



GMMP+30

NATIONAL REPORT: POLAND

Global Media Monitoring Project



GMMP+30



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The actual work involved in this monitoring round was extensive, encompassing the analysis of **362 news stories** and **1,260 news subjects** across a diverse sample of Polish legacy and digital media. The team operated under rigorous GMMP coding procedures to ensure longitudinal and comparative accuracy.

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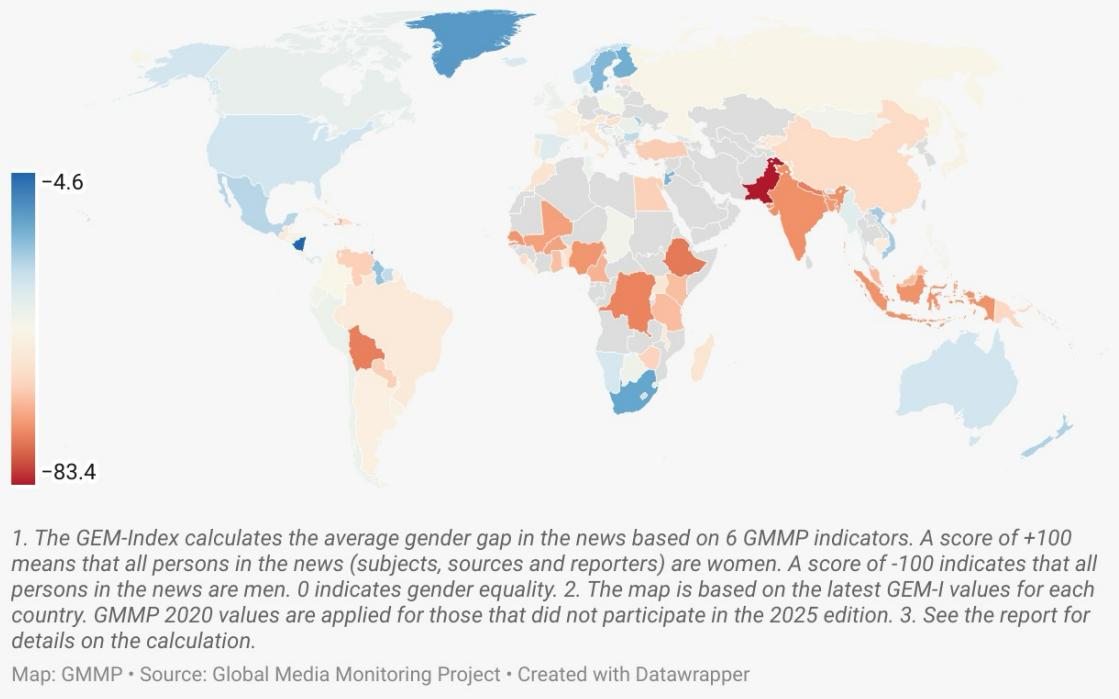
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Gender Equality in the News Media Index (GEM-I) 2025



PREFACE

This report presents the Polish findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project 2025, part of the largest and longest-running global research initiative examining gender equality in and through the news media. Conducted at five-year intervals since 1995, the GMMP provides a unique longitudinal and comparative framework for understanding whose voices are present in the public sphere and how journalistic practices shape visibility, authority, and exclusion.

GMMP 2025 in Poland builds on earlier national monitoring rounds and on the sustained collaboration of researchers and volunteers who have remained committed to media justice and democratic communication over time. It continues the work undertaken in GMMP 2020, allowing us to return to the same questions with renewed urgency and to reflect once again on the still unfinished commitments articulated in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, particularly its Strategic Objectives on women and the media.

Both globally and in Poland, GMMP 2025 confirms that progress toward gender parity in the news has slowed over the past decade. Patterns observed in earlier monitoring largely persist, while the expansion of digital media has not produced a qualitative shift in gendered representations. Rather than disrupting entrenched hierarchies, online news in Poland largely reproduces them, demonstrating that increased representation has not translated into improved journalistic quality or

gender-aware practice. To complement the quantitative GMMP indicators, the report includes qualitative case studies that illustrate how gender and intersectional bias operates through framing, sourcing and visuals (see case studies).

These findings make clear that continued monitoring, while necessary, is no longer sufficient. What is required is a shift from monitoring gender representation to transforming the editorial, organizational, and professional practices through which news authority is produced and sustained.

We dedicate this report to all those who believe that diverse and inclusive media are a cornerstone of open societies. In particular, we address it to journalists, editors, media managers, regulators, educators, and civil society actors who recognize the news media as a public institution with a shared responsibility for pluralism and equality. We invite readers to engage with the Polish GMMP 2025 findings as a starting point for further reflection and collective work toward more inclusive public communication.

Dr. Greta Gober and Dr. hab Margaret Ohia-Nowak
National Coordinators and authors of the GMMP 2025 Poland

Global Context

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action premised that “Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace” (United Nations, 1995). Specifically, the Declaration in its Section “J” established the following objectives related to women and media: Strategic objective J1. “Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication. Strategic Objective J2. Promote a balanced and nonstereotyped portrayal of women in the media” (United Nations, 1995).

The first global monitoring was sparked by a need for empirical evidence on women's place, role and participation in the news.¹ The Beijing Platform for Action thereafter enshrined media monitoring as a strategy to achieve strategic objective J1. Non-governmental organizations and media professional associations were encouraged to establish “media watch groups that can monitor the media and consult with the media to ensure that women's needs and concerns are properly reflected” (para 242a)

The GMMP evolved into the largest and longest-running research and advocacy initiative for gender equality in and through the news media. In five-year spurts since 1995, the GMMP takes a snapshot of key gender equality dimensions in the news.

¹ Read more in the full text of the Bangkok Declaration, outcome of the 1994 “Women Empowering Communication” conference at which the idea of a GMMP was birthed. <https://whomakesthenews.org/wp-content/uploads/who-makes-the-news/Imported/documents/bangkok%20declaration.pdf>

Across thirty years to date, the GMMP has built the data from over 160 countries, with at least one observation for each variable and country.

The global news media landscape has changed profoundly, yet women's place within it has not. The evolution of women's encounters with the sector across the period has not been as dramatic. The GMMP reveals that, in many ways, the status quo of gross underrepresentation and misrepresentation in content has persisted.

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is a coordinated international research and advocacy initiative established to track gender equality in news media. The project emerged from the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, where feminist media activists, scholars, and practitioners highlighted pervasive bias, exclusion, and stereotyping of women in news coverage, and saw systematic media monitoring as a means to support global struggles for media justice. The Beijing Platform for Action subsequently formalized this approach through Strategic Objective J, calling for increased participation of women in and through the media and for the promotion of non-stereotyped portrayals of women.

Since 1995, GMMP has been conducted at five-year intervals as a snapshot of an "ordinary news day," capturing routine journalistic practices rather than exceptional events. Over three decades, the project has evolved into the world's largest and longest-running longitudinal study of gender in the news, building a unique comparative evidence base from more than 100 countries. The 2025 monitoring was carried out in a media landscape very different from the one GMMP faced in its early years. News is now shaped not only by traditional media, but also by digital platforms, cross-border information flows, algorithm-driven distribution, and growing uses of artificial intelligence. At the same time, media regulation has become more complex and less consistent across regions. Despite these transformations, GMMP 2025 confirms a striking continuity: digitalization has not disrupted the gendered hierarchies of news production but has largely reproduced them across new formats.

