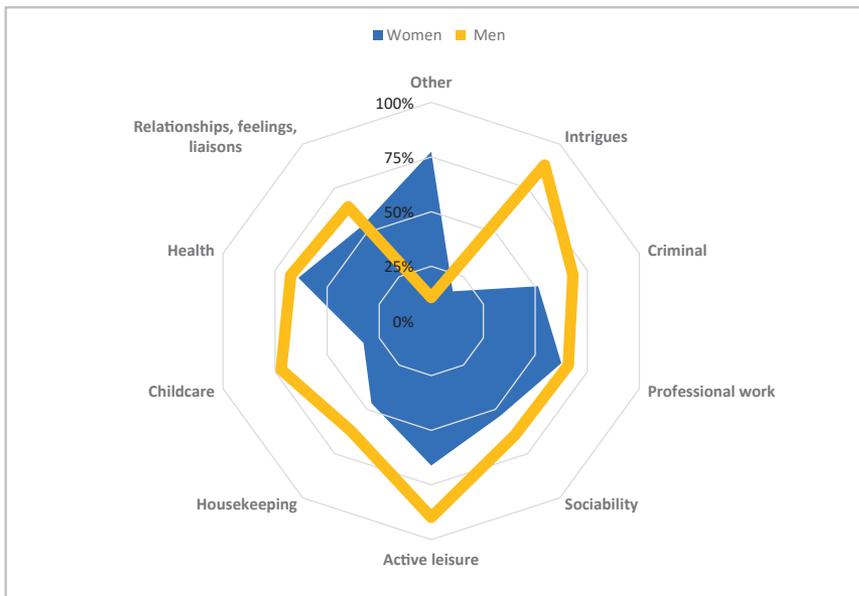


Figure 25. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in ‘Pierwsza Miłość’

Chapter 4

Reconstructions of the Past – Women in Historical Drama Series

The distinguishing feature of historical drama as a genre is its themes set in a historical rather than modern context (see Witek, 2011). A period drama can refer directly to historical events, reproducing them more or less faithfully. We are then dealing with a form of reconstruction in which the characters are authentic historical figures. In this case, historical figures are usually accompanied by fictional characters. The historical context can also be a zone for free interpretation or be only a background for telling a universal story. Then the heroes are usually fictional characters.

The set and costumes of the historical film recreate the scenery, infrastructure, means of transport, rooms and costumes of a given period. Care for realism also requires presenting on the screen the way of life, social relations and roles characteristic of a given historical period.

Convention in Historical Drama Series

The analysed material consists of two historical series very different from each other, both in terms of the historical context and the way the series characters are presented.

The first, '**Korona Królów**', falls into the convention of historical reconstruction. The analysed episodes show the reign of King Casimir

the Great (14th century) during his marriage to Adelaide of Hesse. The series' action takes place in the monastery in Tyniec, at the royal courts in Wawel and in Buda, at the princely court in Świdnica and in Lublin.¹ Among the main and supporting characters are both historical and fictional characters.

In the analysis we took into account the following female characters:

- Queen Adelaide of Hesse – wife of Casimir III the Great;
- Queen Elisabeth Łokietek – sister of Casimir the Great, wife of the Hungarian king Karol Robert, mother of Louis of Hungary;
- Duchess Agnes von Hapsburg – wife of the prince of Świdnica Bolko II the Short;
- Oda – maidservant of Queen Adelaide;
- Jutta – maidservant of Queen Adelaide;
- Maidservant Cudka – daughter of Pełka, wife of Niemierza;
- Maidservant Małgorzata – wife of Pełka, lover of King Casimir the Great;
- Princess Kunegund – daughter of Casimir the Great;
- Maidservant Helena – wife of the Świdnik knight Guncel Reibnitz;
- Regina, a Cracow burgher's wife;
- Maidservant Egle.

Owing to the method of conducting the narrative and the short length of a single episode (about 25 minutes), it is difficult to clearly classify individual characters as primary or secondary over the ten analysed episodes of the series. In the examined material only Adelaide of Hesse comes to the fore, and then in the background we see the maidservants Oda, Jutta, Cudka and Małgorzata. In this context, we also see the Cracow burgher's wife Regina, Agnes von Hapsburg, Elisabeth Łokietek and Helena.

The selection of female characters in the 'Korona Królów' has been subordinated to the requirements of conventions and the creation of a historical context on the one hand, and narrative and dramaturgy on the other. The main female characters are therefore primarily people of royal and princely families (queens, duchess, princess), who are

¹ See <https://vod.tvp.pl/website/korona-krolow,34807622>.

accompanied by maidservants (of noble families). Among the women of inferior status, only the burgher's wife plays a greater role, but she is a comical character.

The main characters of the second of the historical drama series, **'Wojenne Dziewczyny'**, are only fictional characters set in the period realities of World War II (occupation, 1941). The action takes place in Warsaw and Lublin. The series, kept at times in a convention close to an action film, presents the fate of a group of young people involved in underground activity.

The lead characters are three young women ('Wojenne Dziewczyny'): Marysia Joachim, Ewa Fronczak and Irka Szczęsna. The supporting female roles include Major Klara, German Margarethe von Losein, Jadwiga Szczęsna (Irka's mother), Zosia Joachim (Marysia's sister) and prostitute Nina.²

On average, in 'Korona Królów', we watched 12 lead and supporting characters. In this series, the lead characters are King Casimir, his wife the queen and (at least in the sample studied) and King Louis of Hungary. The dominance of men in the foreground is compensated for by the dominance of female supporting roles (5.2 on the average in relation to 3.9) (Table 4).

Table 4. Frequency of Character Exposure in 'Korona Królów' (Average per Episode)

Lead		Supporting		Combined
Women	Men	Women	Men	
1.0	1.9	5.2	3.9	11.7

In 'Wojenne Dziewczyny' men appear slightly more often in the lead and supporting roles. Although the title of the series focuses on women (and in fact the girls from the title are the lead characters), the series positions men as lead characters even more often. Moreover, men play supporting roles more often (Table 5). This seems to confirm the popular belief that all in all, war is a male domain.

² See <https://vod.tvp.pl/website/wojenne-dziewczyny,28767487#>.

Table 5. Frequency of Character Exposure in ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’ (Average per Episode)

Lead		Supporting		Combined
Women	Men	Women	Men	
3.0	3.8	2.9	3.4	13.1

Stereotypes, Roles and Relations in Historical Drama Series

In the ‘**Korona Królów**’, female primary and secondary characters are portrayed in an idealised way, as gentle, sensitive and emotional, loving their husbands and fiancés, dependent on them, but also succumbing to their own weaknesses. They are pious, which does not stop them from believing in superstitions and horoscopes, and in breaking the mirror or breaking a string of beads to see the wrong sign. They like pretty, fashionable clothes and console themselves with eating sweets.

Adelaide of Hesse is a faithful wife, in love with her husband and suffering from his many betrayals. Sometimes she is depicted as a matron, but she does not quite fit this role as a sensitive, straightforward woman simultaneously prone to manipulation. Her maidservants Oda and Jutta are above all loyal to the queen. Although Oda secretly deals in espionage, she is also underhanded and uses her beauty to get the information she needs, but she does all this because of the goodness of her heart rather than the desire for profit. Jutta, in turn, is more sensitive and wants love, bonding with the knight Jura, despite rumours about his illegitimate children. Two more characters, Cudka and Małgorzata, are also sensitive, married women, who are guilty of treason. Both became lovers of the king (in the case of Cudka in the quite distant past), who, although known for his lust, and ‘difficult to refuse’ as a ruler, did not force them against their will. Information about Małgorzata’s betrayal reaches her husband Pełka, who goes on a trip without saying goodbye. Both he and Niemierza, Cudka’s husband, are killed by the people of Kiejstut of Lithuania. Both widows mourn the death of knights, and Małgorzata, torn by remorse, falls into despair.

Two supporting characters Duchess Agnes von Hapsburg and Queen Elisabeth Łokietek are depicted as matrons, true rulers who can put aside

emotions and their own needs, if required by a *raison d'état*. Agnieszka is more sensitive – she is jealous of women (as it turns out, wrongly) about her husband Bolko and missing her ward Anna (Bolko's niece), cared for by Elisabeth. The Hungarian queen, in turn, is a confident ruler, an independent woman pursuing her own policies. She shows wisdom and diplomatic acumen. She is not only a guardian for under-age Anna, but also a mentor.

The burgher's wife Regina, on the other hand, is depicted in a comical way. She is a parody of the stereotype of a 'medieval woman of success' – an enterprising and resourceful low-order person, whose lucrative and calculating skills get lucrative orders from the royal court. Regina follows medieval fashion trends and offers courts not only dresses, but also frivolous (transparent) shirts. An opportunity to earn a living is through mourning along with their wives after the deaths of Pełka and Niemierza. While insensitive and cold-hearted, seeing the despair of the maidservants, she pragmatically states that one needs to live on. Redrawing the character, presented at times as a caricature, contrasts with the noble and sensitive courtiers and Queen Adelaide.

In 'Korona Królów', female figures are presented in a manner adequate to the role and social position of women in the Middle Ages. At that time, a woman was primarily a wife and mother, and the basic task of the royal wife was to give birth to a male heir – a successor to continue the dynastic line. The lack of a successor to the throne means that King Casimir is moving further away from Adelaide, and Louis of Hungary is increasingly striving to take the throne after the death of the Polish ruler. Anna, the under-age niece of Prince Bolko of Świdnica, who is at the court in Buda, is waiting impatiently and fearfully until she becomes a woman, as she has been aware of the role she was intended for. However, not all women enjoy their roles. Maidservants of Queen Adelaide complain about the fact of limiting the function of a woman to giving birth to children.

The series shows several relationships, mostly marriages, generally happy. Women are men's partners and companions and they are loved and treated with respect (the exception is the marriage of the king himself). However, they know the duties of knights and, willingly or not, accept fate when a husband or a beloved embarks on a war expedition. They offer them a ribbon, a jewel or a lock of hair. Only Helena behaves

like a clinging ivy, begging her husband to stay at home and threatening him that she will not be able to bear his loss. While they wait for their loved ones to return, they are portrayed during typical female activities: they embroider, play the lute or pray for knights. The only threat to the sanctity of marriage is betrayal, which, however, they try to atone for with tears, prayer and even wearing a hair shirt (Małgorzata). Among the maidservants (in Buda) we see one that tries to seduce Prince Bolko, but he remains faithful to his wife Agnes.

Despite the differences in position, the relationships between individual women from a different social status are relatively equal. Adelaide is not only a lady to her maidservants, but also a confidant and guardian. The maidservants love their queen and worry about her future. Women support each other in difficult times. Although Regina behaves in an obsequious manner in her relations with the maidservants, this is due to her calculations rather than fear or respect.

In 'Korona Królów', the family model is largely subordinated to historical realities. Marriages of rulers are concluded according to dynastic interests, and the role of a woman is reduced to that of a wife and mother, whose task is to give birth to the heir to the throne. Such marriages were either unhappy (King Casimir the Great and Adelaide) or successful (Bolko and Agnes). The emphasis in the series is on the value of marital loyalty. Although there are references to numerous romances of King Casimir, unfaithfulness of both the ruler himself and his lovers is punished. Two of the king's companions with whose wives he had an affair die, and the king, plagued with remorse, falls seriously ill and balances for a long time on the verge of life and death. Similarly, both widows are punished, paying for their weakness with loneliness and remorse. The womanising Kazimierz is opposed by the faithful Bolko, who is not tempted and enjoys marital happiness.

The concept of the characters in '**Wojenne Dziewczyny**' was created in accord with the film convention. The three leading female characters were chosen on the basis of contrast. They are three young women (hence the title 'Wojenne Dziewczyny') from different backgrounds, who are joined not only by activities in the resistance movement, but also by friendship. The first, Marysia Joachim ('Mela'), is a Jew who speaks fluent German, comes from Łódź, and is the daughter of a pre-war weaving mill owner and a violinist. The other, Ewa Fronczak ('Blackie')

was a thief in the Warsaw's Czerniaków district before the war. The third is Irka Szczęsna ('Baśka'), a well-brought up lady, and a student.³

The leading characters represent several stereotypes. Ewa, an attractive, blonde with long curls and clear make-up, wearing colourful dresses, at first glance brings to mind a sexual object, because she behaves defiantly and makes a great impression on men. She combines the traits of a bimbo and a vamp, which turns out to be just a cover-up. Although Ewa uses her feminine assets in her underground activity, she remains faithful to her beloved Witek (Irka's brother). She does not hesitate to use her skills as a thief in action or to use her acquaintances in the underworld and the criminal world. She is the most inventive of the three, spontaneous and brave. Despite this, she is a sensitive person, willing to sacrifice, and at the same time suffering from complexes because of her lower class origins.

Marysia is a contrast with Ewa because of her background, education and temperament. She is cool and composed, but equally brave. Owing to her knowledge of German, she joins the action in enemy territory. Men are impressed not so much with her beauty or sex appeal as her class and intellect. She is devoted to her family, especially to her father, whom she lovingly looks after.

First and foremost, Irka is the guardian of her fiancé who is suffering from amnesia and who is suspected of being a traitor by the command. She defends his good name. In the series, she is depicted as a sensitive and gentle girl, a female angel, who, however, in times of danger shows great courage. She shoots a friend when he, turns out to be a traitor and tries to kill her fiancé.

The concept of the three main characters is based on breaking the stereotype of a woman as a weaker and less brave person than a man, and therefore relying on his protection and defence. In the series, it is the 'Wojenne Dziewczyny' who save their men from trouble and pull them out of the concentration camp. They take an active part in the robbery of the casino, co-organise the purchase of weapons from Italian soldiers, kidnap an Abwehr intelligence officer and his driver, then negotiate with German intelligence and participate in the exchange of prisoners. They take part in actions on a par with men, often showing

³ See <https://vod.tvp.pl/website/wojenne-dziewczyny,28767487#>.

more ingenuity and bravado. They are even better shooters (Marysia). Unlike men, they act unconventionally and violate command orders, but due to their effectiveness they do not bear any consequences. Courage and participation in actions do not deprive them of femininity. They miss a normal life with their beloved man at their side and decide to have relationships, even though war is not a good time for love. The hierarchy of values is not clearly defined. The girls are devoted to both their homeland and their men. However, when it comes to life, they do not hesitate to violate orders from London and exchange the German officer for their beloved ones imprisoned in Auschwitz.

Major Klara, a character in the background, is older than the three main characters and more experienced. She is the matron type. Composed and cool, and at the same time completely involved in the underground, she defends 'Wojenne Dziewczyny' against the command and acts as their mentor. Klara loses her husband in one of the scenes but she does not show her suffering to others.

Another supporting character is Margarethe von Losein – an antagonist of Ewa, Marysia and Irka. She is a German working for the German intelligence services (Abwehr). Her character combines two stereotypes. Von Losein is shown as a 'Snow Queen' – a cold, ruthless and cruel woman, impeccably dressed, in an elegant jacket, often shown with a cigarette in a glass cigarette holder. She is in black and white or black and red, and her outfit usually has some element of men's clothing: a tie, hat or pants. She enhances her lips with red lipstick. Even German officers feel respect for Von Losein. She uses men and does not enter into any relations with them. When visiting a wounded colleague in the hospital, she only asks him what caused the action's failure. Cunning and cruel, she is nevertheless disgusted with physical torture, preferring intrigue and psychological torture. Owing to her high position in the German intelligence service, she can also be considered a successful woman – not so much an equal partner of men as one exceeding their intelligence and ruthlessness.

The mother of Irka and Witek, Jadwiga Szczęsna, is a typical Polish mother and goddess of hearth and home who is modest, quiet, caring, and the wife and mother of a soldier. She symbolically defines her place by covering the wounded Kamil (Irka's fiancée) with a blanket and saying: 'I give the orders here' (here, at home, next to the wounded).

Zosia, Marysia's sister, has to hide because of her obvious Jewish features. She is more rebellious and spontaneous than her sister, and the relationships of both women can be difficult. Despite the war and constant danger, she defends her right to happiness by getting married to her beloved. Despite a constant threat to her life, she also shows feminine weakness and vanity. When she tries to dye her hair blond for the sake of safety, it turns red. She despairs because of this and is ashamed to show herself to her fiancé.

The 'Wojenne Dziewczyny' series depicts women as generally on an equal footing with men. They are both life partners and combat companions. Independent and self-sufficient, they smoke, drink alcohol, including vodka, which they order in one of the scenes. They maintain sexual relationships with their beloveds without marriage. The war has eliminated social class differences, so people from different backgrounds join the conspiracy activities on an equal footing. The film also shows the theme of cooperation of brothel girls with the Polish underground. Prostitutes hide a wounded Pole, provide information, and even take part in actions (Nina). One can get the impression that women are more likely to take unconventional actions. When it comes to fighting style, they prefer using trickery, while men prefer a more honourable fight. Almost all of them are involved in the fight for Poland's independence. Although there is a Volksdeutscher in the series hanging out with the Germans, even she shows some sympathy, allowing Ewa to say goodbye to her beloved. The author of the denunciation of a doctor is a young girl, still a student, unfortunately in love with a man who chose another.

In the series 'Wojenne Dziewczyny' the image of the family is influenced by war. Thus we see single women whose husbands are killed or staying in a camp. Young girls, who enter into relationships with men, do not wait until the start of their sexual life to get married. War makes life uncertain (you have to live in the moment) and moral norms are relaxed, but the heroines think about getting married. Even a young Jewish woman in hiding gets married in a traditional way, despite the danger it entails. The war also eliminates social differences, so it binds people who are divided by differences in origin, property or race.

To sum up the presentation of female characters in historical drama series, several basic conclusions can be identified:

- Female characters are clearly spanning the distance between the implementation of traits stereotypically attributed to women (caring, sensitivity, concentration on relationships) and the desire/necessity to enter male roles and worlds in which they work quite well;
- There is an undercurrent of female expectations in both series to have ‘a peaceful life alongside a beloved and loving man’;
- Both series are typified by low realism in mapping social relations – the distances (between classes, states, sexes, etc.) are easily exceeded here, and the contrast between them is used to build plot tension or sporadic comedy effects;
- In the case of ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’ we deal more with breaking stereotypes than in ‘Korona Królów’, but interestingly, this breach occurs more with the help of the acting and the plot itself, and less with the help of prolonged active or passive exposure in typically male contexts.

Active Exposure in Historical Drama Series

The sizeable differences between ‘Korona Królów’ and ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’, as indicated above, mean that the generalisations for both series as a certain type are subject to a reservation about possible discrepancies between them. We will show these differences when presenting each of them.

In historical drama series overall, the active exposure of women is lower than that of men. The ratio of both exposures is 0.88. There are also very many scenes without words (34%) (Figure 26). A relatively large share of non-speech is observed mainly in ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’, and is abundant in sensational scenes, where tension is built up mainly by music.

Active Exposure in ‘Korona Królów’

‘Korona Królów’ in terms of active exposure is dominated by men, and 46% of the recording time is occupied by men’s statements. The ratio of active exposure of women to men in ‘Korona Królów’ was 0.70. This series includes rather few non-speaking scenes (22%) (Figure 27).

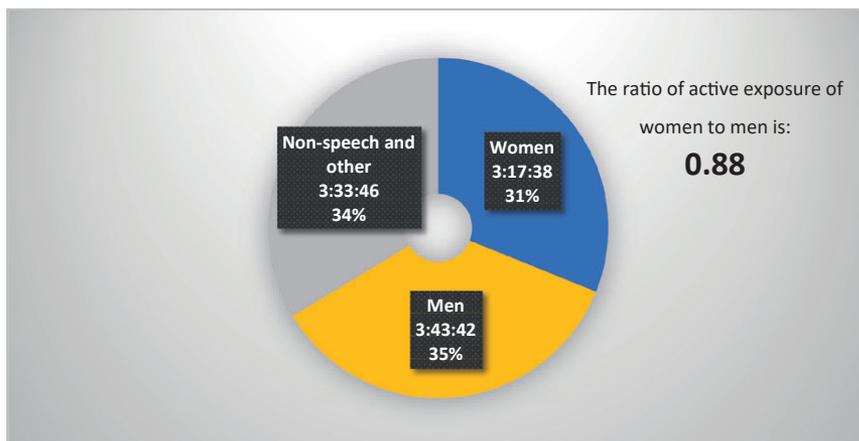


Figure 26. Active Exposure in Historical Drama Series

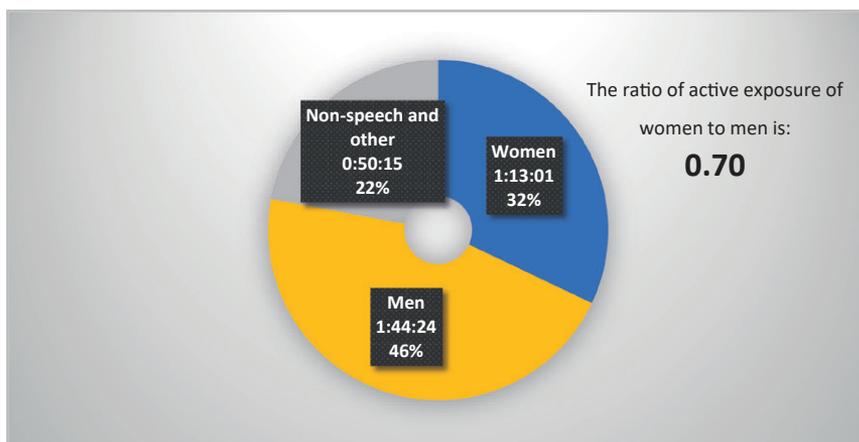


Figure 27. Active Exposure in 'Korona Królów'

Active Exposure in 'Wojenne Dziewczyny'

On the active exposure level, 'Wojenne Dziewczyny' produces a balanced share of male and female statements (ratio of 1.04) and a relatively high proportion of non-spoken scenes (40%) (Figure 28).

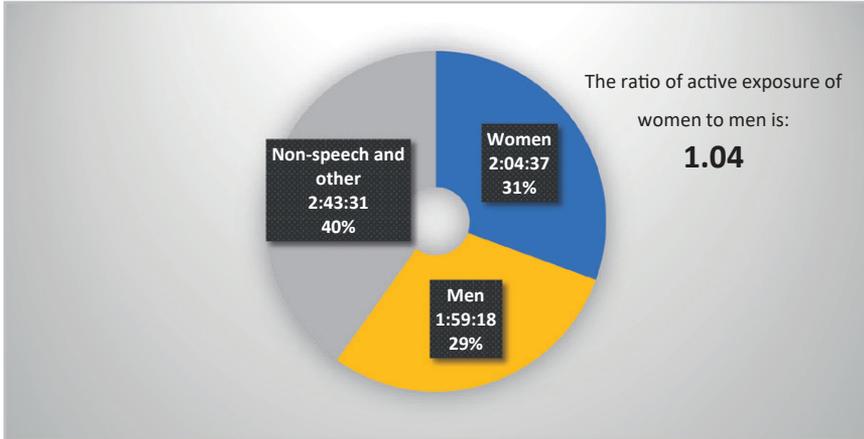


Figure 28. Active Exposure in 'Wojenne Dziewczyny'

Passive Exposure in Historical Drama Series

In the passive exposure analysed for both series together there is a state of equilibrium (relation of 0.97) and representatives of both genders are visible on the screen for about 60% of the time. Compared to the prevalence of men in active exposure, this may lead to the conclusion that in some scenes the role of women is sometimes reduced to that of a 'decorative element' (Figure 29).

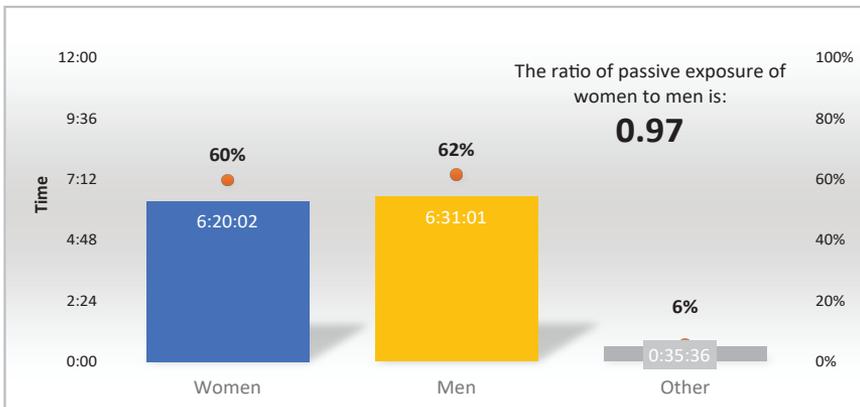


Figure 29. Passive Exposure in Historical Drama Series

Historical drama series more often display scenes where we see more than one person in one camera shot. In total, such scenes occupy 51% of the time, while scenes with a single man or a single woman constitute 43% of the total time (Figure 30).

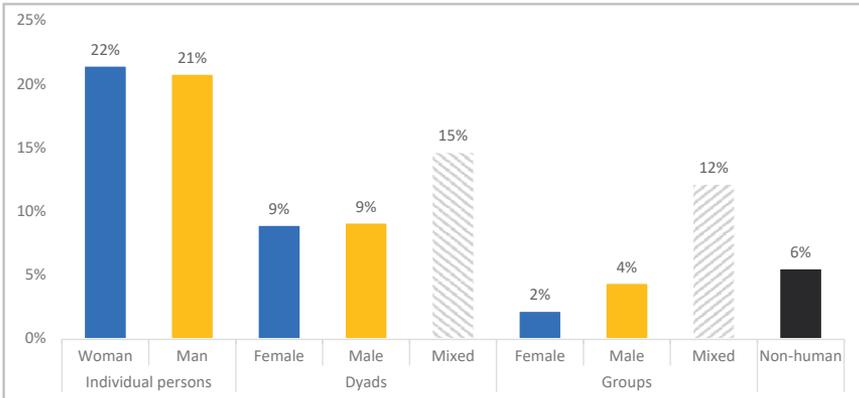


Figure 30. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in Historical Drama Series

Passive Exposure in ‘Korona Królów’

In passive exposure the ratio of women to men is similar to the ratio in active exposure and amounts to 0.74. Men in this exposure occupy as much as 63%, while women occupy 47% (Figure 31).

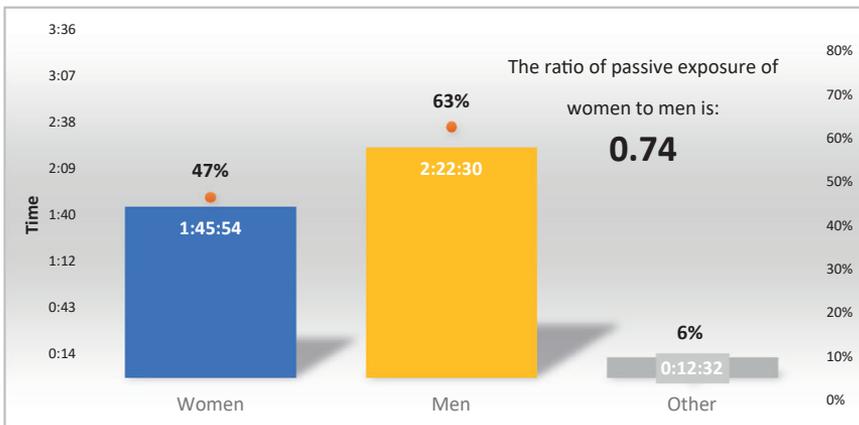


Figure 31. Passive Exposure in ‘Korona Królów’

In the distribution of frequency of individual role configurations by gender, we see the advantage of men in all configurations. A single man is visible more often than a single woman, men's dyads more often than female dyads, and groups of men twice as often as groups of women (Figure 32).

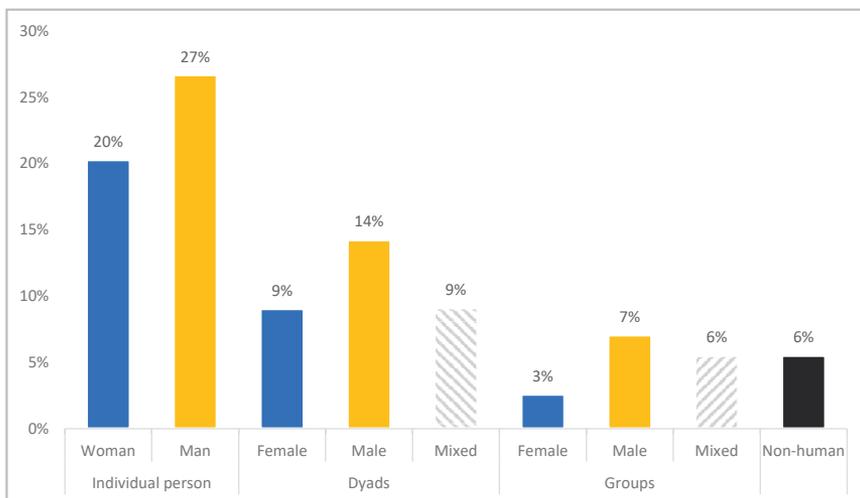


Figure 32. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in the 'Korona Królów'

Passive Exposure in 'Wojenne Dziewczyny'

In passive exposure, we see women more often than men (ratio 1.10) (Figure 33). If we juxtapose that with a balanced distribution of active exposure, then we must state that the creators of this series did not refrain from treating women as ornaments in some scenes, albeit to a small extent.

A fairly characteristic feature of 'Wojenne Dziewczyny' is the relatively large share of group scenes. In 40% of the scenes, we see a solitary woman (22%) or a man (18%), while 54% of the time, we see a minimum of two people participating. We see female dyads (9%) quite often, more so than male dyads (6%), which stems from the formula of the series, in which women are principal characters (Figure 34).

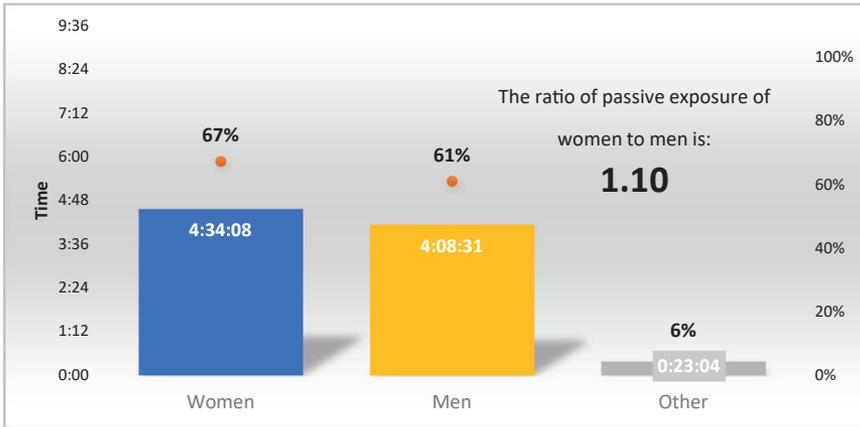


Figure 33. Passive Exposure in ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’

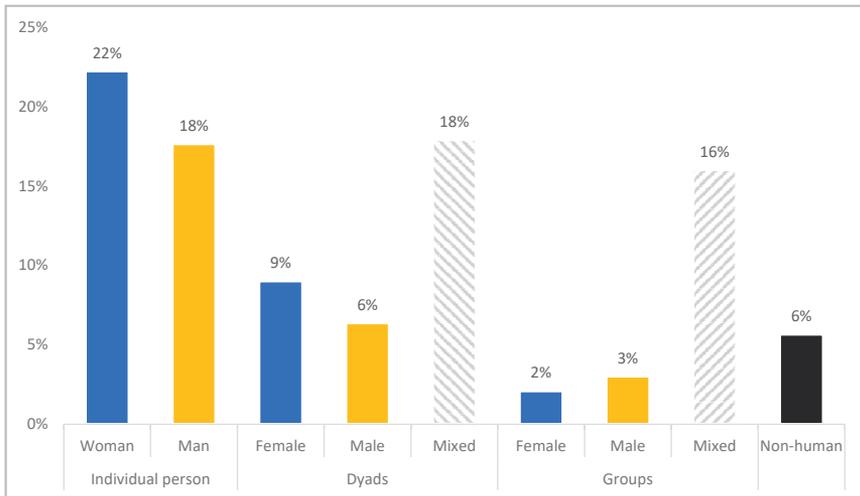


Figure 34. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’

Contexts in Historical Drama Series

The time and place of the action of both historical drama series are about 600 years apart. This time span means that their characters are presented in different contexts. This is especially true for women whose

social roles in the Middle Ages differed significantly from the roles they played in the 1940s of the 20th century. In addition, these contexts are strongly differentiated by the place of action and the selection of characters. Therefore, the combined presentation of contexts and exposures of women in the ‘Korona Królów’ and ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’ averages the often significantly different results considered for each of these series separately.

Historical dramas are dominated by the theme of sociability, i.e. conversations with a low emotional intensity (31%). Of course, scenes about relationships, feelings and liaisons are also present, but they represent 13% of the total recording time. Quite a few scenes contain some kind of intrigue (11%) or criminal threads (10%). In this type of series, we are also dealing with the topic of armed conflict (6%) – a characteristic only of historical dramas. Interestingly, historical drama series are probably the most diverse in terms of plots recorded. In most other productions, usually the two dominating contexts exhaust nearly 80% of the broadcast time. In historical drama series, 85% of the time comprise a total of six contexts (Figure 35).

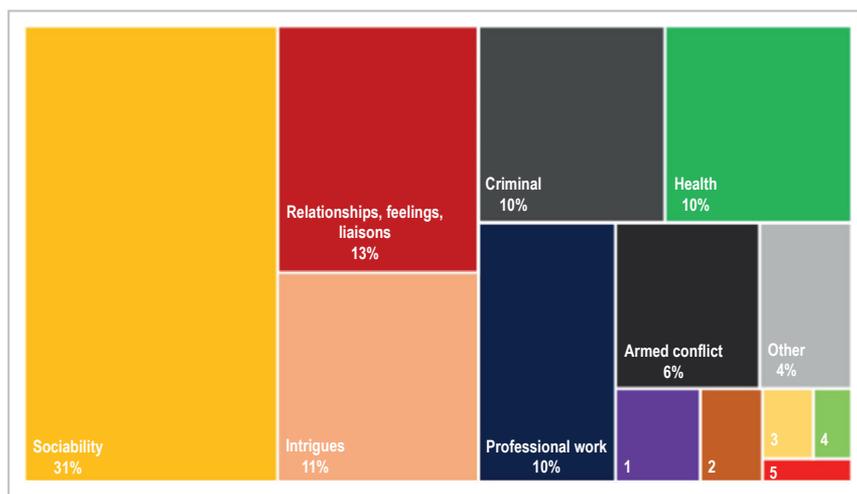


Figure 35. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in Historical Drama Series

Note. 1 – Participation in culture (2.2%); 2 – Housekeeping (1.6%); 3 – Shopping (0.9%); 4 – Childcare (0.7%); 5 – Active leisure (0.6%)

In social contexts and relationships, feelings and liaisons, women are more likely to speak. In the second of the above-mentioned categories, women’s active exposure lasts up to twice as long as men’s. On the other hand, when it comes to intrigues or criminal plots, we more often hear words from the lips of actors playing male roles. Active exposure in historical drama series reproduces the structure of traditional sex roles quite well. In ‘home’ scenes, women are more likely to speak, with men more likely to do so in scenes showing criminal activities and armed conflicts (Figure 36).

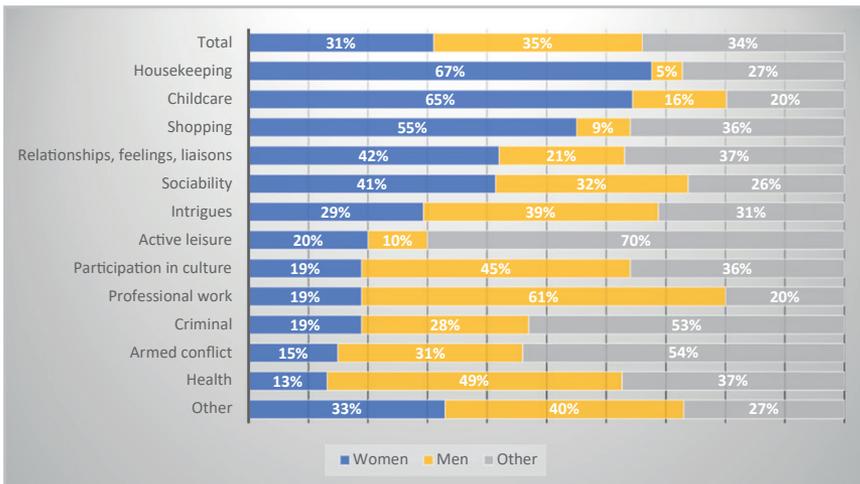


Figure 36. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in Historical Drama Series

On the visual level, in historical drama series we are dealing with particularly clear disparities in the passive exposure against the backdrop of various plots. When the scenes are about taking care of children, home or shopping, we see women much more often. On the other hand, scenes with armed conflict, professional work or health are more often built with the participation of men’s passive exposure (Figure 37).

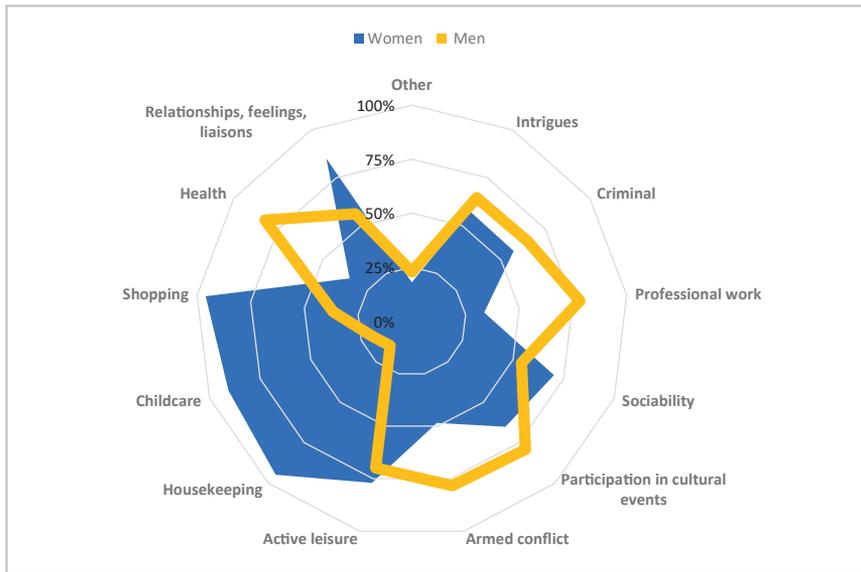


Figure 37. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in Historical Drama Series

Contexts in 'Korona Królów'

In 'Korona Królów', sociability (26%) is most often in the forefront, but the context of professional work occurs almost as regularly (23%). In this series, professional work also includes scenes depicting representatives of the then elite, that is, kings, queens and the most important members of the court, engaging in politics. The third most important context in terms of participation is that of relationships, feelings, and liaisons (12%). It is also worth noting that the share of intrigues and health-related themes is much higher than the average for the whole sample (Figure 38), which is largely due to the course of the action itself. Over the course of several analysed episodes, the main male character, Casimir the Great, is seriously ill, and therefore the actions of the characters focus, on the one hand, around the struggle for the king's life, and on the other, around the endeavours and intrigues related to the succession after the possible death of the ruler. Intrigues are also characteristic of the functioning of the royal court, where certain



Figure 38. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in ‘Korona Królów’

Note. 1 – Housekeeping (2.7%); 2 – Childcare (1.9%); 3 – Armed conflict (1.1%); 4 – Shopping (1.1%); 5 – Active leisure (0.2%)

activities are informal or secret. Women (court ladies) also take part in such intrigues.