The global monitoring took place on 6 May 2025, an "ordinary news day" shaped by an extraordinary geopolitical context. Armed conflict and state-based violence featured prominently in news agendas worldwide, including the ongoing war in Ukraine, the civil war in Sudan, and the genocide in Palestine. Coverage of the war in the Middle East, including Gaza, was the ninth most prominent news topic worldwide. However, although women comprised 39% of the journalists reporting on this conflict, they appeared as only 12% of the people quoted or featured as news subjects, indicating a clear gender imbalance in the coverage. GMMP 2025 shows a global tendency for war and security to be framed through male-dominated political and military perspectives, marginalizing women's experiences, agency, and expertise in contexts of violence.

The 2025 monitoring constitutes the **seventh global edition** of the project and serves as a **thirty-year pulse** check on the commitments made in Beijing. Globally, the report points to a stagnation. Findings, based on **29,935 news articles** and

58,321 people across 94 countries, show women account for **26% of news subjects and sources in legacy media** (newspapers, radio, and television) and **29% on news websites**. While this marks a 9-point increase in traditional media since the first monitoring in 1995, overall progress has **flatlined since 2010**. **Minority women** are even more marginalized, featured as protagonists or interviewees in only **2% of legacy news stories** and **4% of digital news**.

Global findings. The highlights

The global findings are based on 29,935 news articles containing 58,321 people and 26,560 news personnel in 94 countries on the 7th global monitoring day, May 6, 2025.

- 1. Thirty years ago, the report of the first GMMP called for a shift in coverage beyond the male-dominated realms of political and economic power. Not only has the hierarchy of “hard news” in legacy media persisted across time, it has also crossed over into digital outlets.**

Digitalization did not bring a radical break from the patriarchal norms of traditional journalism. Instead, it continues to reinforce and amplify a news hierarchy that privileges spheres and issues centred on power, namely, those dominated by men. The challenge is threefold. First, to dismantle the “hard news” bias, second, to integrate more intentionally spaces and issues of greater concern to women, and third, to enable visibility and voice to women present in traditionally male-dominated spaces.

- 2. After a period of slow but steady improvement, progress toward gender parity in the news has flatlined since around 2010, failing to reach 50% in any media type.**

Thirty years after Beijing, women are 26% of those seen, heard, or spoken about in legacy news (29% on news websites). The needle has shifted 9 points in legacy media since 1995, and 4 points in online news during the past 10 years.

Minority groups are five points more likely to be present in digital news than in legacy media. The probability of minority women being featured in the news as the main protagonists or as interviewees is two in a hundred in traditional media (3% for men) and 4% on news websites (5% for men).

- 3. Women’s visibility in political and economic news has increased significantly – by 15 points each – over the past three decades.**

The severe underrepresentation noted in 1995 (7% in political news, 10% in economic news) has improved. Women’s presence in sports news is abysmal, at only 15% of news subjects and sources.

4. The proportion of women providing expert testimony has grown remarkably over the decades, showing the highest increase (+7 points) in digital news since 2015.

In legacy media, the gender gap in authoritative roles as experts and spokespersons has closed at a slower pace than for persons providing testimony based on popular opinion and personal experience – ordinary roles that require no specialized knowledge.

5. Patterns of gender-biased portrayal endure despite decades of change in women's roles in the physical world

Women have remained about twice as likely as men to be portrayed as victims since 2010. Historically, women were most often portrayed as victims of accidents or poverty. This pattern was overturned in 2025, with “other crime” and “domestic violence” (by intimate partners and family members) becoming the top victim categories.

Women depicted as survivors in legacy media were most likely to have survived “accidents, natural disasters, poverty, and disease” in previous GMMP studies. In 2025, they are most frequently portrayed as domestic violence survivors in equal proportion to accident/disaster survivors.

The over-representation of women as homemakers/parents decreased from 81% in 2000 to 73% in 2025, indicating progress although a persistent journalistic bias toward defining women by domestic roles, despite women’s current unprecedented engagement in work outside the home. Underrepresentation in occupations and in positions of power has remained consistent.

The tendency to describe women by their age and physical attributes has also persisted. They have been photographed more often than men (a 7–9-point difference) over the past two decades, with qualitative analysis continuing to show patterns of sexualized portrayal.

6. Gender inequality in the news is much more acute than in the lived experience.

Gender equality in the news, measured by the GEM Index, is moderately correlated with gender indices in other development sectors such as the Gender Social Norms Index. Between 65% to 75% of media gender inequality cannot be explained by reality, indicating the presence of other confounding factors at play that co-mingle to produce the prevailing gendered news narratives.

7. Women's share as reporters in stories published in newspapers and aired on television and radio has risen and stagnated in spurts since 1995.

Globally, the proportion of women as reporters in legacy media rose 6 points from 2000 to 2005, stalling at 37% for 10 years until 2015, rising 3 points again between 2015 to 2020, and gaining just two points in the past five years. The regions approach and consistently fail to achieve parity, except for the Pacific and the Caribbean, exactly at equality, and North America just a single point below. The findings suggest most news systems are willing to absorb a certain proportion of female labor in the reporter role, but not to cede to full numerical gender equality.

In legacy news media, the gender gap in political reporting has narrowed the fastest (+13 points in 25 years) – outside the sports beat – yet it remains the topic least reported by women. For the first time in 25 years, women now constitute a majority (52%) of science and health reporters. The new tracking of sports news reveals a severely low proportion of female reporters (17%).

Women's share as reporters in national and international stories has seen significant long-term growth (+18 and +16 points, respectively).

8. The sex of the journalist influences the gender lens in stories

The gender lens has historically been found to be sharper in articles by women reporters. Across three decades, a consistent 5–6-point gender gap has existed in source selection, where female reporters feature more female sources than their male colleagues. This gap is even wider (9 points) in digital news. The gender-lens gap between female and male journalists is largest on the indicator regarding women's centrality in the news. The difference is just 1-2 points on other indicators measuring news quality from a gender perspective, but that it exists is an important finding.

9. Gender-based violence is a blind spot in the news. When GBV makes the news, however, the gender lens in reporting is sharper than in stories on all other topics.

Less than 2% of stories cover gender-based violence. This low count is at odds with the serious nature of GBV affecting one in three women and girls worldwide.

Stories on gender-based violence produced by female journalists are more likely to raise gender (in)equality issues than those by men.

While the gender lens is sharper in GBV stories compared to other major topics, there remains enormous room for improvement if news media are to participate in creating a society in which GBV is understood as deviant, criminal, and a violation of fundamental human rights.

10. The bulk of news stories remains deficient in the GMMP dimensions of quality from a gender perspective

The proportion of news stories that clearly challenge gender stereotypes rose from 3% (2005) to 6% (2010) but declined and has remained stagnant at 3-4% since 2015. This indicates an entrenchment of stereotypes in reporting and a consistent journalistic failure to produce content that disrupts stereotypical narratives.

The regional comparisons show significant variations. North American news is exceptional, clearly challenging gender stereotypes in 19% of stories, in sharp contrast to Middle Eastern news, where only 1% overturn simplistic narratives about the roles, attributes, and capabilities of people based on gender.

Gender stereotypes are most prevalent in stories about politics and the economy, both spheres where men are the majority power holders. Over time, challenging stereotypes remains largely confined to topics in which it is safer to challenge the skewed gender power relations status quo. These are celebrity/arts/media, and social/legal news. GBV stories challenge gender stereotypes more than any other news, at 17%. While commendable, this level is insufficient to transform the harmful norms that perpetuate such violence.