In the most popular topic of sociability, it is active female exposure (51%) that dominates active male exposure (31%). In addition, in the context of relationships, feelings, and liaisons, women speak more often (53%). On the other hand, men dominate in professional scenes (66%) and scenes related to intrigues (69%) or criminal events (64%). The active participation of women in the context of their work concerns, on the one hand, female rulers or court ladies and, on the other hand, women of low status, e.g. servants. Thus, we can see that at the level of active exposure the threads in ‘Korona Królów’ are quite strongly divided into female and male. We can talk about a fairly stereotypical representation of the Middle Ages which largely corresponds to historical knowledge about the era (Figure 39).

The review of passive exposure against the background of contexts only strengthens the conclusion presented above. We see that contexts such as house and childcare exclusively or almost exclusively involve women, while armed conflict, intrigue or criminal plot take place without the passive exposure of women (Figure 40).

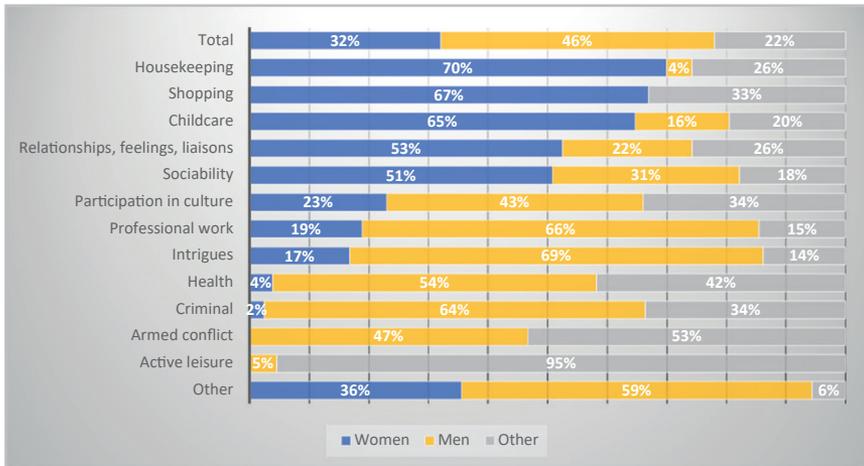


Figure 39. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in 'Korona Królów'

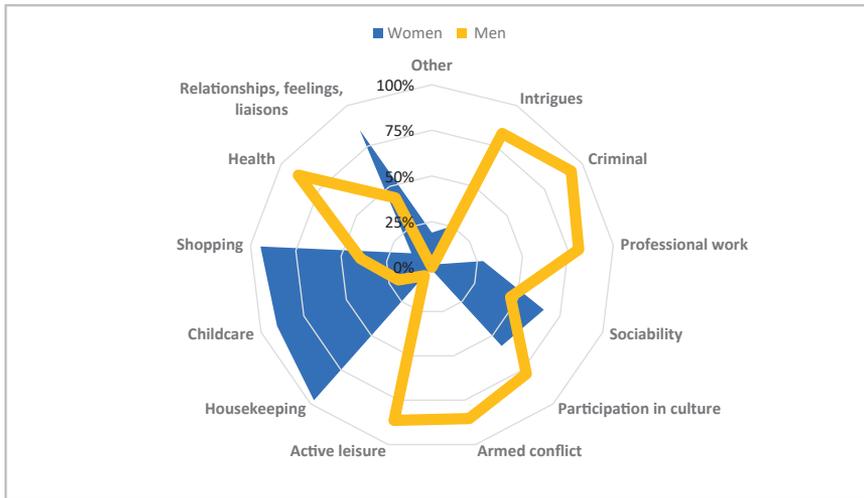


Figure 40. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in 'Korona Królów'

Contexts in 'Wojenne Dziewczyny'

In 'Wojenne Dziewczyny' we have contexts of sociability characteristic of historical drama series (33%), which in the case of this genre additionally serve the function of presenting the everyday reality of the times in which the action is set. However, a more characteristic feature of this series is the context of armed conflict (9%). Directly related to it is the equally extensive health context (9%), generally concerning the treatment of wounds suffered during combat or as a result of violent interrogation. Intrigues, which in this series most often refer to conspiracy, are equally important. It is also worth noting the relatively high share of the criminal context (13%), which is also related to the course of action. As part of their underground activity, the characters organise criminal actions, such as a robbery of a casino, kidnapping, and blackmail. In 'Wojenne Dziewczyny', the context of taking care of children is virtually non-existent, while housekeeping and shopping occur in trace amounts. A small share of the context of professional work means that it is not known, for example, how the main female characters support themselves (Figure 41). Thus, we are dealing with a simplified picture

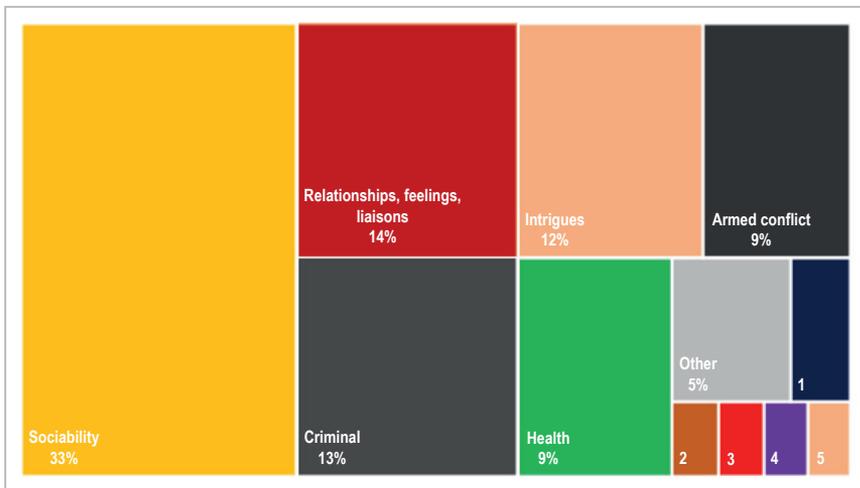


Figure 41. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in 'Wojenne Dziewczyny'

Note. 1 – Professional work (2.3%); 2 – Housekeeping (0.9%); 3 – Active leisure (0.9%); 4 – Participation in culture (0.9%); 5 – Shopping (0.8%)

of war in which people are mainly engaged in combat and conspiracy, and there are practically no issues related to work, home, children, even though coping with the difficult everyday life of war and occupation concerned almost everyone. Deliberate or not, there is an interesting attempt by the creators of the series, on the basis of one stereotype, which generalises that during World War II people were mainly involved in fighting and conspiracy, to violate another stereotype, which implied that fighting and conspiracy were dealt with by men. As will be shown below, this stereotype is breached more with regard to conspiracy than combat.

‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’ is a series striving to present the role of women in war as important. This artistic twist is not carried out directly, as women are not shown in direct combat, at least not through active exposure. In this exposure and in this context, men have a twofold advantage. However, when we look at the shares of exposure in the context of intrigues, which take even more time than armed conflict and which, as mentioned before, often relate to the conspiracy against the occupier, we see that active exposure of women (36%) has a definite advantage over that of men (24%) (Figure 42). Therefore, the makers of the series decided to emphasise the role of women in softer form of combat, which produce a rather smaller cognitive dissonance than if they dominated

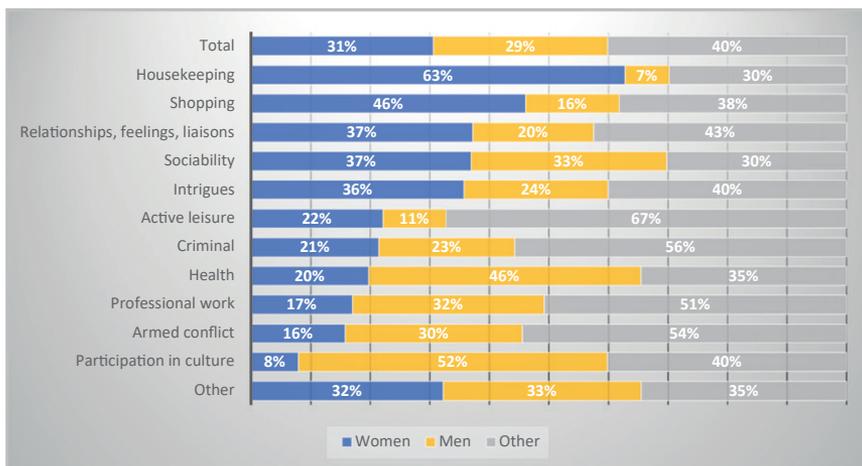


Figure 42. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’

in combat. Therefore, the health context is also dominated by men. It is usually men who are tortured during interrogations and injured in battle. None of the women are killed in action or seriously injured.

Also, in passive exposure, women appear more often in those contexts that are their domain in passive exposure: intrigues and sociability, while men are more often also passively present in armed conflict (Figure 43).

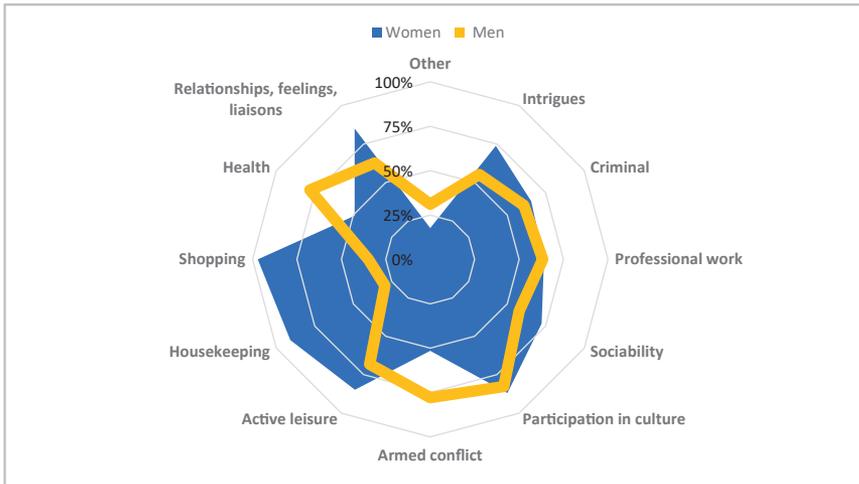


Figure 43. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in 'Wojenne Dziewczyny'

Chapter 5

Equality in the World of Crime – Women in Crime Dramas

The distinguishing feature of a crime drama film is its focus on the issue of breaking the law, crime and justice. The main characters of this type of films are therefore usually victims, criminals, policemen, private detectives, prosecutors, as well as their loved ones or friends. These people share a criminal plot, an unsolved mystery or a mystery from the past. Because of the plot, the convention of a crime drama also includes a change in the identity or personality of the characters, who turn out to be something other than initially assumed. An informal investigation by a victim or wrongly accused person is a common motive for this type of movie. This happens if law-abiding institutions fail to fulfil their function or break the law themselves (e.g. due to corruption). Such a hero is generally in double danger, being chased by both police and criminals. In a conventional crime drama, viewers' sympathy should be directed toward the victim, and evil should be punished (see Jankun-Dopart, 1998).

Convention in Crime Dramas

The first of the series, '**Diagnoza**', additionally has the features of a medical series. The main characters of the film are doctors and other employees (nurses, psychologist) employed in the hospital in Rybnik,

and the action of the analysed episodes focuses on the investigation of illegal transplants. Current events taking place have their roots in the past, and the main characters share common dark secrets and tragic events from years ago.¹

The leading characters are the Head of the Department Bogna Mróz, and doctor Anna Leśniewska. Supporting female characters are nurse Wanda Jureczko, doctor Maria Kaleta and psychologist Marta Artman. Anna and Marta share a common ex-husband Jan Artman, also a doctor working in the Rybnik hospital and Bogna's former lover.

The series is almost a crime thriller. As it turns out, illegal transplantations are carried out by two doctors at the Rybnik facility: Bogna Mróz and Jan Artman. They also share another secret. An unknown man was killed in a car accident caused by Jan Artman. Convinced by Bogna, who was a car passenger and an accident witness, Artman conceals the case and hides the body. Blackmailed by an accomplice, he is forced to carry out illegal transplants. Both characters are placed in opposition to each other by two doctors on the side of justice and truth. Anna and her partner Michał Wolski are involved in the informal investigation. An additional motive dating back to the past is a medical error that Anna committed years ago, cutting out a healthy kidney during the operation. This, as it turns out, is also related to the illegal practice of transplants.

The plot of the series '**Pułapka**' takes place in the current reality, but the characters' memories are shown as flashbacks of the events of two and 11 years ago. The leading characters of the series are a mature woman – Olga Sawicka and a fifteen-year-old girl Ewa Maj. The first is a writer, an author of widely read detective stories. Two years previously she experienced a personal tragedy – she lost her husband. She cannot cope with memories. As a result, she experiences a writer's block. She turns to and abuses alcohol. During the authors' meeting in an orphanage, from which one of the pupils recently disappeared, she meets another pupil of the facility – Ewa Maj. Looking for material for her next novel, Olga begins to be more interested in the girl and her story and conducts her own investigation of mysterious events in the

¹ See <https://player.pl/seriele-online/diagnoza-odcinki,6186>.

children’s home. Ewa is bullied by her friends and she is tormented by memories of the past.²

Three persons are supporting female characters. Justyna Mateja is Olga’s closest friend and a policewoman with the rank of a senior constable. She is young, lonely, and looking for love on dating sites. Natalia Róžańska, on the other hand, is a mature woman and a prosecutor supervising the investigation in an orphanage. A professional, wife and mother, she seems happy, but she also hides a secret from the past. The third character is the director of the orphanage in which Ewa is staying. As it turns out, she was also the director when Olga Sawicka was brought up in the same orphanage.

The character scheme is typical for a crime thriller. Thus, we have a mature woman who is challenging the courts, who is facing justice and is starting her own investigation. She runs away with Ewa, who is wrongly suspected of killing a friend from the orphanage, from the hitman and the police. The young policewoman Justyna does not trust the institution in which she works and helps Olga by breaking the rules. Then, two women (the director of the orphanage and the prosecutor supervising the investigation in the institution) who should follow the law, become child abusers and ruthless murderers.

‘Diagnoza’ is balanced in terms of the number of appearances of men and women in both principal and supporting roles. In the leading roles we have two women and two men who appear in each episode (Table 6).

Table 6. Frequency of Character Exposure in ‘Diagnoza’ (Average per Episode)

Lead		Supporting		Combined
Women	Men	Women	Men	
2.0	2.0	3.3	3.2	10.5

In ‘Pułapka’ we have similarity in the frequency of female and male roles. Here, as in the second series of the genre, in the foreground we have two women and two men in the leading roles, which we see in

² See <https://www.tvn.pl/serie/pulapka,21,pc>.

each episode. Supporting roles are slightly more dominated by men (Table 7).

Table 7. Frequency of Character Exposure in ‘Putapka’ (Average per Episode)

Lead		Supporting		Combined
Women	Men	Women	Men	
2.0	2.0	2.2	3.3	9.5

Stereotypes, Roles and Relations in Crime Dramas

The two main characters of ‘**Diagnoza**’ were chosen on the basis of contrast and the theme of the fight between good and evil. Bogna Mróz is the embodiment of evil and combines three stereotypes. She is the ‘Snow Queen’, a successful career woman with a ruined private life, and at the same time a *femme fatale*. The first stereotype is emphasised by her name and the nickname her colleagues call her (‘the Snow Queen’) behind her back. The head physician is mature but still attractive and well-groomed. She wears tight black and red dresses (surprisingly and unrealistic, but this also applies to hospital uniforms). She has short black hair, cut like a man. Her image is complemented by a black nail polish and a bright red lipstick. At first glance, Bogna is a successful woman: she enjoys respect in the medical environment, she lives in a beautiful house arranged by an interior designer. In fact, the head of the company with Artman she blackmails, conducts illegal organ transplants and tries to get rid of everyone who stands in her way. She disconnects Maria’s partner from the respirator, directing suspicion at Anna Leśniewska, who is then arrested. Her personal life is also far from perfect. She is lonely and mentally unable to handle illegal activities. In one episode she drinks herself to oblivion. Illegal activities come to light and Bogna goes to prison. While in prison, she tries to take revenge on Artman, who managed to avoid punishment due to cooperation with the police.

Anna Leśniewska is the embodiment of good. She wears a blue hospital uniform and long loose hair which, parted in the middle, gives her an ‘angelic’ appearance. Like Bogna, Anna also combines several

stereotypes. She is a successful woman – a great surgeon, a doctor by calling. She has two children and is in relationship with a colleague, also a doctor. Professional success is not entirely compatible with private happiness. She is a divorcee. She has a new partner, but the relationship is not entirely successful. The man has a suspicion of serious illness (ALS – amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) and, after a beating, descends into a gradual addiction to drugs. The woman also manifests the features of a Polish mother's stereotype. She loves her children very much, cares for them and devotes her free time to them. She is also a female angel. She cares for friends and supports them in difficult times. She is gentle and forgiving. Anna is also brave. Together with her partner, she conducts her own investigation of illegal transplants, then reporting them to the police. For the sake of the children, she allows Artman to report to the police station himself.

Two secondary characters embody the stereotype of a successful woman with a ruined private life. Marta Artman, a friend of Anna, had a family, but her husband (Jan Artman) has lied to her since the beginning. The children she treated like her own, are under the care of their biological mother – Anna. Still, the woman helps her friend bring up the children. She suffers when seeing the children move away from her. She is a sensitive woman and cannot cope with it. Like Anna, she is a female angel. She worries about others. Marta also manifests the traits of a blonde. Parking improperly, she blocks a prosecutor's car. This event begins the relationship between Marta and the prosecutor. The man turns out to be weak and the woman becomes disappointed in the relationship. Breaking the stereotype, it is Marta who ends the relationship.

Maria Kaleta is a professionally fulfilled woman. She is a physician as is her adult son. She goes through a mid-life crisis. She is in a relationship with a much younger man who could be her son. A non-stereotypical relationship meets both with sympathy and ridicule from colleagues. The couple love each other but Maria feels uncomfortable in the relationship, believing that it has no future and the partner sooner or later will desire a child that she will not be able to give him. The couple argue about it. The man has an accident falling from a height. This is when Maria's life gets complicated. She behaves like an angel, watching over her partner by his bed. But she is also excessively emotional, tormented by remorse,

behaving irrationally and disregarding facts. She cannot believe that her partner is paralysed and will never walk. She neglects to inform him about the possibility of performing a risky operation. The man is trying to commit suicide. He is kept on a respirator to stay alive. The woman completely breaks down.