The likelihood of news stories to cite human rights or gender equality frameworks has fluctuated modestly, hovering between 7% and 11% over the 15 years that this indicator has been measured. A human rights lens is absent in approximately 9 out of 10 stories.

Online stories are less likely to integrate a human rights lens than those published in legacy media, but the probability of women being the central protagonists in a news story is higher in digital news (15%, compared to 10% in traditional news).

In all story topics except for GBV news, the sex of the reporter matters slightly for the integration of a gender lens. 3% of stories by women clearly challenge gender stereotypes, compared to 2% of those by men. 12% of stories by women highlight gender (in)equality issues, compared to 10% for men. 8% of articles by women adopt a human rights framing, compared to 7% of those by men. In the case of GBV stories, for instance, female reporters are more than 10 points more likely to call attention to gender inequality than those by men.

The GMMP message in 2025, thirty years post-Beijing, is a global news industry whose progress towards gender equality has reached a crossroads.

The almost standstill pace of change in the past 15 years points to a need for a radical shift in strategies by all actors in the news ecosystem to break the inertia. Under the current conditions and with the current tools, remarkable change towards gender equality is unlikely.

The negative impacts of digitalization on the news industry and gender relations online as a whole will undoubtedly make the task of securing women's rights in and through digital news more complex.

Readers seeking detailed further global analyses, thematic findings, and regional comparisons are directed to the [GMMP 2025 Global Report](#), which provides the full empirical and methodological foundation for the national results discussed here.

Regional Context - Central and Eastern Europe

The regional context for the GMMP 2025 is shaped by a European media landscape undergoing uneven change, set against a backdrop of profound geopolitical instability. In the period leading up to the global monitoring day of 6 May 2025, the war in Ukraine was one of the dominant events shaping news agendas across Europe, alongside major national elections and ongoing international conflicts. These developments reinforced a strong “hard news” hierarchy focused on power, governance, and national defense.

Within this regional context, GMMP 2025 confirms that conflict reporting remains among the most gendered areas of news production. Stories categorized under war, civil war, terrorism, and other forms of state-based violence (excluding the Middle East) show particularly severe underrepresentation of women, who account for only around 11% of news subjects and sources.

At the same time, European media systems display a complex and uneven pattern of change in gender representation. Over the past three decades, women’s visibility as news subjects and sources in European legacy media (newspapers, radio, and television) has increased by 11 points, now standing at 27%. Europe is one of the two regions (alongside the Pacific) to experience a sharp increase in women’s presence in online news, with +7-point increase over the last decade. Women remain most visible in science and health reporting (43%) and in coverage of gender-based violence (48%). Their presence is lowest in sports (15%).

The European media industry shows a distinct split between presentation and reporting. Numerical parity has been reached among news presenters in Europe, with an exact 50/50 split between female and male presenters in legacy media. This balance, however, does not extend to reporting roles. Although women report a relatively high share of news stories in legacy media (45%) compared to the global average (42%), a persistent glass ceiling is evident, particularly in print (41%) and online (44%), and in coverage of politics, defense, and conflict.

Despite the lifetime prevalence of non-partner sexual violence for women in Europe estimated at 12.0%, gender-based violence accounts for a “negligible” portion (4%) of the total news volume and is often treated as a private concern rather than a structural political issue. The data also identifies that 3% of news stories in Europe clearly challenge gender stereotypes. While gender-based violence (GBV) stories perform better than any other news topic - challenging stereotypes in 15% of cases - at least four in five stories in Europe still reinforce or fail to defy oversimplified gender narratives.

National Context

Poland has participated in the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) since 2010, contributing national data to a coordinated international effort to assess gender

equality in and through the news media. The national context for GMMP 2025 is marked by significant political, institutional, and geopolitical change. The period between 2020 and 2025 constitutes a distinct phase for Polish media, within which shifts in governance, conflict in the region, and contested debates over gender and rights form the backdrop against which the findings of this report should be read.

Societal and political backdrop

Poland enters the 2025 monitoring period as an EU member state with a mixed record on gender equality. While educational attainment and health outcomes for women remain comparatively strong, women continue to be underrepresented in political decision-making and face a substantial labor market participation gap. This structural imbalance has been accompanied by heightened political conflict over women's rights, most visibly following the 2021 near-total ban on abortion and subsequent debates over reproductive health policy. The reinstatement of public funding for IVF in 2024 signaled a partial policy shift, yet outcomes remain politically contested and uneven.

These tensions form the background against which news media operate. As in previous GMMP rounds, women's limited visibility in Polish news is closely connected to their constrained access to institutional power in public life.

War, borders, and agenda disruption

From 2021 onwards, Poland's media landscape was strongly shaped by two overlapping border and conflict contexts: the humanitarian crisis at the PolandBelarus border and, from February 2022, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. These events restructured news agendas and redistributed editorial resources, privileging war-related and security-focused narratives at the expense of pre-existing diversity topics, including reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ issues, and gender equality.

This disruption produced a stark double standard in the representation of forced migration. Coverage of arrivals from Ukraine following the 2022 invasion was framed through a humanitarian and solidaristic lens: those crossing the border were consistently labelled refugees and war victims, with strong visibility given to women, children, and the elderly, and Poland portrayed as a moral and humanitarian actor. By contrast, reporting on the 2021 Poland–Belarus border crisis was dominated by securitization frames, in which people were described as illegal migrants, instruments of hybrid warfare, or a civilizational threat, with disproportionate attention to young men and the marginalization of women's experiences. This contrast reveals an ethicized and racialized logic of compassion, in which perceived cultural proximity, whiteness, and national belonging function as implicit criteria for empathy, shaping whose suffering is humanized and whose presence is framed as a security problem.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine consolidated a hard-news hierarchy in Polish media, in which military, security, and state-centric narratives consistently displaced pre-existing diversity agendas, including LGBTQ+ rights and reproductive justice. This shift was not only a consequence of news urgency but also the result of deliberate editorial choices. Editors described a unifying master narrative of national solidarity and heroism that justified muting or postponing sensitive topics - such as war-related sexual violence, domestic strain, or legal precarity - to avoid amplifying fear, provoking polarization, or appearing “anti-Polish” in a highly charged information environment. As a result, diversity was temporarily reframed from an epistemic necessity into a potential risk to social cohesion, to be reintroduced only once newsrooms stabilized and trust in sources was re-established.

Media polarization and institutional change

Between 2015 and 2023, Polish media - particularly public service media - operated under conditions of acute political polarization and direct state influence. Public broadcasters were widely perceived as instruments of government communication, a situation that intensified after 2020 and shaped both topic selection and framing. Following the October 2023 elections, a process of institutional reset began, including liquidation proceedings affecting major public broadcasters, aimed at reestablishing governance structures and editorial independence.

The post-2023 depoliticization of public service media, alongside a decline in Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) and hostile rhetoric from government officials, resulted in an improvement in Poland’s standing in international press freedom assessments. In the 2025 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders, Poland rose by 16 places year on year, reaching 31st position. As a result, Poland now ranks ahead of the United States and is classified among the more stable European democracies with respect to media independence.

While these developments mark an important structural shift, available evidence does not yet indicate a rapid or uniform transformation of gender representation in news content. Rather, they form part of a transitional context whose implications for gender equality in and through the media remain uncertain.