Wanda Jureczko is a nurse friendly with Doctor Piotr Sadzik. Like him, she comes from the Silesia region. In relations with him, she behaves like an asexual buddy. When she goes through a divorce with her husband, and Piotr begins to be tired of family life (he has five children), the relationship of a pair of good buddies begins to take on a different character. They are one step away from romance, both surprised by what is happening to them. However, they decide to return to their buddies' relationship and their personal life returns to normal (Wanda finds out that she is pregnant by her ex-husband and they get together again).

The series also includes peripheral characters, which personify and breach various stereotypes. Marzena, wife of Doctor Piotr, is a stereotypical Polish mother combined with a multitasking woman. The couple have four daughters and a son. The woman completely devotes herself to the family. The husband works and she looks after the home and the children. Unlike her husband, she controls all the extra activities for her children.

Doctor Kalina breaks the stereotype of a physically weak woman who needs a man in her life. She saves a friend at the bar when one of the men twists his arm. After Kacper suggests they go out together, and she gets him into an unpleasant procedure, she decides to compensate the man and invites him on a date. In this way he breaks the stereotype that it is the man who suggests a date. She is a would-be nun.

The series features relationships among various characters. In general, they are equal relationships: partners in a relationship, colleagues at work, and friends. The remaining characters are dominated by Bogna Mróz, who uses Artman, crossing the privacy limits of her subordinates (she learns of Wolski's suspected illness and moves him away from performing surgeries).

In emotional relationships, we see relationships of various types: a traditional family (Piotr and his wife Marzena) and a non-traditional patchwork family (Anna with her ex-husband and children and his

ex-wife). The series also features a partnership between two women. Both are anaesthesiologists, and in their environment, their relationship is treated as something normal. In a relationship, one of the women dominates the other. Finally, the woman apologises to the partner for her behaviour and proposes to her. The idea of legalising their relationships abroad appears.

Each of the two main female characters in the ‘*Putapka*’ series is the *alter ego* of the other. Ewa Maj is a younger copy of Olga Sawicka. Both were raised in the same orphanage, both are talented (Olga as a writer and Ewa artistically), both are sensitive, lonely and unhappy; both lose their loved ones.

The character of Olga personifies the stereotype of a successful woman with a ruined private life. She is a writer, and her crime novels, based on events of the past, are quite popular. She was a child at the same orphanage as Ewa. As a teenager, she lost her friend. The girl, haunted by her friends, hanged herself, and Olga blames herself for not being able to help her. As an adult woman, she was professionally successful and got married. She lives in a luxury villa with a pool. One evening, driving a car, she caused a tragic accident in which her husband, a car passenger, was killed. Olga blames herself for his death, and turns to abusing alcohol and smoking. She cannot cope with the loss of her husband and childhood friend. As a result, she experiences a writer’s block. Many people turned away from her. The only friends she has left are Justyna, the policewoman and a friend, and her book publisher, Adam. However, they both die at the hands of a paid assassin. The heroine also embodies the features of a sensitive and emotional woman who, at the same time, is a non-stereotypical Polish mother. She is very worried about Ewa, cares for her and tries to make home for her. She can open up to Ewa and Czarny (policeman), telling them about his past. In the last episode of the series, Olga is an embodiment of an angel in one of the scenes. She visits the former director of the orphanage in prison and, to the surprise of the woman, forgives her all of her wrongs.

The stereotype of a rebellious teenager is embodied by Ewa Maj. The girl does not know her past, but it returns to her in dreams and memories. She is an orphan. As a four-year-old, she was left in the church and ended up in an orphanage. She often draws the figure of a man who,

as it turns out, was hired to kill her and her parents and, in fact, he saved her twice. The girl draws different places where she was with her parents, which helps Olga investigate Eve's past. At school and at the orphanage, the girl is the object of ridicule and bullying. She has a beloved rat pet, which she loses. She runs away from the orphanage, uses vulgar language to adults, and steals from Olga despite Olga trying to help her. She does not want anyone's pity. She thinks that she can manage alone. She blackmails a mentally handicapped janitor employed in an orphanage to get money. In one of the scenes, she threatens Olga with a knife. The girl is not bad. In fact, she is vulnerable and lost and she cannot cope with loneliness. Her only friend is a boy from the orphanage, Kamil, and their relationship gradually begins to turn into one with feelings.

Other stereotypes can also be found in other supporting characters where other stereotypes can be found. The headmistress of the orphanage initially behaves like an experienced matron, self-confident and a professional tutor. However, she turns out to be a ruthless, calculating and cold woman – a real 'Snow Queen'. For years, she has been ignoring abuse in the orphanage. She does not seem to notice that the janitor sexually abuses teens in exchange for gifts. The woman is involved in the illegal trafficking of children. She sells young children to wealthy people living abroad. Filmed by one of the teenagers, the scene of passing a young girl to a man suggests that he is a paedophile. After the teenager blackmails the director with recordings of evidence of the crime, she kills the girl and tries to blame the janitor. She goes down because she does not know how to delete a compromising film from her phone, which perpetuates the stereotype of a woman as a person who cannot cope with technology. She is exposed by Olga. The woman is eventually arrested and put in prison.

Prosecutor Róžańska appears to be a successful career woman, who holds a high position. She is elegant and self-assured. She has a happy family – a husband and a daughter. He seems to be a positive character in most episodes. However, it turns out that Róžańska had an affair with Ewa's father. The man loved his daughter very much and for her, he decided to stay with his family, ending his relationship with a colleague from work. The woman turned out to be *femme fatale*, which caused the man to be lost. As revenge, she hired a paid assassin who was supposed to kill the family of a former lover. Instead of Ewa, it is her friend who

dies. When Róžańska finds out that Ewa is alive, she hires a paid assassin, which causes more people to die, including Olga's friends, Justyna and Adam. She wants to personally kill Ewa, but she is shot by a man who was supposed to have killed Ewa's family years ago.

Policewoman Justyna Mateja, Olga's friend, combines several stereotypes, while breaking some of them. She is a brave policewoman, a faithful friend who does not hesitate to break the rules to help Olga, and at the same time she is also a lonely, sensitive woman seeking love on the Internet. On the one hand, she is a stupid blonde with big breasts, and on the other – an asexual buddy for fellow policemen, laughing at her new boyfriend met on a dating site. She knows soccer rules, dresses in sports clothes but she also wears pink high heels. She is distrustful of a colleague of the policeman, but in a shy and modest boy she meets, she cannot recognise a paid assassin, so she dies when he pushes her under the train. She is a multidimensional and tragic figure.

The background characters embody various stereotypes. Like Ewa, the rebellious teenagers in the series are also her friends from the orphanage. They smoke, are vulgar and bully Ewa. They throw her rat into the dog playpen. Some teenagers have sexual relations with the janitor. They are cynical, corrupt, and love money and gadgets.

In addition to the story of the janitor's relationship with girls from the orphanage, the series also has another stereotype of a woman treated solely as a sexual object. Olga's conversation with the gangsters in the nightclub takes place against the backdrop of a stage where half-naked girls are writhing during pole dancing.

Equal relationships prevail between women and men. Although men sometimes speak down in front of women and treat them scornfully, such situations are incidental. Women are generally men's equal partners, not only in private and professional life, but also in crime.

Emotional relationships in the series have a different character and the family pattern is shown in various variants. The orphanage is a place where real orphans like Ewa stay but there are also children like Kamil, whose parents who cannot cope with parental responsibilities or whose mothers have entered into a second relationship. Kamil's family is pathological – the mother and her partner abuse alcohol. The man bullies and torments the boy. Despite this, the mother tries to cope with the situation and cares for her son as much as she can. Róžańska's

child is also looked after by her husband. Olga is a childless widow, and Justyna is single, looking for love online. In the film, we also see Czarny's ex-wife and children. Olga will try to create a substitute home as Ewa's adoptive mother.

The dominant theme that stands out in both crime drama series in the context of the presentation of female characters is the work-life balance, or rather the price that women pay for professional success. Both series *implicitly* suggest that professional success involves (sometimes random, sometimes chosen) personal loss. Both series also support stereotypes of women's greater emotionality.

Active Exposure in Crime Dramas

In two criminal drama series analysed together, the advantage of active exposure of women over active exposure of men is very clear (the ratio is 1.30). It is important, however, that there is a large share of scenes where there is no dialogue and the plot is built through music (Figure 44).

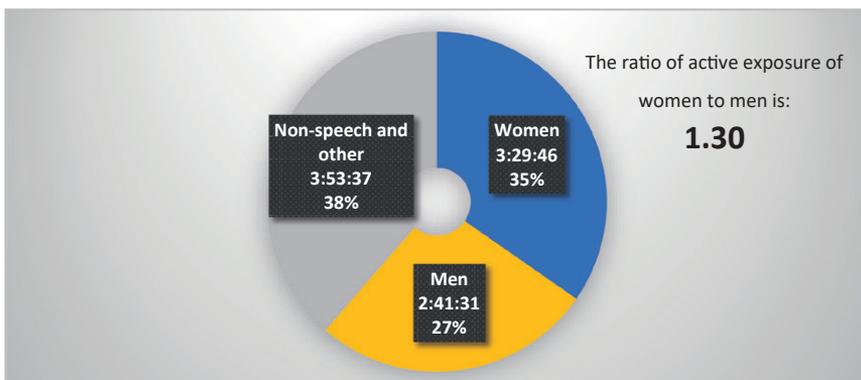


Figure 44. Active Exposure in Crime Drama Series

Active Exposure in 'Diagnoza'

In 'Diagnoza' women speak slightly more often than men (the ratio is 1.10), but this is not a big advantage. The share of silent scenes falls within the average share for the entire sample studied (Figure 45).

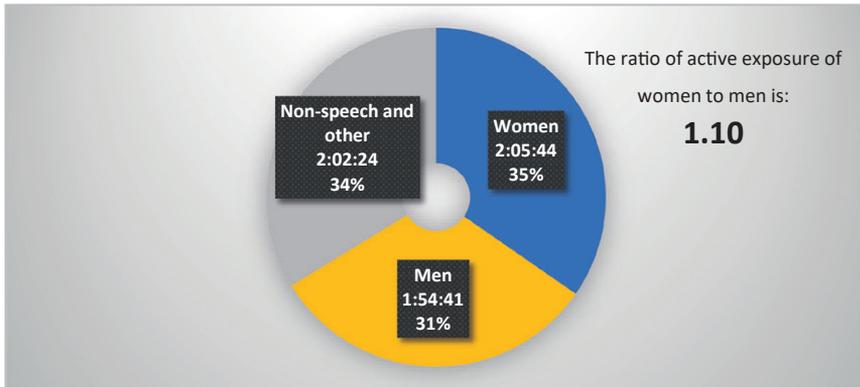


Figure 45. Active Exposure in 'Diagnoza'

Active Exposure in 'Pułapka'

If we can dub 'Diagnoza' as a fairly feminine series, then 'Pułapka' must be called a hyper-feminine series. The ratio of active exposure of women to men is 1.79. However, what is even more characteristic of this series is the share of scenes where we hear mainly tension-building music but no dialogue or statements, which amounts to as much as 45% (Figure 46). This significant share of scenes without people's utterances testifies to the dark climate of this series, created, among other things, by the flashbacks of tragic memories of the two heroines' past, as well as the motives of fleeing and hiding.

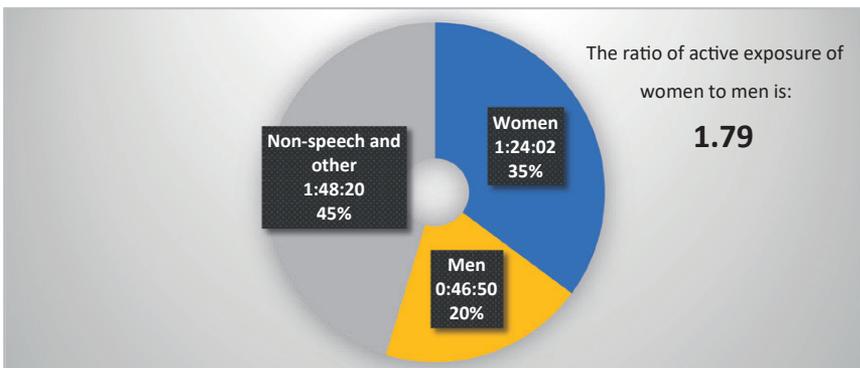


Figure 46. Active Exposure in 'Pułapka'

Passive Exposure in Crime Dramas

In passive exposure, the advantage of women is less obvious (ratio 1.18). Comparing this result with the large majority of women in active exposure, we can say that this type of series raises the status of women, while men in many situations appear only as passive participants of the scenes (Figure 47).

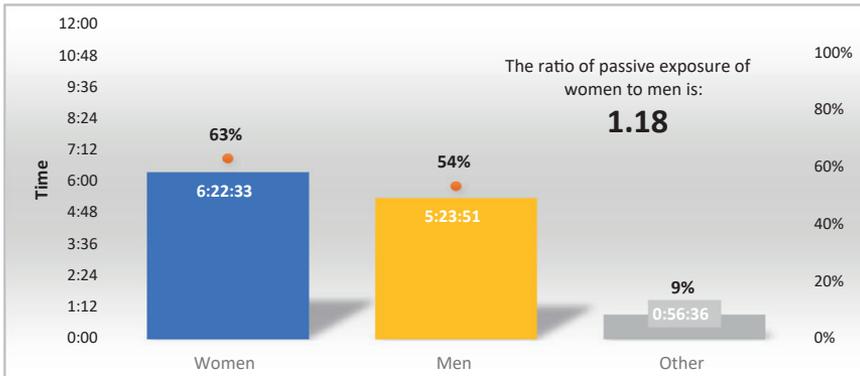


Figure 47. Passive Exposure in Crime Drama Series

In the visual sphere, crime dramas usually contain scenes when a single woman (24%) or a single man (22%) is shown, but this is a feature that is mostly common to all series. ‘Diagnoza’ and ‘Pułapka’ considered

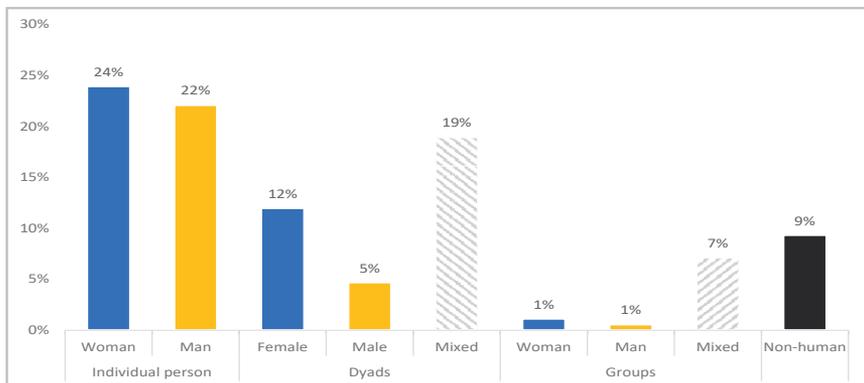


Figure 48. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in Crime Drama Series

as a whole, however, are typified by the predominance of female dyads (12%) over male dyads (5%) (Figure 48). It could be considered that in the case of this genre we are dealing with an interesting measure when women are the dominant gender in a series type traditionally more associated with men, but this result is only of averaging the data, which show large disparities between the series.

Passive Exposure in ‘Diagnoza’

In passive exposure, women take less time (56%) than men, which in combination with the inverse proportion of active exposure leads to interesting conclusions. Here we have the first series in our analysis, where the role of women is very strong compared to men. Women are less visible, but they speak more, so men are more often passive extras (Figure 49).

In the visual sphere, we usually see a single man on the screen (29%); women are shown less often (22%), but we remember that they have a greater active exposure. Scenes without human characters (10%) constitute a relatively large proportion. Together, this leads us to the conclusion that in ‘Diagnoza’ we deal with group scenes relatively less frequently than the average for all series (Figure 50).

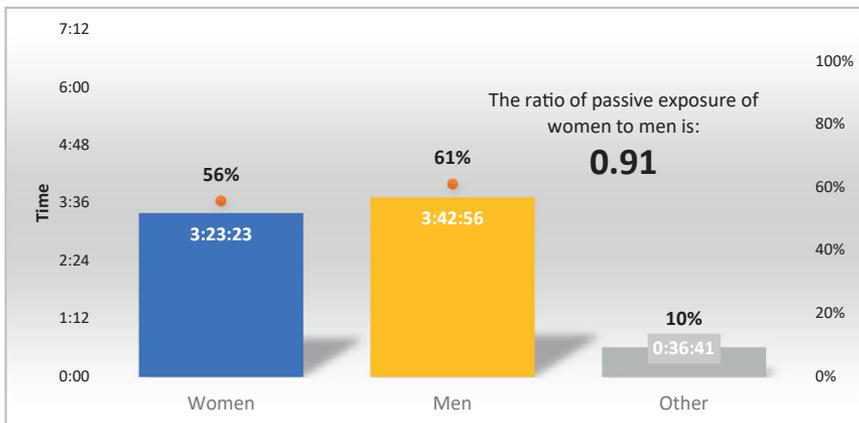


Figure 49. Passive Exposure in ‘Diagnoza’

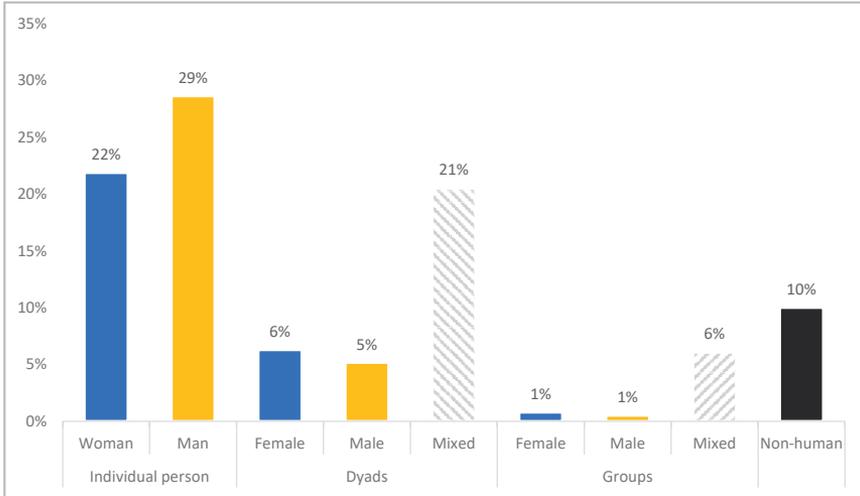


Figure 50. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in ‘Diagnoza’

Passive Exposure in ‘Pułapka’

Insofar as in we saw a subtle combination of a large dominance of active exposure of women and a relatively smaller passive exposure in ‘Diagnoza’, so in ‘Pułapka’ the dominance of women is evident in both dimensions. For 75% of the time, we see women on the screen who are not speaking, while silent men appear in 42% of the recording time (Figure 51).

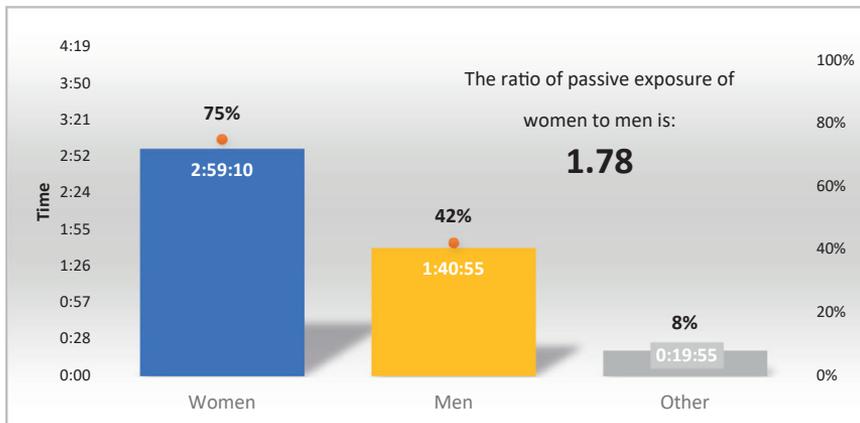


Figure 51. Passive Exposure in ‘Pułapka’

When we look at gender configurations in the visual sphere, we see the ‘femininity’ of ‘Pułapka’ in its entirety. We see a single woman 27% of the time, which is more than twice the time in which a single man appears (12%). More often than a single man we see a female dyad on the screen (21%), while a male dyad is very rare (4%) (Figure 52).

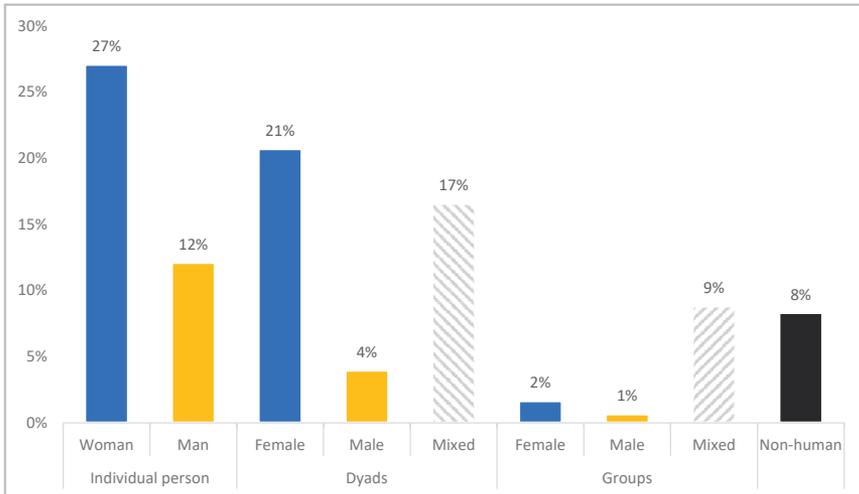


Figure 52. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in ‘Pułapka’

Contexts in Crime Dramas

In the type of series discussed in this section, crime plots naturally have the largest share in the recording (33%). However, they are immediately followed by relationships, feelings, liaisons (27%) and work (22%). Typically, in the case of crime dramas, professional work often combines with a criminal plot in such a way that the scenes depict the professional work of law enforcement agencies. The theme of sociability, so popular in other types of series, here is pushed aside in 9% of plots, which immediately makes it clear to us that in general the atmosphere of crime dramas is much more serious (Figure 53).

Despite the generally overwhelming active exposure of women in crime dramas, we will not find so much of it in the leading crime stories in this genre. In criminal scenes, however, men (30%) speak slightly more

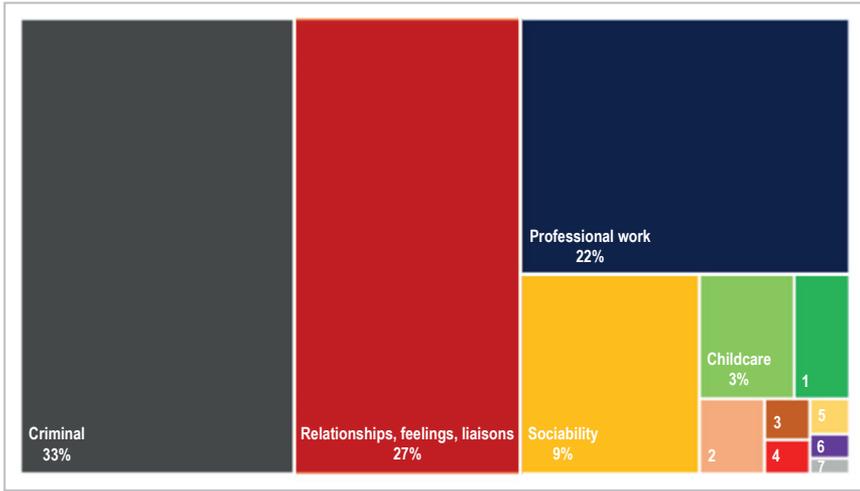


Figure 53. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in Crime Drama Series

Note. 1 – Health (1.8%); 2 – Intrigues (1.3%); 3 – Housekeeping (0.5%); 4 – Active leisure (0.4%); 5 – Shopping (0.4%); 6 – Participation in culture (0.3%); 7 – Other (0.2%)

often than women (28%). The advantage in women’s active exposure is primarily because of a much longer time of female statements in contexts related to relationships and feelings (41% compared to 19% of men) and in work (39% compared to 30% of men) (Figure 54).

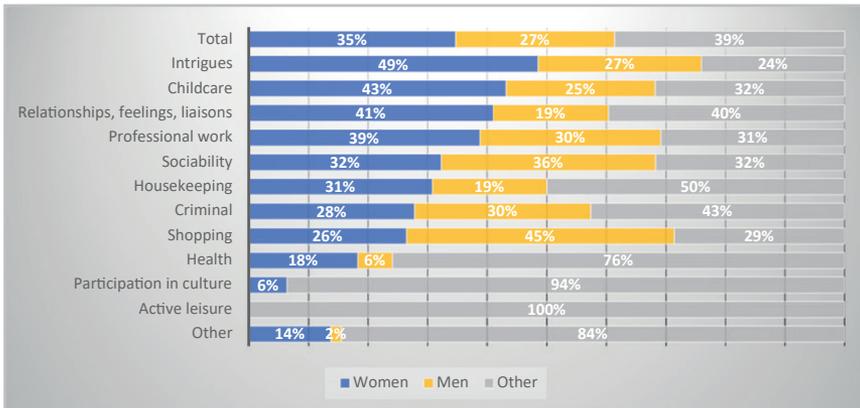


Figure 54. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in Crime Drama Series

The analysis of passive exposure in crime drama series confirms the dominance of women, as in the visual sphere in the context of relationships, feelings and liaisons. However, when it comes to the criminal plot, we see that women are exposed as often as men. This means that in this plot, the role of women is limited more to shaping a background. On the other hand, in the topic of professional work, the gender balance in active exposure is also confirmed by passive exposure (Figure 55).

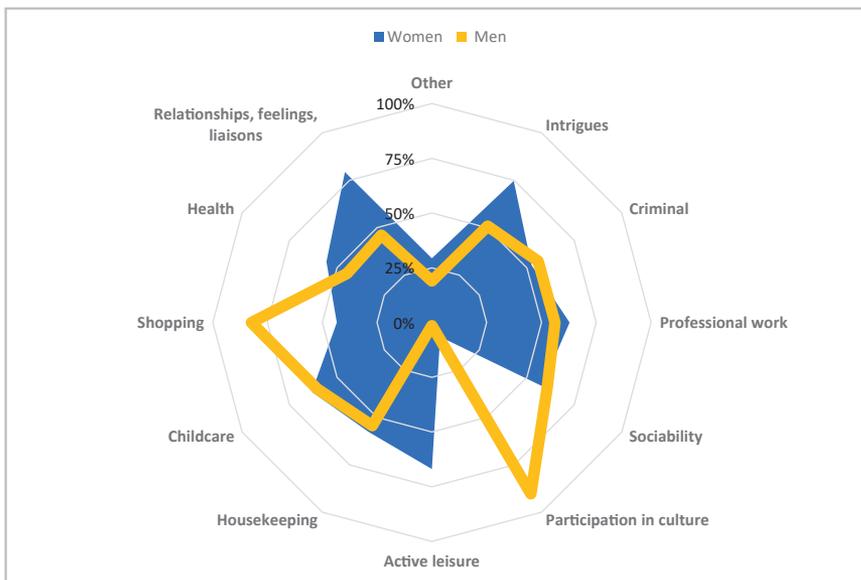


Figure 55. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in Crime Drama Series

Contexts in 'Diagnoza'

In 'Diagnoza' the criminal context obviously comes to the fore, which as it is dominant, was noticed 34% of the time of the whole story. We then have threads about relationships, feelings and liaisons (25%) and work (21%). Sociability is only in fourth place (12%), and interestingly, is followed by childcare (4%) (Figure 56). In general, therefore, in 'Diagnoza' we deal with contexts that build great tension (criminal and

relationships, feelings, relationships) and a relatively large number of scenes without human figures, which most often emphasises the mood of mystery.

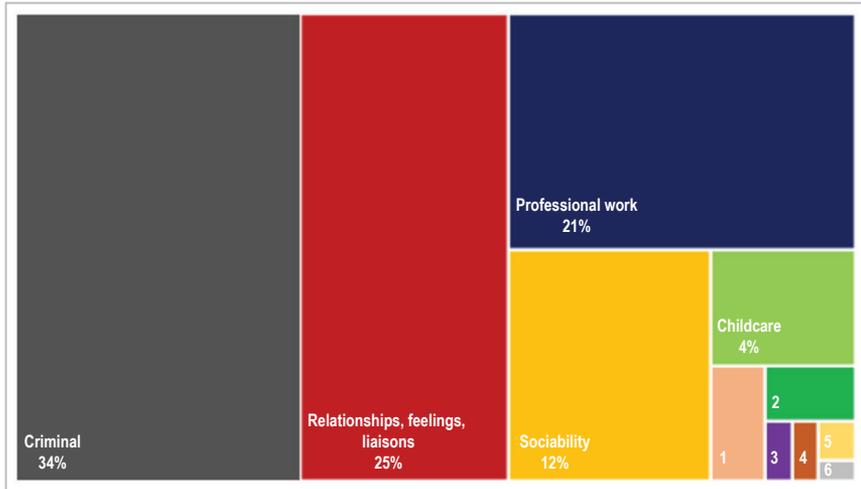


Figure 56. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in ‘Diagnoza’

Note. 1 – Intrigues (1.6%); 2 – Health (1.3%); 3 – Participation in culture (0.4%); 4 – Housekeeping (0.4%); 5 – Shopping (0.3%); 6 – Other (0.2%)

In ‘Diagnoza’ the leading context is the criminal context, but in it the active exposure of women is clearly smaller than the exposure of men. The context that determines the overall greater active exposure of women in the series involves relationships, feelings and liaisons, and women’s active exposure is nearly twice the active exposure of men (Figure 57).

In the passive exposure, we find, first of all, confirmation of women’s domination of the sphere of feelings and male domination of the criminal context. Women are also shown more often in intrigues. On the topic of childcare, we have a strong confirmation of the stereotype that even as a man is present in scenes where children are taken care of, (the passive exposure of women and men is balanced in this context), the person taking over the initiative is a woman (definite advantage of active exposure of women) (Figure 58).

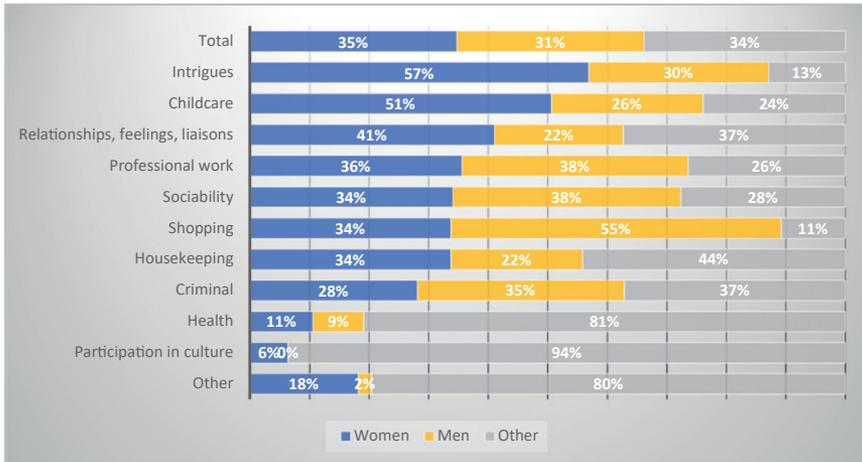


Figure 57. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in 'Diagnoza'

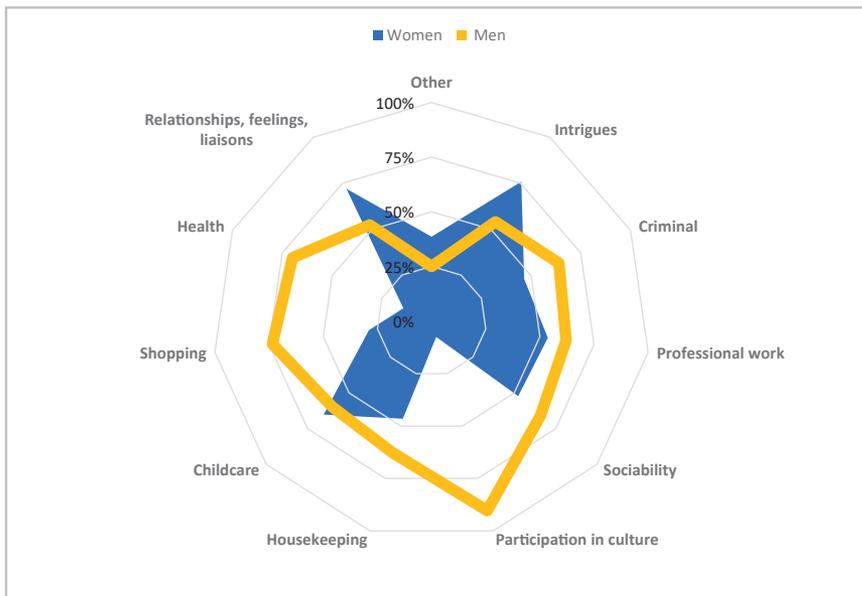


Figure 58. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in 'Diagnoza'

Contexts in ‘Pułapka’

The criminal context being the most common (32%) in ‘Pułapka’ is not surprising, but it is worth noting that we often have scenes about relationships, feelings and liaisons (31%). Additionally, there is also a considerable work context (24%). In total, the three contexts occupy 87% of the plot time. This means that compared to other series, ‘Pułapka’ seems to be a fairly homogeneous production (Figure 59).



Figure 59. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in ‘Pułapka’

Note. 1 – Childcare (1.2%); 2 – Active leisure (1.0%); 3 – Intrigues (0.9%); 4 – Housekeeping (0.7%); 5 – Shopping (0.3%); 6 – Other (0.1%)

In the active exposure against the background of plots, it is worth noting that in ‘Pułapka’, in contrast to ‘Diagnoza’, women are also the dominant sex both in the criminal theme and in professional work (Figure 60).

Therefore, quantitative data confirms a fairly strong breach of cultural conventions that connect the criminal sphere mainly with men. Both crime series build intrigue and action around female protagonists, casting women in both positive and negative roles.

In addition, on the level of passive exposure, i.e. merely presenting silent characters, women dominated in virtually all plots in ‘Pułapka’ (Figure 61).

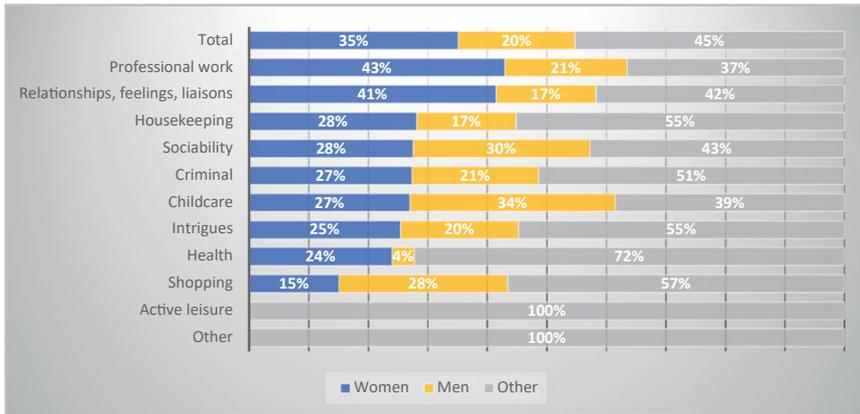


Figure 60. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in ‘Pułapka’

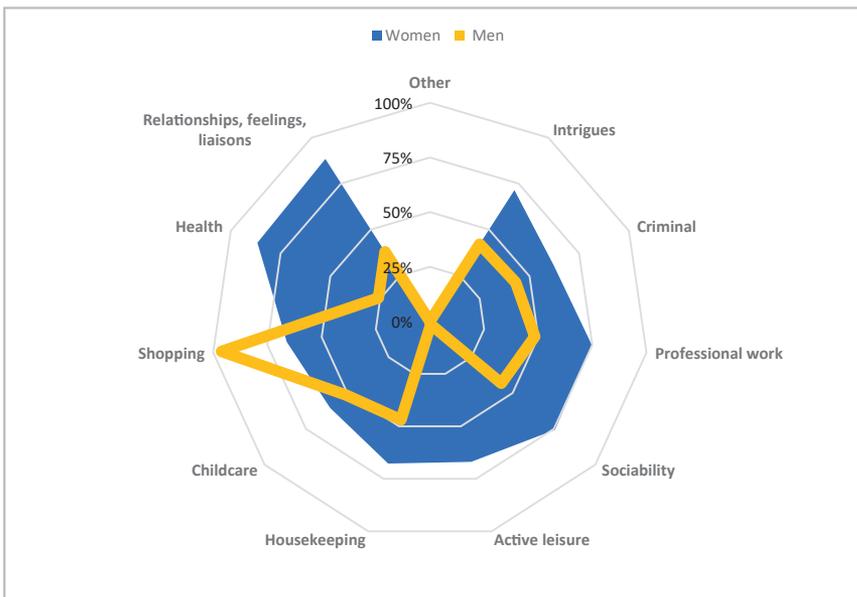


Figure 61. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in ‘Pułapka’

Comparing the two series, we can conclude that in 'Diagnoza' gender proportions are more or less even, while in 'Pułapka' there is a significant advantage for women. This can be explained by the differences in the scenarios. The action of the latter series revolves around the plot of the main characters hiding and running away. The place of action in 'Diagnoza' is a hospital in which the participation of doctors of both sexes is similar.

In the criminal plot in 'Diagnoza' men prevail, while in 'Pułapka' women lead the way. Relations and liaisons in 'Diagnoza' mainly relate to erotic heterosexual relationships, hence the screen most often shows a mixed couple. The situation in 'Pułapka' is different. Women definitely dominate here (singly and in pairs), because the formation of bonds (e.g. mother and daughter) between the two main characters is an important topic of the series.

Chapter 6

Funny and Go-Getting – Women in Comedy Series

The hallmark of a comedy movie is to create an amusing effect on the audience. This effect can be achieved by various means, e.g. situational, verbal or character. In the conventional comedy movie, the characters are schematic, often reduced to pure types (see Hendrykowski, 1998).

Convention in Comedy Series

The protagonists of the analysed series **‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’** are five Ukrainian women, living in Warsaw and trying to create their life in Poland: Polina Kłyczko – working in a restaurant run by the wife of a gangster, Olya Juszcuk – a student who earns money by cleaning, Uljana Pawliczenko – a violinist, Svetlana Omiliańska – running an agency for babysitters and Katia Łuczenko – looking for a job and a wealthy husband. The girls are connected by the figure of Henryk Pućko – an old gentleman, a former counterfeiter who rents a room in a tenement for the Ukrainians. Currently, Polina, Uljana and Katia live in that room.