Diversity management and newsroom practices

Alongside structural constraints, the 2020-2025 period also saw the emergence of bottom-up diversity initiatives within parts of the Polish media sector. Research on newsroom practices indicates that some outlets have begun to treat diversity less as symbolic compliance and more as an epistemic and strategic resource, particularly in subscription-based and digital models.

These practices include recruiting staff from non-media backgrounds to introduce socially differentiated perspectives, implementing language guidebooks and internal training on gender- and minority-sensitive reporting, and appointing coordinators

responsible for monitoring the diversity of experts and guests. In several newsrooms, Ukrainian journalists and Ukrainian-language competencies were integrated into editorial work following the outbreak of war, transforming language from a perceived barrier into a tool for collaboration.

At the same time, these initiatives coexist with significant tensions. Journalists from minority backgrounds report identity exhaustion, symbolic inclusion without institutional power, and challenges to their professional credibility. Diversity debates in Polish media remain largely confined to gender and viewpoint, with ethnicity and race still marginal to mainstream newsroom practice. Efforts to publicly position outlets as values-driven or rights-oriented have also generated internal conflict, exposing the fragile and contested nature of diversity work in a polarized environment.

Taken together, the Polish context of GMMP 2025 reflects a media landscape marked by crisis-driven agenda narrowing, persistent gendered hierarchies of newsworthiness, and selective innovation under pressure. These conditions provide the immediate framework for interpreting the national GMMP findings presented in the following section.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The GMMP 2025 Poland national report demonstrates that progress toward gender equality in the news media has stalled, and in key respects regressed in quality. While women's visibility has increased in online news, the numerical gain has not translated into greater authority, interpretive power, or rights-based reporting. Overall, Polish news continues to reproduce entrenched gender hierarchies across both legacy and online media.

Women accounted for just **27% of people in the news (all news subjects or sources)** in Poland in 2025, marking a slight decline from **28% in 2020**. In legacy media (print, radio, and television), women's visibility decreased to **25%**, reinforcing a long-standing pattern of underrepresentation. Online media present a more gender-balanced picture in numerical terms, with women representing **32% of people in the news** - a substantial increase from **16% in 2015** - yet this apparent progress remains largely superficial. The qualitative case studies complement these findings by showing how the observed patterns of gender inequality are produced in practice across political reporting, migration coverage, demographic crisis narratives, cultural journalism, and reporting on violence, revealing recurring mechanisms of authority denial, instrumentalization, and gender blindness.

The visibility–authority gap

Increased presence does not equate to increased influence. Across all media, men continue to dominate positions of interpretive authority and institutional power. Men accounted for **74% of experts** and **72% of spokespersons**, as well as **86% of**

politicians and **85% of business leaders** featured in the news. Women were rarely positioned as central actors: only **11% of monitored stories** centered women as primary subjects, and these were largely confined to crime, violence, or celebrity coverage rather than politics, the economy, or governance. For example, the story on fertility rates in Poland shows how women can be effectively excluded even from coverage of issues that directly concern their lives. Rather than an exception, this case reflects routine reporting practices that detach gendered issues from gender equality perspectives (see Case Study 3). This pattern is exemplified also by the coverage of the Nawrocki's apartment, in which institutional and political authority remains firmly male-dominated (see Case Study 1). The case further demonstrates that harassment and delegitimization of women who speak in the media function as a structural mechanism of exclusion, aligning with global GMMP findings on the silencing of women through both online and media-driven intimidation

The “progress paradox”

Digital media exhibit the clearest form of this contradiction. Despite hosting the highest share of women as news subjects and sources (32%), online journalism shows the weakest engagement with gender equality. Findings show that **zero percent (0%) of online stories** addressed gender inequality, even when it was structurally relevant to the topics selected for coverage. Moreover, **77% of online stories reinforced traditional gender stereotypes**, while none clearly challenged them. Digitalization has therefore expanded women's visibility without disrupting male-dominated hierarchies of authority.

Gender-based violence as a critical blind spot

Coverage of gender-based violence (GBV) remains severely limited. GBV accounted for only **3% of total news stories** and was entirely absent (**0%**) from monitored television bulletins. While online media showed slightly higher responsiveness (10% of online stories), reporting largely framed violence through individual tragedy rather than structural perspectives. Even in stories about violence against women, men occupied **100% of expert and spokesperson roles**, relegating women to the roles of victims or eyewitnesses. For example, the qualitative analysis of reports on the murder of 16-year-old Maja shows how violence against women can be categorized as a generic crime or bullying rather than as gender-based violence (GBV) (see Case Study 5).

Intersectional invisibility

Intersectional exclusion remains pronounced. Only **5% of all news subjects and sources (people in the news)** belonged to racial, ethnic, religious, or other minoritized groups. Minority women accounted for just **1.4% of all people in the news**, occupying a doubly peripheral position in the news agenda. Their appearances were rare, episodic, and often linked to imported cultural spectacles

rather than routine domestic reporting, underscoring the narrow boundaries of public visibility in Polish news. Two typical mechanisms emerge from the case studies: threat-framing without migrant voices (see Case Study 2), and spectacle-driven minority visibility (see Case Study 4).

Taken together, the findings confirm that Polish news media continue to function as a public institution of exclusion rather than equality. Although **55% of monitored stories** were analytically relevant to gender equality or inequality, virtually none addressed these dimensions explicitly. The report calls for a shift from symbolic inclusion and visibility metrics toward structural change - focusing on authority, accountability, and rights-based journalism. Without deliberate editorial strategies, crisis-resilient diversity policies, and sustained institutional commitment, numerical gains in visibility will continue to coexist with persistent gendered and intersectional exclusion.

A DAY IN THE NEWS IN POLAND

On 6 May 2025, the Polish news agenda was shaped by a small number of highly visible stories that circulated across television, radio, online portals, and tabloids. Coverage that day centered on an elite political controversy, securitized narratives about migration, new data on fertility decline, a globally visible cultural event (the Met Gala), and the killing of a teenage woman (femicide). Across these otherwise disparate stories, similar patterns were evident: political and expert authority was voiced primarily by men, women appeared most often as mothers, carers, cultural figures or victims, and racialized groups were either framed as security threats or rendered visible through exceptionalized spectacle. This section traces how these stories unfolded over the monitoring day and how they structured gendered and racialized visibility in the Polish news landscape.

One of the main stories of the day on 6 May 2025 concerned *Mieszkanie Nawrockiego* [Nawrocki's Apartment], a controversy surrounding Karol Nawrocki, then a leading presidential candidate and head of the Institute of National Remembrance. The immediate trigger was a series of investigative articles published by Onet on 6 May, which scrutinized property declarations made by Nawrocki, and focused in particular on a studio apartment in Gdańsk acquired through arrangements presented as ethically questionable. The reporting challenged Nawrocki's earlier public claim that he owned only one apartment and raised questions about the transfer of a municipal flat from an elderly tenant to Nawrocki and his wife. As the story gained traction, it spread quickly across the media system. Political actors responded publicly throughout 6 May: party representatives and allies held press conferences, released documents, and appeared in broadcast interviews to contest the allegations and reframe the transaction as a standard property sale. These statements, delivered almost exclusively by male politicians, spokesmen and commentators, set the tone for the day's coverage and anchored the conflict as a high-stakes political dispute. Within this largely male-driven narrative, brief attention

was given to Anna Kanigowska, a care worker who had assisted the elderly tenant involved in the apartment transfer. Appearing momentarily in broadcast coverage, she described the wave of online abuse and harassment she experienced after speaking to journalists. In subsequent reporting across other outlets, her testimony was either marginalized, questioned, or omitted altogether, while the focus shifted toward defending Nawrocki's family, with his wife and child increasingly framed as the primary victims of media pressure. By the end of the day, the apartment controversy had become a fully consolidated political news story, structured around competing statements, legal interpretations and reputational damage, and circulated across television, online news portals and social media. The gendered dynamics of voice, credibility and authority visible in this coverage are analyzed in Case Study 1.

In the early evening of 6 May 2025, migration became a prominent news story on right-wing broadcasters. Coverage on TV Republika and wPolsce24 focused on the planned establishment of Centers for the Integration of Foreigners, following local council sessions in early May in cities such as Piotrków Trybunalski and Radomsko, where the centers were formally debated and put to a vote. Footage from these meetings, including protests by residents and activists, provided the immediate news material used in broadcasts on the monitoring day. The framing was further amplified by reports alleging that German authorities were transferring migrants to Poland after the reintroduction of border controls; on 6 May, a reported border incident was repeatedly referenced and linked to the CICs, which were presented as future sites for these migrants. Across items, broadcasters relied heavily on generic footage of anonymous brown- and black-skinned men, while political actors and activists warning about "security" and an "increasing migration problem" dominated as speakers. Migrants themselves, particularly women and families who would live in the centers, were absent from the coverage. These stories form the basis for Case Study 2, which analyses how migration is framed as a security threat and political instrument through crisis language, selective sourcing, and racialized imagery, while policy context, legal frameworks, and migrants' own perspectives are systematically excluded.

Another dominant news story on 6 May 2025, across Polish media concerned newly published data on fertility decline. The immediate trigger was an estimate circulated by Birth Gauge, an international demographic tracker that analyses partial monthly birth data ahead of official statistical releases. The estimate suggested that Poland's total fertility rate had fallen to around 1.03 and that the number of births in early 2025 was approximately 10 percent lower than in the already record-low year 2024. The story entered the national media agenda through an article published by *Rzeczpospolita* titled "Fertility in Poland is scraping the bottom," which cited expert commentary and long-term population projections. The figures were quickly taken up by other outlets: *Ncza*s explicitly referenced *Rzeczpospolita*, while a population animation circulated on social media reached a mass audience and further amplified the issue. By the evening, the topic appeared in the main TVP1 bulletin as the segment "Shocking data on fertility," marking the consolidation of fertility decline as a

key news theme of the day. Taken together, the fertility coverage that day did more than report new demographic figures: it revealed a remarkably consistent way of narrating demographic decline across the Polish media landscape. The repetition of similar frames, metaphors and authoritative voices suggests the presence of a shared gendered master narrative that cuts across political divisions. This narrative becomes the focus of the gender-based analysis presented later in the report in Case Study 3.

The day ended with news about the 2025 Met Gala. This event, held on the day of the monitoring 6 May 2025, attracted significant attention in Polish media because the Met Gala is not only the world's most important fashion event, but in this particular year also carried a strong political and social charge. The theme of the exhibition, and by extension, the evening's dress code was *Superfine: Tailoring Black Style*. It was the first exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in over twenty years devoted exclusively to menswear, inspired by Monica L. Miller's book *Slaves to Fashion*. Black people thus entered the media, for once, as admired protagonists. The coverage of this event in Polish media diverged sharply. In TVN, the event was framed through a Western, progressive lens, with emphasis placed on historical context and symbolic meaning. Al Sharpton and Cynthia Erivo discussed how elegant dress can function as a symbol of Black dignity and resistance, while Anna Wintour urged viewers to support Black communities. TVP and Republika however filtered this news through a distinctly national frame. Instead of engaging with the history of Black dandyism, coverage focused on Magda Butrym, the Polish designer whose growing international visibility was treated as the central news value, and on white and locally familiar celebrities, a standard strategy used by media to domesticate distant global events for national audiences. This pattern, analyzed further in Case Study 4, helps explain why, despite occasional visibility, minorities remain marginal in Polish media: their presence not only depends on imported spectacles but is also quickly re-centered on white and national achievements.

Another news story on 6 May 2025 across Polish media concerned the murder of 16-year-old Maja from Mława and the online hate directed at her after her death. The story's visibility on the monitoring day was triggered by a procedural news peg: the prosecutor's office released preliminary autopsy findings stating that the girl had died as a result of repeated blows to the head. This announcement synchronized coverage across outlets and brought the case firmly into the national news agenda on that day. Major online portals and tabloids, including Super Express, expanded the story by combining investigative updates with emotional interviews with Maja's mother and relatives, reconstructions of her final messages, and screenshots of hostile social media comments. By contrast, some broadcasters, such as Radio Zet, reduced the event to a brief crime bulletin focused solely on procedural facts. Across outlets authority was voiced primarily through police and prosecutors. Taken together, the coverage of the femicide of 16-year-old Maja illustrates a familiar news trajectory in which a gendered act of violence becomes a story of the day through

individual tragedy and emotional amplification. These dynamics are examined in detail in Case Study 5.

THE CONTEXT

The monitoring took place on **6 May 2025**, an ordinary news day in a Polish media environment that had entered a transitional post-crisis phase following the change of government in late 2023. While legal and institutional disputes around public service media governance were ongoing, the most overt forms of political pressure and delegitimization of independent journalism had subsided.

At the same time, structural media polarization continues to shape editorial practices in Poland. News outlets remain differentiated by ownership structures, funding models, and institutional legacies, which influence framing, sourcing, and narrative emphasis. Such polarized environment channels “ordinary” coverage into predictable ideological scripts, reinforcing stable patterns of voice, authority, and contextualization observed on the monitoring day.

Editorial agendas nevertheless remained strongly structured by routinised “hard news” priorities, particularly politics, migration, security, and international affairs.

Media monitored and rationale for sampling

Media outlets were selected in accordance with GMMP methodology, based on **audience reach, national relevance, and political diversity**, covering press, radio, television, and online news.

Newspapers

Five national newspapers with the highest average circulation and diverse editorial profiles were monitored:

1. Fakt (centre-populist tabloid; 101,889 average copies sold per issue²)
2. Super Express (populist-nationalist tabloid; 56,607)
3. Gazeta Wyborcza (liberal opinion daily; 27,710)
4. Rzeczpospolita (liberal-conservative opinion daily; 22,877)
5. Dziennik Gazeta Prawna (centre-right, legal and business daily; 21,378)

Radio

Ten radio stations were selected based on listenership and political positioning. From each station, **three main news bulletins** were monitored, resulting in **30 radio news services**:

² Average paid sales per issue (print + e-paper), Q2 2025 (April–June).
<https://www.pbc.pl/wynikiprasa-plus/>

1. RMF FM – Fakty: 06:00, 12:00, 16:00 (28.5% audience share³).
2. Radio Zet – Wiadomości: 08:00, 12:00, 18:00 (12.1%)
3. Radio Eska – Serwis informacyjny: 08:00, 14:00, 17:00 (7.6%)
4. Polskie Radio Jedynka – Aktualności: 07:00, 13:00, 17:00 (5.6%)
5. Polskie Radio Trójka – Serwis: 06:00, 12:00, 16:00 (3.3%)
6. TOK FM – Wiadomości: 08:00, 14:00, 18:00 (2.4%)
7. Radio Maryja – Serwis informacyjny: 08:00, 14:00, 18:00 (1.1%)
8. Radio Nowy Świat – News programme: 07:00, 13:00, 18:00 (No data)
9. Radio Kampus – News programme: 07:30, 16:30, 18:30 (No data)
10. Radio 357 – News programme: 07:00, 16:00, 18:00 (No data)