Supporting characters of the series are: the wife of the gangster – Polina’s employer, Zofia Nowakowa – Olya’s employer, friendly with Henryk and mother of Tomek (Olya’s fiancé).¹

¹ See <https://vod.tvp.pl/website/dziewczyny-ze-lwowa,21383287>.

The convention of the series is that of a comedy. The characters are schematic and exaggerated, and the plot simplified. Even dramatic or dangerous situations have a happy ending, and almost all the characters are good (the exception is gangster Kamyk and his gang). One of the most important plots of the analysed episodes is the fight against Kamyk, the so-called tenement cleaner, trying to take over the house where Henryk's and Tomek's apartments are located.

The action of the analysed episodes of the series *'Przyjaciółki'*, broadcast by Polsat, focuses on the fate of five women who can be categorised as leading characters. Anna Strzelecka works in a law firm, and her marriage with Paweł is in crisis. Patrycja Kochan is disturbing Wiki in forming a relationship with Wiktor. Single Inga Gruszewska has two daughters and fathers of girls help her, while she looks for a new partner on dating sites. Zuzanna Markiewicz returns to work after cancer, and her relationship with Jan Głowacki is fraught by mutual betrayal. Dorota, a young widow and a single mother, the wealthy owner of a nail salon, gets into a relationship with a matrimonial cheater.

Supporting characters are Julka Strzelecka – the daughter of Anna and Paweł, Wiki – the former partner of Wiktor and mother of the daughter brought up by Patrycja and Wiktor, Daria – partner of Jan (cheating on her with Zuza) and Marianna – the neighbour of Strzelecki, whom Paweł loves.²

While the series falls within the conventions of drama, its comedic nature is quite questionable. The plot is full of tragic situations (serious illness, accident, death), and the heroines experience real life dilemmas and dramas. The comedic overtone of the series is given by two exaggerated characters: Inga and Dorota and sometimes comical situations (Paweł's 'romance').

In *'Dziewczyny ze Lwowa'*, women dominate as the leading characters. In the sample studied, only one male role can be considered a leading role. On the other hand, men dominate the supporting roles (Table 8).

² See <https://www.polsat.pl/serial/przyjaciolki/>.

Table 8. Frequency of Character Exposure in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’ (Average per Episode)

Lead		Supporting		Combined
Women	Men	Women	Men	
4.8	1.0	2.2	7.8	15.7

The second in the genre of comedy series is also characterised by an unprecedented asymmetry in the main roles as we see women are predominant in the leading roles (in the case of ‘Przyjaciółki’ only women), with men cast more often in the supporting roles (Table 9).

Table 9. Frequency of Character Exposure in ‘Przyjaciółki’ (Average per Episode)

Lead		Supporting		Combined
Women	Men	Women	Men	
5.0	0.0	2.2	4.7	11.9

Stereotypes, Roles and Relations in Comedy Series

As mentioned above, the characters of the series ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’ can be considered schematic and exaggerated. All leading characters are good and sensitive, but they differ in character. Against their background, the real female angel is Olya, docile and gullible, unable to refuse anyone help. She had no father in her life, so she looks to the church for advice from an Orthodox priest. In one of the last episodes analysed, she is reconciled with her father, who finds her after many years. Svetlana, who left her two children in Lviv, is trying to create a life with Piotr. She is enterprising and independent, but when her adult son begins to cause her problems, she accepts help from a caring partner. Polina is independent and self-sufficient; she works with the gangster’s wife, but she wants to run a legal business herself. She breaks up with a partner, who is an anti-terrorist policeman and tries to meddle in her life, but the couple eventually reconciles. Uljana is a grey mouse, and

at the same time, a talented violinist. She plays in a band. She dates a band musician and changes her *image* to one that is more stage-appropriate (sexy). In Lviv, she left her child from a previous relationship. Katia embodies the stereotype of a blonde and a sexual object. She dresses to catch attention, puts on heavy make-up, and walks around the apartment in a skimpy dressing-gown. She does not think seriously about work and has no skills but makes a stunning impression on men (regardless of their age). She is helpless but longs for luxury; therefore, she wants to meet a wealthy, mature man who will 'take care of her'. In the final episodes, her character begins to change: she dresses more modestly and wonders about a relationship with a young and not even wealthy man.

Among the women in the supporting roles, Zofia Nowakowa is a typical matron. For Ukrainians, she is a mentor, teaching them proper behaviour and cleaning (!). She disciplines the nurse in the hospital and interferes with Henry's life. People avoid her. She is a haughty lady, and although she seems harsh at first, she turns out to be a woman with a big heart.

Also noteworthy is Tomek's mother, who personifies the stereotype of a terrible mother-in-law (future). Overprotective and suspicious (on the verge of paranoia), she hires a private detective to track her son's fiancée.

The gangster's wife is apparently a successful career woman. An attractive and confident 40-year-old, she manages a trendy restaurant. However, it turns out that her gangster husband secretly bullies her customers to come to the restaurant to make his wife happy.

Peer-to-peer relationships dominate the series, although they bear a certain note of paternalism in relation to Ukrainians. Henryk is like a father for Ukrainian women who rent a room while Zofia acts like a mother to the girls. The gangster's wife has a similar attitude towards Ukrainian women. The heroines of 'Dziewczyny ze Lwowa' are resourceful and independent: they work, have their own businesses, and study. The exception is Katia, who is looking for a wealthy husband in Poland, but gives up these plans by going through an internal and external transformation.

The family pattern shown in the series is characteristic for immigrant women. Initially, women stay in Warsaw without children, who are in

Ukraine under the care of relatives. Only Svetlana, at her current partner's request, brings her son and daughter to Poland. All the heroines enter into new relationships with Poles, trying to start a new life in their new homeland.

In **'Przyjaciółki'** the stereotypical bimbo and woman treated as a sexual object is Inga, a blue-eyed, attractive blonde. She has two daughters, each with a different man. She is friends with her children's fathers. A woman looking for a relationship via the Internet, she agrees to a relationship with a young doctor (Maks) on the principles of 'friends with benefits'. However, a purely sexual relationship is no longer enough for her. She really wants a permanent relationship, but the man is not ready for it. Inga tries various tricks to make Maks fall in love with her, but in the end, she realises that he does not want a serious relationship. The situation in which the fathers of her daughters sympathetically nod their heads at the despairing Inga is comical. Inga also behaves like a clinging ivy who cannot do without a man. In critical situations she loses her mind. When her daughter has an accident in the mountains, Maks helps her by getting a helicopter in which she flies to a hospital in Zakopane.

Anna, who is first and foremost a Polish mother, a goddess of hearth and home and an exemplary hostess who cares for the house and husband, as well as taking care of both her children and grandson, also shows traits of a bimbo. She is technologically challenged, and is unable, for example, to operate a mobile phone. She multitasks. Owing to her husband's enchantment with her neighbour, Anna undergoes a metamorphosis, breaking the stereotype of a woman devoted to her family. She quits her job at a law office and becomes a flight attendant. She moves out of the house and rents a studio. Her husband is forced to take over all household duties. Anna begins to take care of herself and her needs. She becomes assertive. Because she had previously raised her grandson, her daughter is unable to take care of her son. She refuses to help her daughter when her grandson is sick because she is on her way to work but later reproaches herself when her grandson goes to the hospital. This situation forces her daughter to grow up and grow into the role of mother. Paweł is also undergoing a change. He begins to appreciate his wife and sees her as a woman again. He seeks her favour and arranges a date with her.

Dorota combines the stereotype of a successful career woman and a bimbo. She is very wealthy, has her own nail salon, a beautiful house and a housekeeper. She is a widow and raises her daughter alone. She becomes the object of interest of a matrimonial fraudster. Initially, she is enchanted by him and ignores the facts (e.g. his notorious lack of money). When she begins to suspect who she is dealing with, she plans revenge, breaking the stereotype of a bimbo. She places an advertisement on a dating site with a photo of a man and information that he is a scammer and his earlier victims should meet with her. Everyone meets in a restaurant. The man is unmasked and arrested by the police. Dorota's character is exaggerated and sometimes comical.

Zuza is also a woman of success, but her private life seems far from perfect. She earlier had cancer and after convalescence returns to work as a director. She has two children and a partner. During her illness, Jan betrayed her with his partner Daria. Zuza loses her friend Heidi, whom she met during treatment. She experiences a breakdown and calls her doctor, with whom she betrays Jan in a moment of weakness. Both betrayals come to light and the relationship goes through a serious crisis.

Patrycja combines several stereotypes. The woman is overly emotional, on the verge of hysteria, and at the same time she is a Polish mother and an exemplary hostess. She is multi-tasking. She also works professionally. She breaks the stereotype of his stepmother, caring with love and devotion for the daughter of her partner Wiktor. She is jealous of her child and partner, even possessive and can be carried away by emotions.

In the background are several women embodying various stereotypes. Daria is a successful woman, but her life is not going well. Her husband is a womaniser. In retaliation, Daria betrays him as well, after which she tries to rebuild the marriage.

Wiki is an emotionally unstable schemer and manipulator. She tries to get revenge on her ex-partner and spoil his relationship with Patrycja. She kidnaps her own daughter and goes to Germany where she dies in a car accident.

Marianna, an attractive neighbour of Anna and Paweł, is perceived by a man as a female angel – an object of adoration. Paweł loves her platonically. Despite the words of his mother, who advises him to 'shag'

his neighbour, he does not seek sexual relations. The illusion is dispelled by Marianna herself, who – as it turns out – would have nothing against contacts of this type.

In the series supporting role, there is a stereotype of a rebellious teenager. Inga's daughter instructs her mother, points out her mistakes and imposes her opinion on her. She withdraws too much money from her bank account but says she has the right to money from the support paid by her father.

Women in the series are very emotional, impulsive and sometimes irrational. Dorota, upon learning that her partner is a cheater, goes crazy and swears. Patrycja argues with Wiki and pushes her. When Anna catches Paweł peeping at their neighbour, she sprays him with water using a garden hose. Zuza engages in a 'marriage scene' with Jan in the presence of a foreign woman. Almost all of them can, however, keep cool in critical situations. Anna saves the life of a man teaching flight attendants. Patrycja, in the situation when her stepdaughter is kidnapped, behaves rationally, unlike Wiktor. Dorota performs an effective action of exposing the cheater.

Women are generally shown in peer relationships. They are equal to men, cheat like them, abandon family, and leave children behind.

The series presents different types of families. Its heroines are 'women with a past': widows, divorcees and those living in non-traditional or patchwork relationships sharing childcare with their former partners or former partners of their current partners. In the analysed episodes there is a thread of searching for a partner on the Internet, as well as a type of relationship based solely on sex. A matrimonial fraudster is preying on lonely women, financially exploiting his victims.

It is difficult to find common features of the presentation of female characters in such multi-plot series. The only element that can be identified in common is the thread of female helplessness recurring in various contexts and configurations (in social, emotional, technical or professional situations). In 'Dziewczyny ze Lwowa', this helplessness is used primarily to achieve the effect of comedy, while in 'Przyjaciółki' to sketch the process of the characters' transformation. The series also share a consistent breaking of this stereotype – in borderline situations, serious female characters turn out to be more resourceful than one would expect from the previous character presentation.

It is worth emphasising the stereotypical casting of female characters of ‘Przyjaciółki’ and ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’ in professional roles. The professions performed by the heroines of both comedy series usually correspond to the stereotypes of ‘female professions’. This is especially true in the case of ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’, but here one has to take into account the fact that the heroines are immigrants, so they often work in low-paid professions, such as cleaning or babysitting. In ‘Przyjaciółki’, prestigious professions (director, lawyer and businesswoman) are balanced by more ‘female’ professions (manicurist, flight attendant, etc.).

Active Exposure in Comedy Series

Analysed comedy series in our sample are those in which women’s shares prevail. The ratio of active exposure of women to active exposure of men in this genre is 1.63. Women speak for 46% of the time, and men for only 28% (Figure 62).

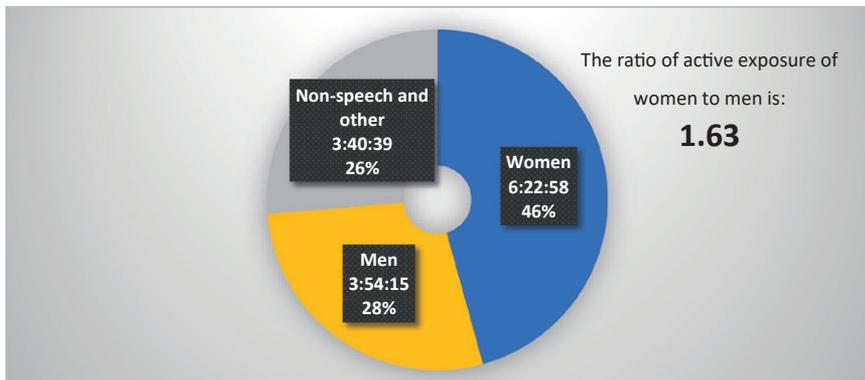


Figure 62. Active Exposure in Comedy Series

Active Exposure in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’

In ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’, the ratio of the active exposure of women to the active exposure of men is 1.25. This is not the weakest result in the sample, but not the strongest, either. In this series, women speak more often than men, but not overwhelmingly (Figure 63).

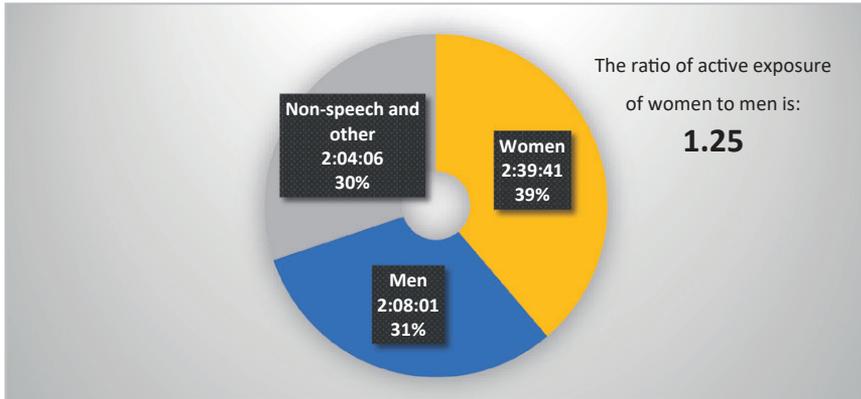


Figure 63. Active Exposure in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’

Active Exposure in ‘Przyjaciółki’

‘Przyjaciółki’ is the uncontested leader when it comes to the active exposure of women. Women speak in it up to 52% of the total time, which is 2.10 more than men’s speaking time (Figure 64).

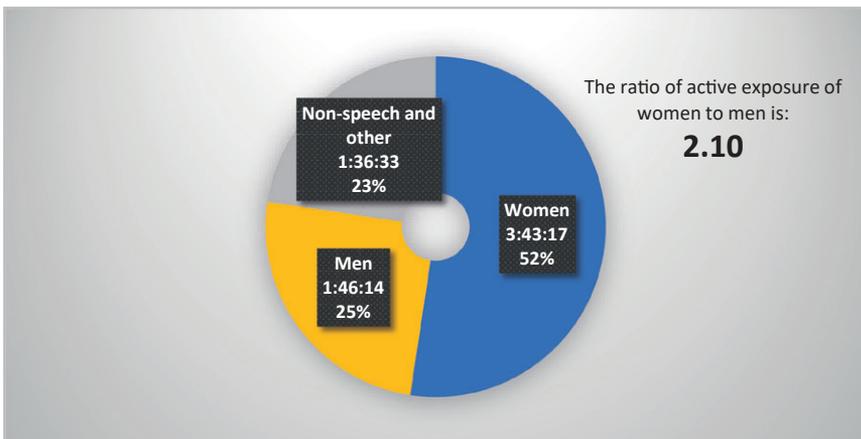


Figure 64. Active Exposure in ‘Przyjaciółki’

Passive Exposure in Comedy Series

Women also dominate in passive exposure, where the ratio of women to men is 1.47. The difference between women’s and men’s possible exposures is 24 percentage points (Figure 65).

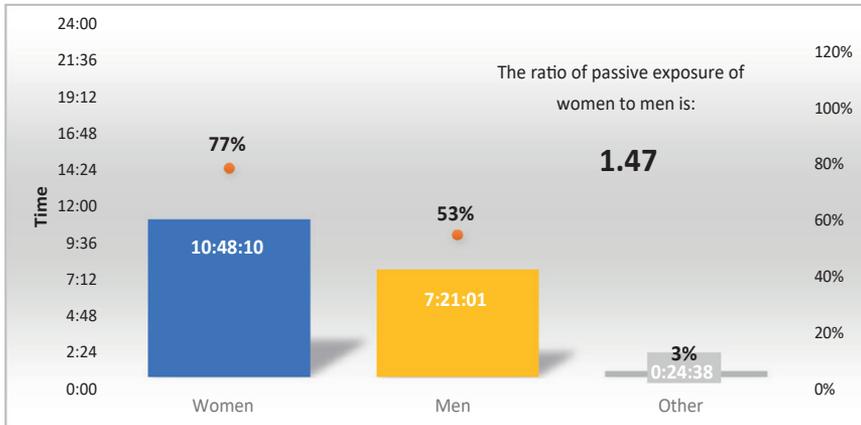


Figure 65. Passive Exposure in Comedy Series

In this type of series, single women (32%) are shown on the screen twice as long as single men (16%). Moreover, female dyads (10%) occupy the screen time three times longer than male dyads (3%). Interestingly, in these types of series we see groups of women relatively more often (3%) (Figure 66).

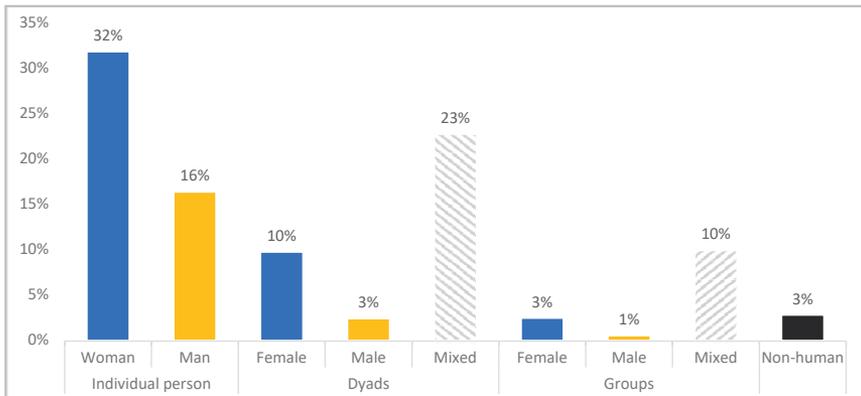


Figure 66. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in Comedy Series

Passive Exposure in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’

In the passive exposure of ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’, we see the proportions of men and women maintained similar to active exposure. Silent women are visible on the screen 74% of the time with silent men in 61% of the recording (Figure 67).