Television

Ten television stations were selected based on national reach, ownership structure, and political relevance. In total, **19 television news bulletins** were monitored across ten stations:

1. TVP1 (public service) – Wiadomości: 08:00, 12:00, 19:30
2. TVP2 (public service) – Panorama: 10:40, 18:00
3. TVP Info (public service) – Serwis Info: 10:00, 21:20; Info Dzień: 16:00
4. Polsat (private) – Wydarzenia: 18:50
5. Polsat News (private) – W Rytmie Dnia: 09:00; Wydarzenia: 15:50, 21:50
6. TVN (private) – Fakty: 19:00
7. TVN24 (private) – Fakty po południu: 16:00; Dzień po dniu: 23:00
8. TV Trwam (private, owned by Catholic Church) – Informacje Dnia: 20:00
9. TV Republika (private) – Express 17:20; Dzisiaj: 19:00
10. wPolsce24 (private) – Wiadomości wPolsce24: 19:30

Online news services

Online outlets were selected based on **monthly reach (Real Users)** and ideological diversity:

1. Onet.pl (17,961,588 RU⁴)
2. Interia.pl (16,279,056 RU)
3. WP.pl (16,079,472 RU)
4. Gazeta.pl (10,826,136 RU)
5. Nczas.com (No data)
6. Niezalezna.pl (No data)

³ Audience share (all 15–75s) in the period July–September 2020.

⁴ Metric: Real Users (RU), May 2025 (the closest full month to 6 May), all devices.

Monitoring team

The monitoring was conducted by a national team of volunteer coders trained in GMMP coding procedures. The national coordinators also participated in the coding and were responsible for training and supervising the team. The team in alphabetical order (by surname):

- Olga Godziejewicz • Greta Gober

- Dominika Kochańczyk
- Oskar Krasoń
- Anna Kurach
- Margaret Ohia-Nowak
- Maria Platos
- Milena Smolińska

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

A total of **362 news stories were monitored** in Poland (Table 1). The distribution across media types was relatively balanced, with no single medium overwhelmingly dominating the sample.

	Print	Radio	Television	Online	All media
Number of stories	103	57	124	78	362
%	28%	16%	34%	22%	100%

Table 1. Monitoring sample. Number of news items monitored. GMMP 2025 Poland.

The topics of the 362 news stories that Poles could read, hear, or watch on 6 May 2025 were diverse, although political and social issues clearly dominated (Figure 1). Most stories focused on politics and government activities (124 news stories, or 34% of all items), followed by social and legal issues (93 stories / 26%). The next group included reports on crime and violence (51 stories / 14%) and economic news (27 stories / 7%). The least represented categories were science and health (16 stories / 4%) and gender-based violence (12 stories / 3%).

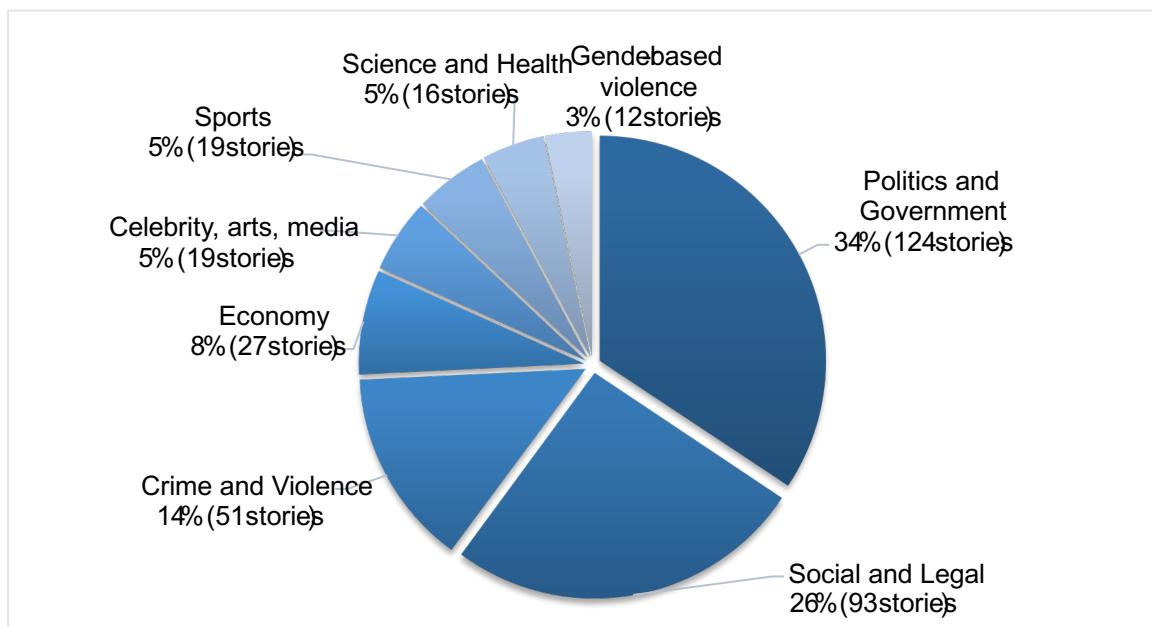


Figure 1: Monitoring sample. Major news topics. GMMP 2025 Poland.

The distribution of topics across legacy and online media reveals both differences, as well as some surprising tendencies (Table 2). The largest share of stories on politics and government appears in radio (46%), online media (44%), and television (35%), while in the press this proportion is the lowest (19%). The press, traditionally regarded as an analytical and opinion-shaping medium, thus appears the least political in numerical terms.

Social and legal issues remain a defining feature of the press's overall agenda, accounting for 35% of all print stories, compared with 28% in radio and 24% in television. Online, they represent only 14% of content. Scientific, health, and economic stories have a relatively modest presence across all media.

Major news topics	Print	Radio	TV	Online
Politics and Government	19%	46%	35%	44%
Economy	7%	11%	5%	10%
Science and Health	7%	4%	1%	8%
Social and Legal	35%	28%	24%	14%
Crime and Violence (excluding gender-based violence)	15%	9%	19%	10%
Gender-based violence	3%	2%	0%	10%
Celebrity, arts, media	8%	0%	8%	1%
Sports	7%	2%	7%	3%
Other	0%	0%	1%	0%

Table 2. Monitoring sample. Major news topics by media types. GMMP 2025 Poland.

Differences are also visible in how various media cover violence. *Crime and Violence (excluding gender-based violence)* news appear most frequently in television (19%) and print (15%), reflecting these media visual (and hence dramatic) orientation, while they are less common in radio (9%) and online (10%). *Gender-based violence* remains marginal across all media, accounting for only 3% of monitored news stories. While such coverage is entirely absent from television (0%) and more visible in online news (10%), this difference should not be read as evidence of qualitatively improved reporting. The greater presence of gender-based violence in digital media may reflect higher responsiveness to activist agendas and social media discourse. However, the quality of this coverage remains problematic. As Case Study 5 demonstrates, even high-profile violence against girls can be reported as generic crime or violence rather than as gender-based violence, revealing a persistent failure to recognize and frame such incidents as structurally gendered within Polish news reporting.