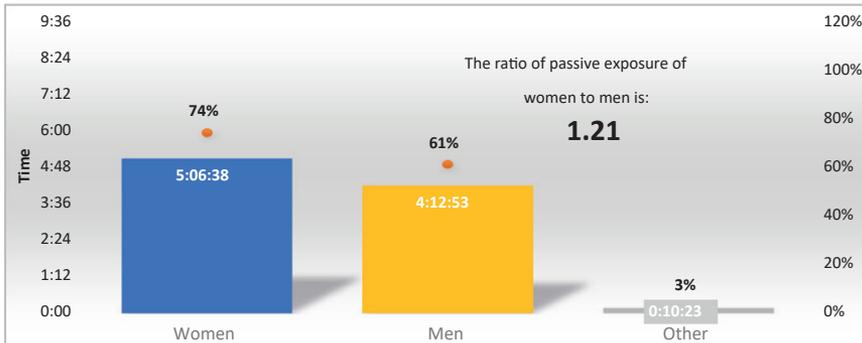


Figure 67. Passive Exposure in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’

In terms of visible presence, we will see a single woman (26%) in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’, more often than a single man (17%). The factor that determines the character of this production to a greater extent is that the dominant scenes are the ones in which we see at least two people on the screen, and often they are female dyads (9%) rather than male dyads (5%); from these two configurations, mixed dyads and groups have a larger share (Figure 68).

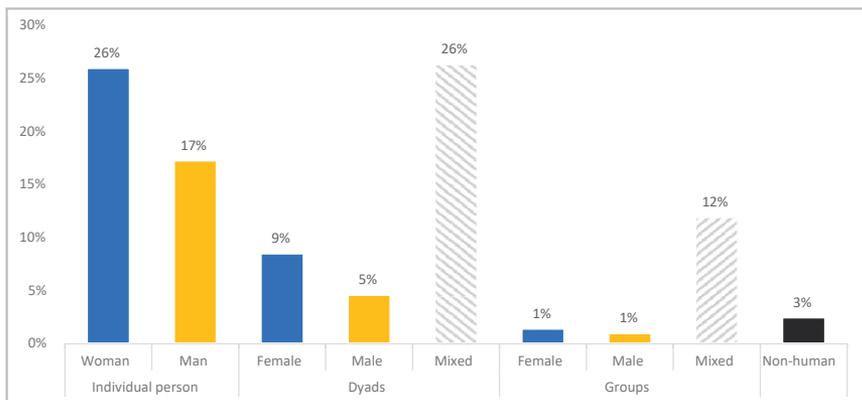


Figure 68. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’

Passive Exposure in ‘Przyjaciółki’

Women’s passive exposure in ‘Przyjaciółki’ does not have such an advantage over men’s passive exposure, like in active exposure, but it is still impressive. While women appear as silent in 80% of the recording time, we see silent men in 44% of the recording (Figure 69).

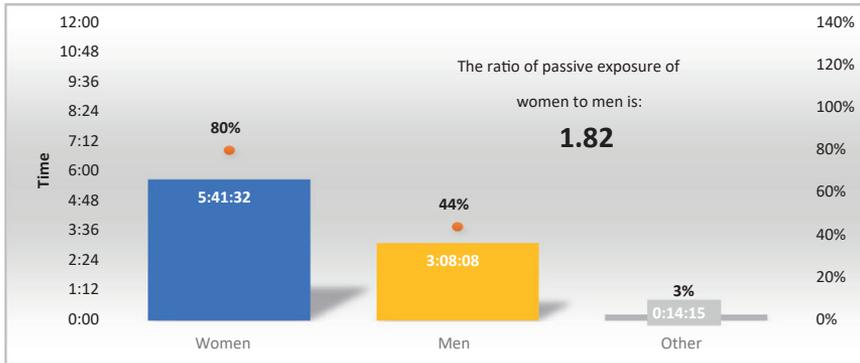


Figure 69. Passive exposure in ‘Przyjaciółki’

The most common configuration visible on the screen is a single woman (38%). A single man appears 16% of the time, and female dyads appear 11%. Men’s dyads occupy only 1% of the total broadcast time (Figure 70).

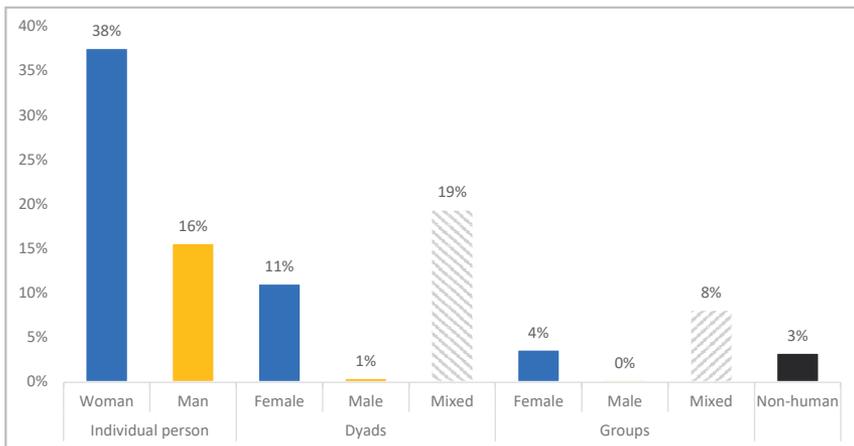


Figure 70. Character Visibility Configurations on the Screen in ‘Przyjaciółki’

Contexts in Comedy Series

About two-thirds of the broadcasting time of the series is devoted to scenes about social relationships (visits, guests, social gatherings, events, etc.) and scenes related to family, partner or erotic interpersonal relationships. Other plots/contexts, such as work, intrigues and childcare are presented much less frequently, a few percent at most. However, the latter context, against the background of the whole sample, has a relatively large share (Figure 71).

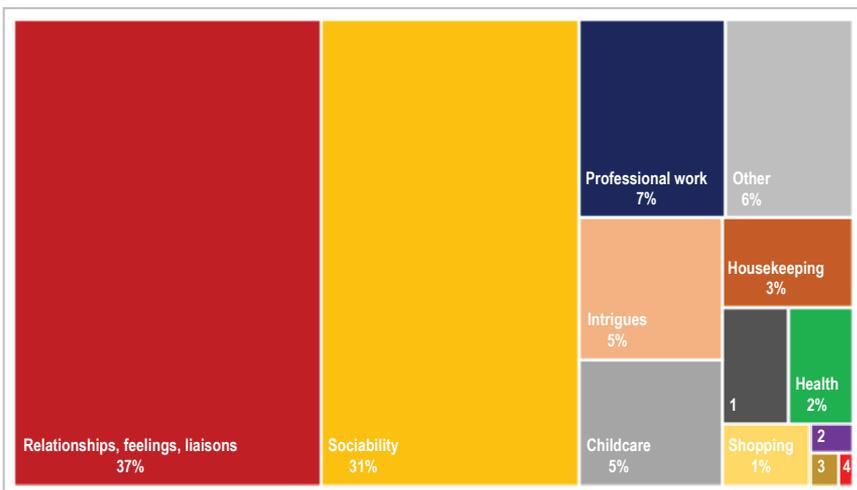


Figure 71. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in Comedy Series

Note. 1 – Criminal (1.9%); 2 – Participation in culture (0.3%); 3 – Social activity (0.2%); 4 – Active leisure (0.1%)

Both series therefore match the patterns of contemporary, realistic drama series, which focus on private or at most semi-private space and on the family-social events of the characters.

Typically, this type of series, women are the dominant sex in any plot. In all of them, women's active exposure is either much bigger than men's or barely at the same level (Figure 72).

A review of the share of passive exposure of women and men in the context of the plot only confirms the earlier conclusions that of the four analysed genres in the series, comedy series are most dominated by women (Figure 73).

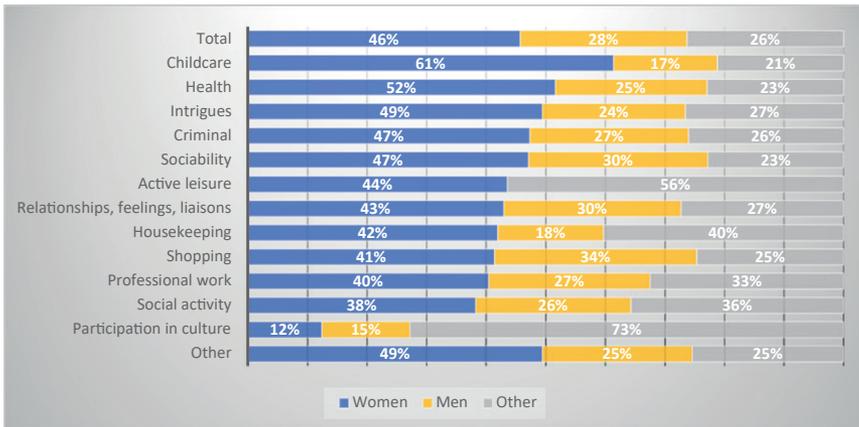


Figure 72. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in Comedy Series

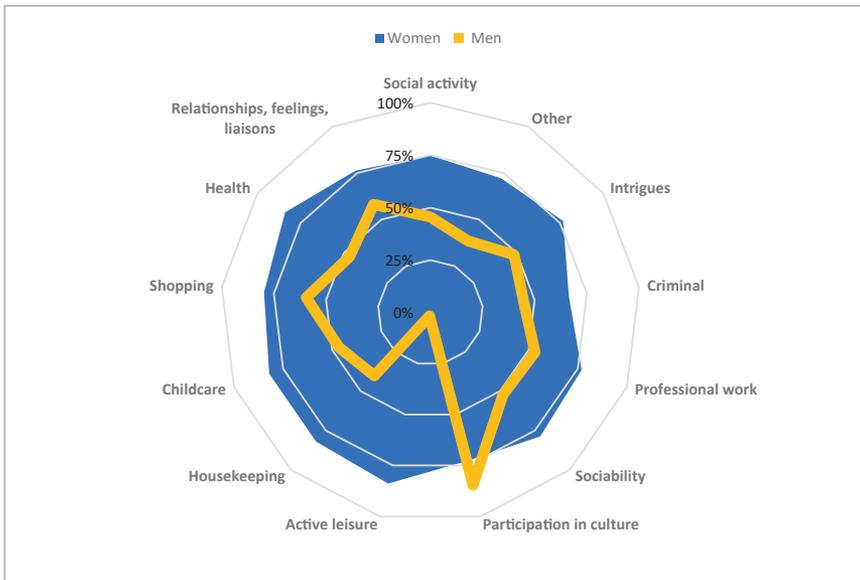


Figure 73. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in Comedy Series

Contexts in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’

A large share of the time (45%) in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’ is dominated by themes of light sociability and conversations with a shallow emotional depth. Nevertheless, plots about feelings and relationships also hold a significant share (35%). Their share of the above contexts clearly indicates that the plot of this series revolves around light and superficial relations (Figure 74).

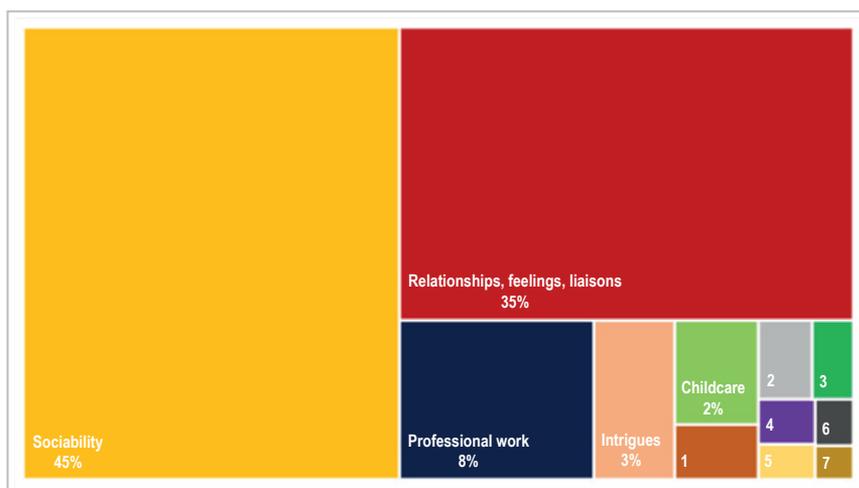


Figure 74. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’

Note. 1 – Housekeeping (1.2%); 2 – Other (1.1%); 3 – Health (0.9%); 4 – Participation in culture (0.7%); 5 – Shopping (0.5%); 6 – Criminal (0.5%); 7 – Social activity (0.3%)

In both the most popular contexts of the series we are dealing with a greater active exposure of women, but the share of active exposure of men does not differ drastically. This means that in basic contexts, the plot is built based on dialogues in heterogeneous pairs or groups (Figure 75).

In ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’ we see that the passive exposure of women in the context of relationships, feelings and liaisons is balanced by the passive exposure of men, and only slightly larger in the context of

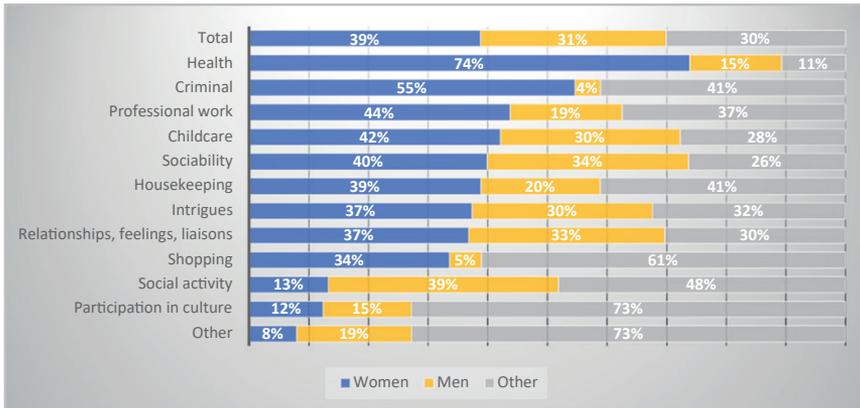


Figure 75. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’

sociability. Interestingly, as in ‘Diagnoza’, women are more often shown in a passive exposure in a criminal context, but it should be noted that for this series this is only a side plot (Figure 76).

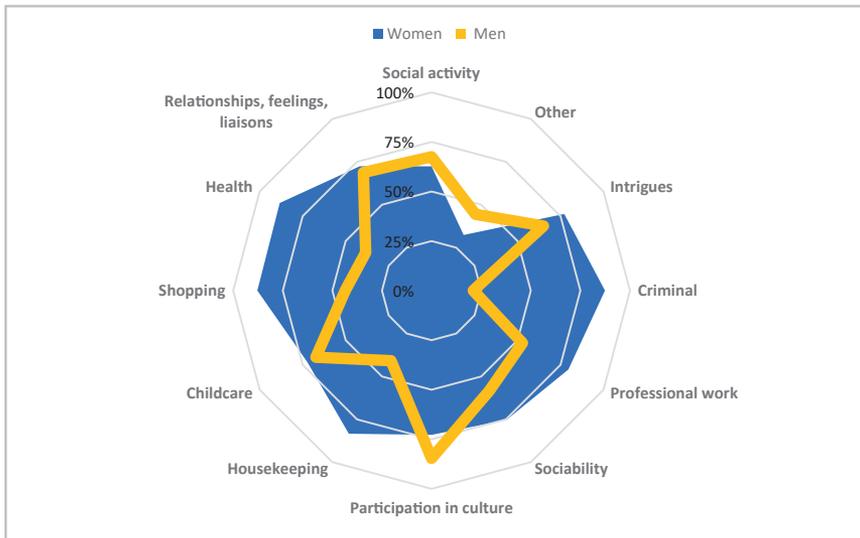


Figure 76. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’

Contexts in ‘Przyjaciółki’

‘Przyjaciółki’ is primarily a series about emotions (38%), interspersed with social scenes (17%). There are relatively fewer (6%) professional aspects in it, but more intrigues (7%) and childcare (7%) than in others (Figure 77).

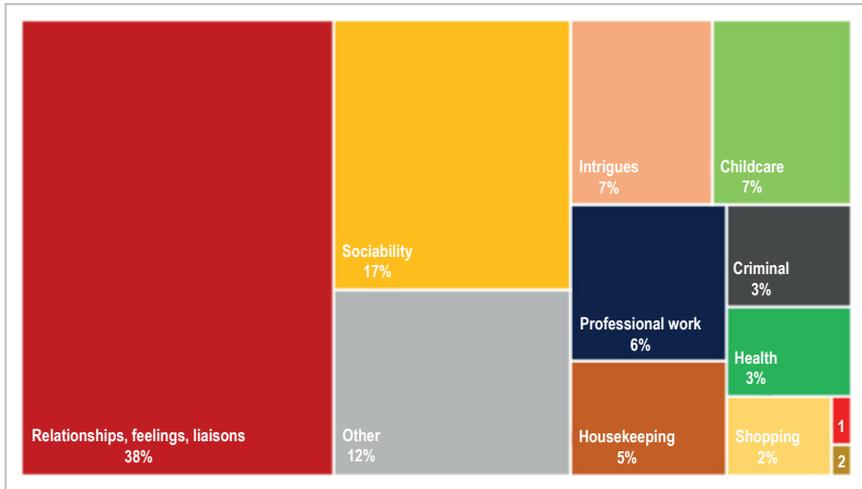


Figure 77. Context Share in the Total Recording Time in ‘Przyjaciółki’

Note. 1 – Active leisure (0.2%); 2 – Social activity (0.2%)

Almost all plots in ‘Przyjaciółki’ are characterised by the overwhelmingly active exposure of women compared to the active exposure of men, except for the context of professional work, where the time ratio of both sexes speaking is equal (Figure 78).

A brief glance at the distribution of the presence of passive exposure of men and women visible in Figure 79 confirms that in this series men practically disappear compared to the presence of women.

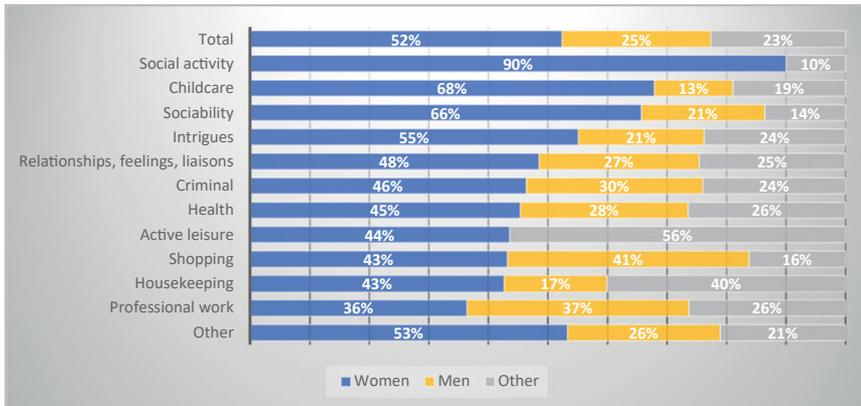


Figure 78. Active Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in ‘Przyjaciółki’

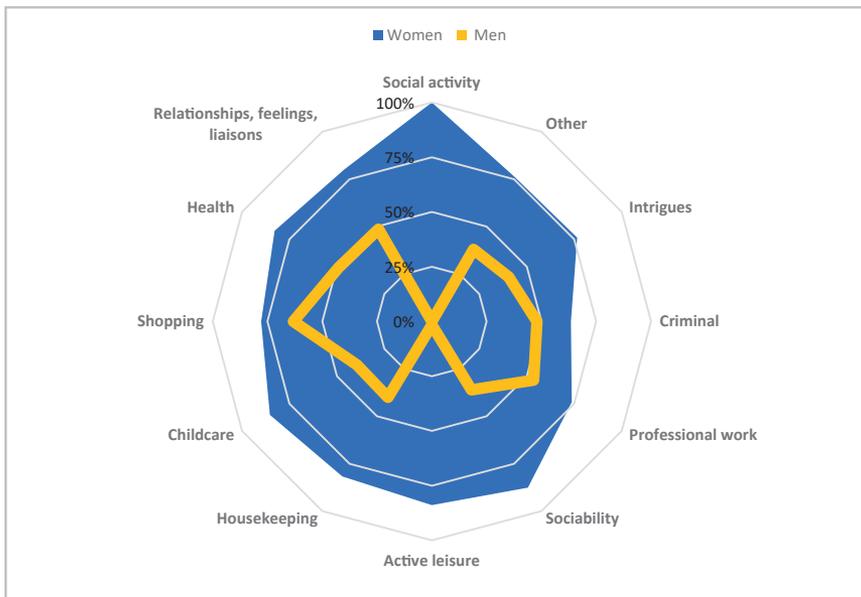


Figure 79. Passive Exposure of Men and Women Against the Backdrop of Contexts in ‘Przyjaciółki’

Comparative Analysis – Conclusions

On average, in all the analysed series, female characters predominate both in active exposure and on-screen presence. This difference, especially in the first case, is significant. As the research material contains four genre types, there are differences between and within the genres (this applies e.g. to soap operas). The proportions are reversed only for historical dramas.