NEWS SUBJECTS AND SOURCES

A total of **1,260 news subjects and sources (people in the news)** were identified across all monitored media in Poland: 511 in television, 405 in online media, 237 in press, and 107 in radio. Of these, **345 (27%) were women**. The gender gap was even wider in **legacy media** (print, radio, and television), where women account for only **25% of people in the news**, while **online media** present a slightly more

balanced picture, with women representing **32%** of all news subjects and sources (Figure 2).

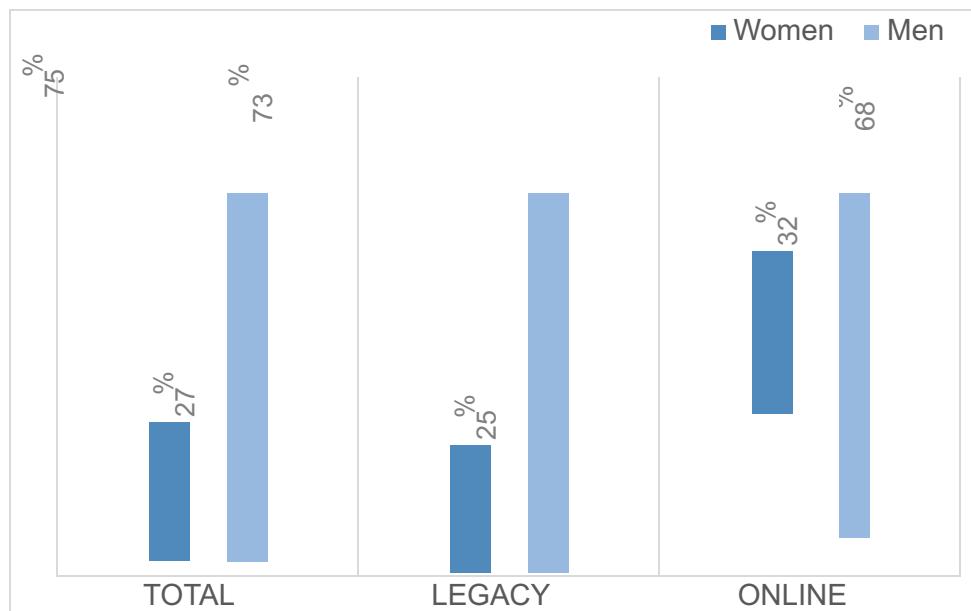


Figure 2. Gender of people in the news by media types. GMMP 2025 Poland.

27% total of female news subjects and sources in 2025 represents a decrease compared with 2020 (28%) (Table 3). The figures in traditional media have fluctuated a little over time. By contrast, online media have shown significant progress over the years - the share of women as news subjects and sources has doubled, from 16% in 2015 to 32% in 2025.

Women as news subjects and sources	2025	2020	2015 ⁵	2010 ⁶
Legacy media (print, radio, TV)	25%	27%	23%	28%
Online media	32%	32%	16%	no data

Table 3. Women as news subjects and sources by media types in Poland in 2010–2025.

If we look at the gender gap across news topics, men dominated every thematic category in 2025. In the hard-news areas, *Politics and Government, Economy,*

Social and Legal, and Crime and Violence (excluding GBV), women's presence remained below 30%, with men accounting for roughly two-thirds to three-quarters of all news subjects and sources. Women appeared more frequently only in topics associated with softer news. Their representation was highest in *Celebrity, arts, and*

⁵ [GMMP 2015 Poland](#) identified 767 news subjects and sources in 359 monitored news stories on 25 March 2015.

⁶ [GMMP 2010 Poland](#) identified 253 news subjects and sources in 318 monitored news stories on 29 November 2009.

media, where they approach parity (46%). In stories about *Sports* women represent $\frac{1}{3}$ of all news subjects and sources. In *gender-based violence* news, where women are most often the central subjects of coverage, women represented 36% of news subjects and sources (Figure 3).

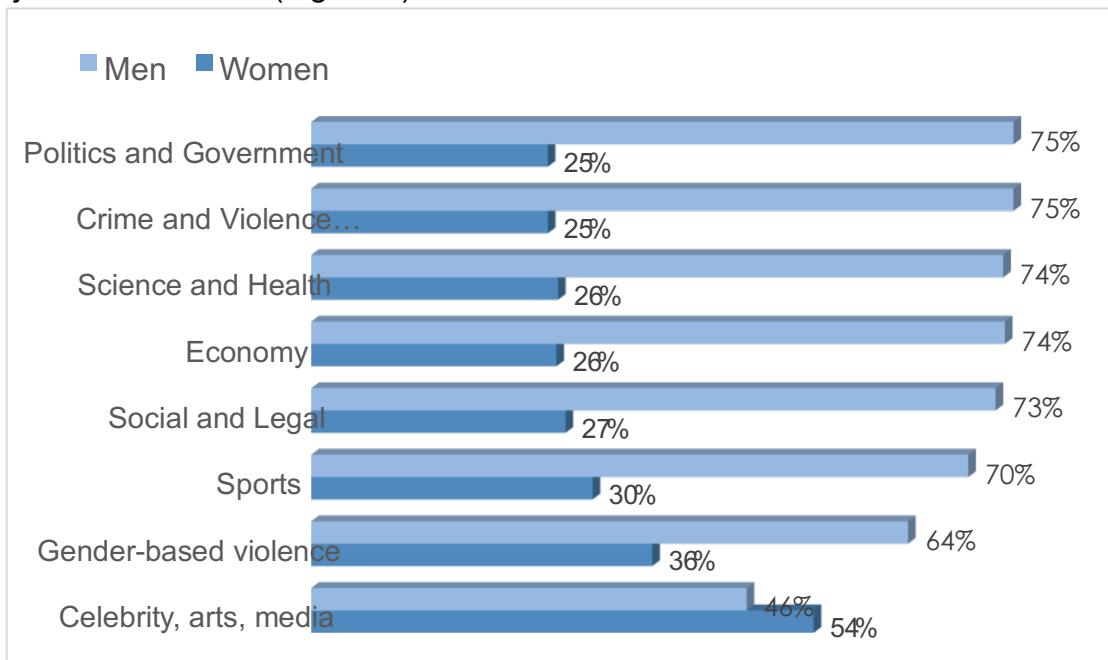


Figure 3. Gender of people in the news by major news topics. GMMP 2025 Poland.

If we look at the presence of women in the news from a geographical perspective – that is, whether a given news item referred to events of local, national, regional or international significance – we see a very similar pattern as in 2020: women are most visible in news closer to home, and considerably less visible once coverage moves beyond the local sphere. Women were featured most often in local news (47% of news subjects and sources), the only category approaching gender parity. In all other categories their visibility was markedly lower: in national and regional news women constituted 28% and 30% of news subjects and sources respectively, and only 17% in foreign and international news (Figure 4). This again shows that women remain most visible in news framed as close to everyday life and least visible in stories positioned as globally or politically significant.