The series are dominated by contexts related to interpersonal relationships – partner, emotional, or sexual (29%) and relationships of a social nature, such as meetings, visits, or events (26%). Both take over half of the time (55%). Two subsequent contexts are professional work (15%) and crime (10%), but they are very differentiated between individual genres and titles.

Contexts that occupy a small percentage of the time are childcare (3%) and housekeeping (2%), while issues such as participation in culture, active leisure, or social activities appear in trace amounts.

Taking into account the basic indicators included in the monitoring, namely, the relationship of active and passive exposure of women and men, we can conclude that in the case of two series we are dealing with a predominance of men both in terms of speaking time and appearance on the screen. 'Diagnoza' is a unique series where women dominate over men in the sphere of dialogue, but not on the visual level. Other series show women more often than men to a larger or smaller degree. The last indicator in the table, the ratio of the time of active to passive exposure of women in a given series, allows us to assess to what extent showing women goes hand in hand with giving them the floor. We see that this indicator combines such different series as 'Korona Królów' and 'Przyjaciółki', whose active to passive exposure ratio is high, i.e.

in relation to their visibility on the screen, the women proportionally speak a lot. In these two, as well as in ‘Pierwsza Miłość’ and ‘Diagnoza’, a woman usually speaks when she is on the screen. At the other extreme, in ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’ and ‘Pułapka’, a large part of the presentation of women on the screen is silent, which does not mean that they are merely a background, but is more a way of building up tension and furthering the plot (Table 10).

Table 10. Comparison of Active and Passive Exposure of Women and Men

Type of series	Series	The relationship of active exposure of women to active exposure of men	The relationship of passive exposure of women to passive exposure of men	The relationship of time of active exposure of women to passive exposure of women
Drama series (soap operas)	M Jak Miłość	1.22	1.06	0.55
	Pierwsza Miłość	0.76	0.85	0.62
	Total	0.98	0.97	0.58
Historical drama series	Korona Królów	0.7	0.74	0.69
	Wojenne Dziewczyny	1.04	1.1	0.45
	Total	0.88	0.97	0.52
Crime dramas	Diagnoza	1.1	0.91	0.62
	Pułapka	1.79	1.78	0.47
	Total	1.3	1.18	0.55
Comedy series	Dziewczyny ze Lwowa	1.25	1.21	0.52
	Przyjaciółki	2.1	1.82	0.65
	Total	1.63	1.47	0.59
Total		1.19	1.15	0.56

In terms of active exposure of women, the two comedy series, i.e. ‘Przyjaciółki’ and ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’, dominate. The other end of this ranking is occupied by the two historical drama series: ‘Korona Królów’ and ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’. It is important to note, however, that although the share of active exposure of women in historical drama series is similar, the relation of this exposure to the active exposure of men is very different. While in the ‘Korona Królów’ the small active exposure of women is accompanied by a large active exposure of men, in ‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’ women say more than men even though their speaking time is relatively less than in other series. The share of silent scenes is decisive in this case (Figure 80).

Comedy series also lead in passive exposure of women, but they are separated by ‘Pułapka’ in the second place, in which women uttering no words are exposed in as much as three-quarters of the total time (Figure 81).

After the review of active and passive exposures in the series, the question remains as to which series are more masculine and which

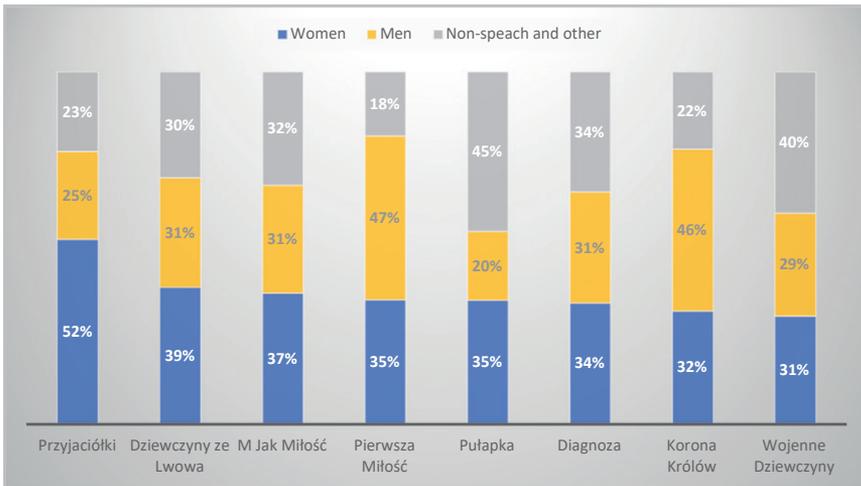


Figure 80. Ranking of the Series in Terms of Active Exposure of Women

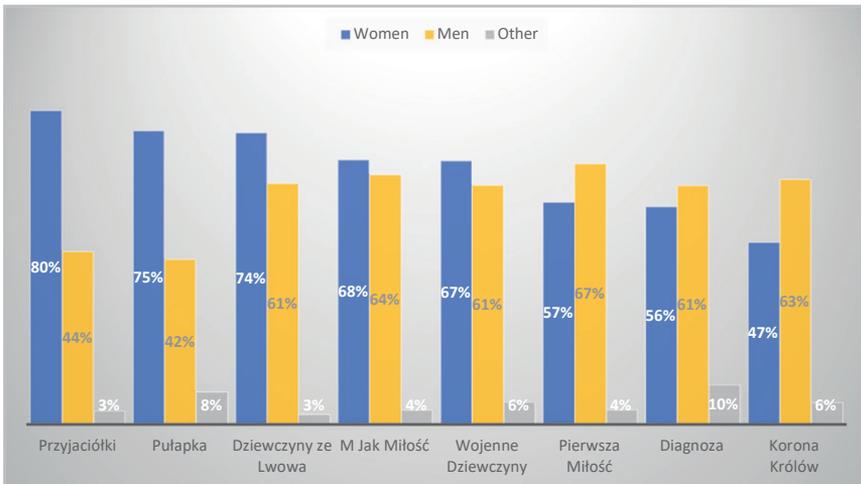


Figure 81. Ranking of the Series in Terms of Passive Exposure of Women

more feminine in terms of both exposures. When we combine passive and active exposure, i.e. the audio and video layers, a fairly wide range of configurations is created. We juxtaposed these configurations to provide a spectrum that extends from the configuration in which women are visible on the screen and at the same time we hear their utterances

to a similar male configuration (Figure 82). The series with the largest exposure of women are ‘Przyjaciółki’, ‘Pułapka’, and ‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’. The ‘Przyjaciółki’ series is clearly in a class of its own when it comes to the time occupied by women both in dialogue and by being visible on screen. This advantage also has an impact on the average for the total sample tested, clearly elevating it. In the context of ‘Pułapka’, it is worth noting a large share of women’s passive exposure, i.e., without any speech. This is due to the large number of highly dramatic scenes involving women. In ‘Wojenne dziewczyny’, the sum of exposures involving women is slightly higher than the sum of exposures involving men but given that the three main characters are female, this does not seem to be a significant advantage. In this series, scenes without dialogue and with the exposure of mixed groups or without human figures have the greatest share of the recording time.

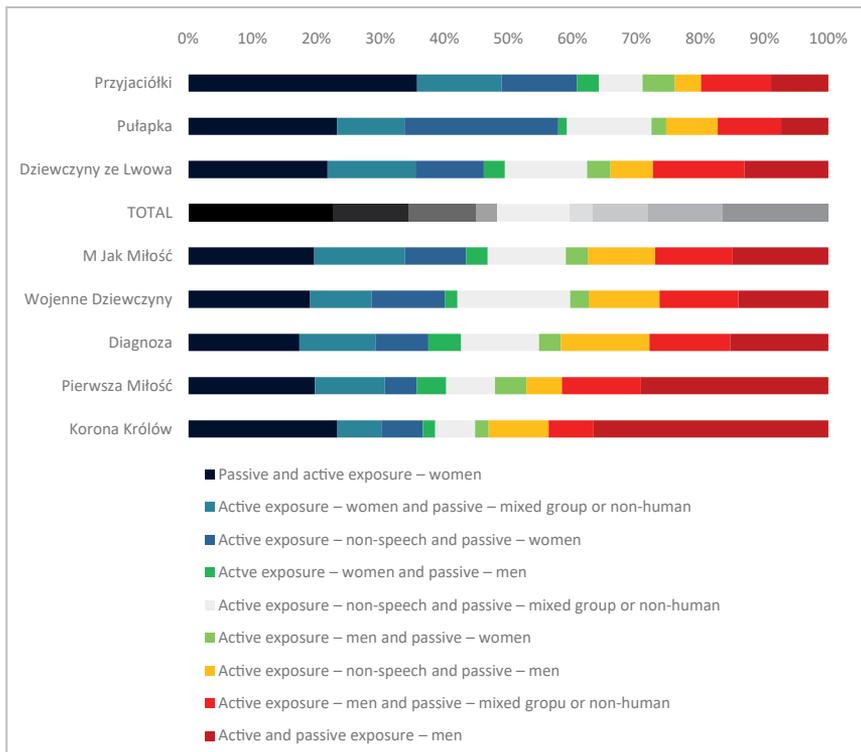


Figure 82. Ranking of the Series in Terms of Total Active and Passive Exposure

A special case in terms of exposure is the series ‘Diagnoza’, in which, on the one hand, scenes with women in both passive and active exposure have an advantage over corresponding male scenes, but on the other hand, the greatest share (14%) of the total recording time among all the series is occupied by scenes in which men appear on video without dialogue. These are, for example, scenes illustrating the characters’ inner dilemmas. The large share of such scenes makes ‘Diagnoza’ move to more masculine positions in the exposure ranking.

In turn, the greatest exposure of men is provided by ‘Korona Królów’ and ‘Pierwsza Miłość’. These two series clearly expose men much more, which is understandable in the former case and surprising in the latter, given the genre to which the series belongs.

The next Figure 83 presents the mapping of the series according to the main indicators included in the analysis. The x-axis depicts the relation between the active exposure of women and active exposure of men, which means that the more the given series leans to the right, the greater the advantage of time when women speak (in relation to men). The y-axis illustrates the relation of passive exposure of women to the passive exposure of men, which means that the higher the series

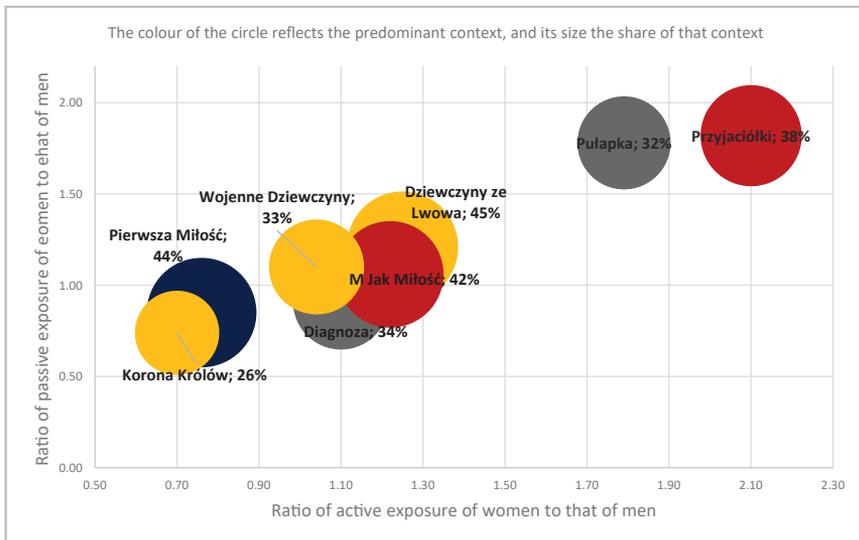


Figure 83. Mapping of the Exposure of Women as Compared to the Exposure of Men

is placed, the more time is taken by scenes with women not speaking out. The bubble colour illustrates the context prevailing in a given series (the colours are identical as in the previous figures showing contexts), while its size shows the share of the dominant context.

We see that the context of sociability dominates over others in three of the monitored series. It should be noted, however, that while in 'Dziewczyny ze Lwowa' it is a dominance of almost a half of the total, in 'Korona Królów' the share of this context is about a quarter, leaving more room for the rest. When it comes to women's speaking time, the duo clearly stands out from the other series comprising 'Pułapka' and 'Przyjaciółki', which through their active exposure of women significantly outperform other series. These series, which, as we have written earlier, are leaders in exposing women, are two different examples of attempts to shape off-screen reality. In 'Przyjaciółki' we are dealing with a more typical social framework in which the women who dominate the screen are presented above all against the background of topics related to emotions and interpersonal relations, i.e. the context that is most private in our classification. In 'Pułapka', on the other hand, the framework is toppled, and the dominant exposure of women is connected with the leading criminal thread which belongs more to the public sphere and, more importantly, is traditionally perceived as an area of male activity. The non-standard nature of 'Pułapka' is particularly obvious when juxtaposed with the other crime series analysed, which in our typology were classified as more masculine in terms of exposure. Another preservation of the social framework is observed in the case of 'Przyjaciółki', where professional work is combined with greater exposure of men. Thus, it can be said that in terms of influencing the viewers with the contexts and the role of women in these contexts, the authors of the series placed more emphasis on the typical, but sometimes there are also experiments that may not be revolutionary, but which nevertheless go beyond the traditional social framework. We cannot say clearly how these proposals for social change shown in the series actually affect viewers, but according to the sociological theories mentioned earlier, the sparing dosage of atypicality to the dominant mass of known and understood images can have a greater impact than pushing the known world upside down.

The above observations on contexts are of a quantitative nature, i.e. they indicate which exposures and which contexts dominated in terms of time. Quantitative aspects also have their weight, the background is important, and the dominant context may determine the nature of the entire production. At the same time, as researchers, we are aware that just as in the kitchen a pinch of spice can affect the taste of the whole dish, so in the series a message that takes up little time but has the appropriate quality weight can determine the nature of the whole production. In our opinion, the role of spice for the series we examined was fulfilled by the stereotypical roles depicted in them.

The analysed series feature the most important cultural stereotypes about women. Women are generally shown to be more emotional and sensitive than men. Their focus is on family and home. Women in the series are focused on building lasting interpersonal relationships of both an erotic and friendly nature. This contrasts strongly with the fact that the series rarely present models of full, unbroken, and traditional families. Informal, patchwork, incomplete relationships ‘with a past’ dominate. However, it is difficult to assess whether this is the result of the conscious intention of the author, the historical context, or instead results from the requirements of constructing an engaging plot or rotation in the cast. Regardless, women can count on other women – friends or neighbours in their endeavours and adventures. If they are lonely, they do not hesitate to look for new partners or to take the initiative. Sometimes they try to break up other people’s relationships or take revenge on their former partners. They are also shown as professionally active. Work does not interfere in their looking after the home and children, because they are – unlike men – multitaskers. However, if their ambitions go too far, their private lives suffer. Then they look for consolation, for example, in alcohol. They are shown in a variety of professional roles, both those traditionally assigned to women and in roles previously reserved for men. When facing danger, they show ingenuity and courage. On the one hand, women maintain their position in the context of home and motherhood, while increasingly crossing the borders of the male world in the professional field (Table 11).

Table 11. Stereotypes of Female Leads and Supporting Characters in the Research Sample

Stereotype*	‘M jak Miłość’	‘Pierwsza miłość’	‘Korona królów’	‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’	‘Diagnoza’	‘Putapka’	‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’	‘Przyjaciółki’
Polish mother, goddess of hearth and home	+	-		+	+	+/- -		+
Hausfrau/homemaker	+	-			+			+/- +
Matron			+	+		+/-	+	
Stepmother			-		-			-
Rebellious teenager		+				+		+
Mother-in-law							+	-
Grandmother	+							
Active senior	+							
Greater Emotionality	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+ +/-
Female Angel, Perfect Woman	+		+	+	+	-/+	+	+/-
<i>Femme Fatale</i> , Vamp, Schemer, Manipulator	+	+		+	+	+		
Bimbo, Blonde				-	+ +/-		+	+ +/-
Snow Queen				+	+	+		
Ivy		+	+			+		+
Asexual Buddy		+			+/-/+	-/+ +/-		
Lack of Technical Prowess		-		-	+	+		+
Less Physical Fitness, No Interest in Sports		-		-	-	-		

Table 11 cont.

Stereotype*	‘M jak Miłość’	‘Pierwsza miłość’	‘Korona królów’	‘Wojenne Dziewczyny’	‘Diagnoza’	‘Pułapka’	‘Dziewczyny ze Lwowa’	‘Przyjaciółki’
Multi-tasking					+			+
Successful Career Woman			+	+				
Successful Career Woman with Problems in Her Personal Life		+			+	+	+	+

Note. * The table shows at least one occurrence of a given stereotype in a lead or supporting character.

- + stereotype
- anti-stereotype
- +/- breaking the stereotype in the course of action
- /+ breaking the anti-stereotype in the course of action
- +/-/+ breaking the stereotype in the course of action, then returning to the previous state

In the context of the initial research question, it can therefore be argued that **the series under analysis confirm existing gender stereotypes more than attempt to change them. Where stereotypes are reversed or broken in the course of the plot, it seems more like following the trends observed in contemporary societies than trying to create a new social reality in the media.**

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The key objective of this work is to answer the question: **To what extent do contemporary Polish TV series try to change stereotypes about women and to what extent do they preserve them?** The analysis involved a total of eight series produced and broadcast by Telewizja Polska, TVN and Telewizja Polsat, grouped by genre into: (1) drama series – soap operas; (2) historical drama series; (3) crime dramas and (4) comedy series. The analysis included 76 episodes of the above series with a total length of 49 hours and 51 minutes.

The subject of quantitative analysis was the total speaking time of female characters and their visibility on the screen. The qualitative analysis was based on the identification of the most important gender stereotypes and their use in the series' storylines. In the analysed series, female characters speak for one fifth of the time longer than male characters and are visible on the screen 15% longer than male characters.

The dominant plots in the sample are issues of interpersonal relationships, i.e. partner relationships, emotional and sexual relationships (29%) and casual social relationships (meetings, visits, parties – 26%). Together, both contexts account for 55% of the time. Their analysis establishes (with a few exceptions) the most prevalent cultural stereotypes about women, including in particular: greater emotionality, strong focus on family and home matters (but not necessarily childcare), and general life orientation on building lasting interpersonal relationships. Due to the requirements of the plot, these stereotypes are nevertheless broken through. In particular, women often turn out to be resourceful and entrepreneurial. The analysis of stereotypes also indicates that the introduction of women into traditionally male roles is much easier than introducing men into roles traditionally considered female.



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