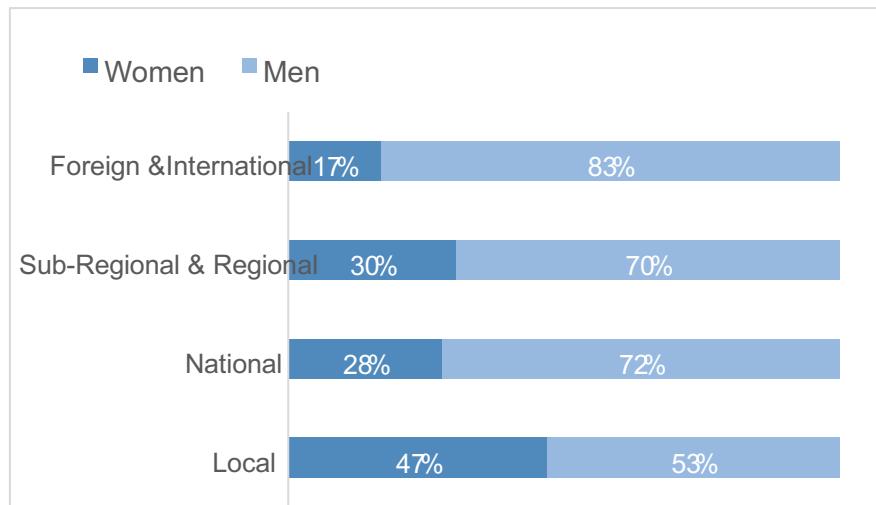


Figure 4. Gender of people in the news by geographic scope of coverage. GMMP 2025 Poland.

Occupations of people in the news

To analyze the occupations of the 1,260 people that appeared in the news, we used a standardized list of 25 occupational categories (see Annex 1). This scheme spanned a wide spectrum of social roles, from political, administrative, professional, scientific, and business positions to manual and service occupations, as well as categories for people whose occupation was not stated. It also includes students, homemakers, children, retirees, celebrities, athletes, activists, and an 'Other' category used only when none of the specified groups applies.

In practice, however, the breadth of this classification proved to be largely theoretical. Across the news sample, the occupations of news subjects were strikingly homogeneous: the top ten categories accounted for 80% of all news subjects (Table 4).

Occupation	N	%	Cumulative %
Politician/ member of parliament	499	40%	
Government employee, public servant, spokesperson	107	8%	
Student, pupil, schoolchild	64	5%	
Not stated	62	5%	
Religious figure, priest, nun	61	5%	
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	55	4%	
Celebrity, artist, actor, writer, singer, TV personality	43	3%	

Media professional, journalist, filmmaker	42	3%	
Businessperson, exec, manager, stockbroker	41	3%	
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach	39	3%	80%

Table 4. Top 10 occupations of people in the news, with cumulative shares. GMMP 2025 Poland.

Of the 1,260 people that appeared in news across the monitored media, political actors dominated decisively, accounting for 40% of all news subjects and sources. They were followed by government employees, public servants and spokespersons (8%). Students or schoolchildren, religious figures, and subjects and sources whose occupation was not stated each accounted for 5%, while academic experts and teachers represented 4%. Celebrities, media professionals, businesspeople, and sportspersons each accounted for around 3% of news subjects and sources. Altogether, the ten most frequent occupational categories accounted for 80% of all news subjects and sources, underscoring the strong concentration of news visibility in political and state-oriented roles.

If we look at these occupational categories from a gender perspective, the picture becomes more differentiated. Women were most visible among people whose occupation was not stated (60%), among students and schoolchildren (53%), and in the broad world of public administration (government employees, public servants and spokespersons) (51%). Representation was close to parity in the category of celebrities and cultural figures (47% women, 53% men). However, in categories associated with institutional power, authority, or specialized expertise, men clearly dominated. Men accounted for 86% of politicians, 85% of business leaders, 78% of academic experts and teachers, and 76% of media professionals. Unequal authority is evident in both the coverage of political scandals (Case Study 1) and demographic reporting (Case Study 3), in which men dominate interpretive roles. In sports, men also dominated (67%). This distribution shows that women's visibility remains concentrated in less powerful or less clearly defined occupational roles, while men continue to dominate positions linked to political authority, economic power, and expert status (Figure 5).

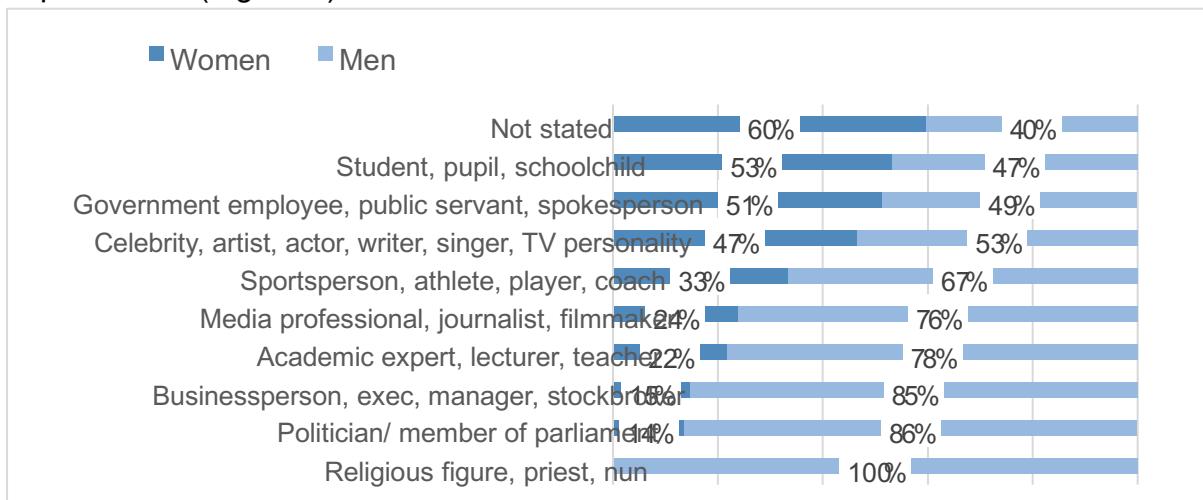


Figure 5. Gender of top 10 occupations of people in the news. GMMP 2025 Poland.

Function of people in the news

If we look at the function that the 1,260 people (all news subjects and sources) played in the media, the distribution is heavily concentrated in three categories. The largest group were people who appeared as the direct subject of the news item - 43% of all subjects. Experts or commentators followed at 28%, and spokespersons or representatives speaking on behalf of others made up a further 18% (Table 5).

Subject	546	43%
Expert or commentator	347	28%
Spokesperson	227	18%
Personal experience	107	8%
Popular opinion	16	1%
Eyewitness	7	1%
Do not know	7	1%
Other	3	0%

Table 5. Function of people in the news. GMMP 2025 Poland.

Functions that introduce individual perspectives into the news appear far less frequently. Only 8% of people in the news are included to share personal experience, while just 1% are cited to express popular opinion and a further 1% appear as eyewitnesses. When such voices are included, they are typically positioned as affective or illustrative rather than authoritative, a pattern reinforced by the case studies, which show that personal experience is frequently feminized and dismissed (Case Study 1), and that groups directly affected by policy decisions, such as migrants, may be rendered entirely voiceless (Case Study 2).

Overall, both legacy and online news continue to rely primarily on people who are talked about, people who explain, and people who speak on behalf of institutions, leaving very limited space for ordinary voices.

If we look at these functions through a gender lens, the pattern becomes more uneven. Women are most strongly represented in functions that are least prevalent in news coverage. They accounted for 86% of eyewitnesses, although this category comprised only a very small number of news subjects and sources overall. Women also constituted a majority among those illustrating popular opinion (69%) and were

relatively well represented among people included for their personal experience (43%). By contrast, roles that structure news production were overwhelmingly male. Men accounted for 78% of news subjects, 74% of experts or commentators, and 72% of spokespersons. Taken together, these distributions show that women's visibility is highest in functions associated with testimony, opinion, or experience, while men continue to dominate functions linked to authority, expertise, and institutional voice (Figure 6).

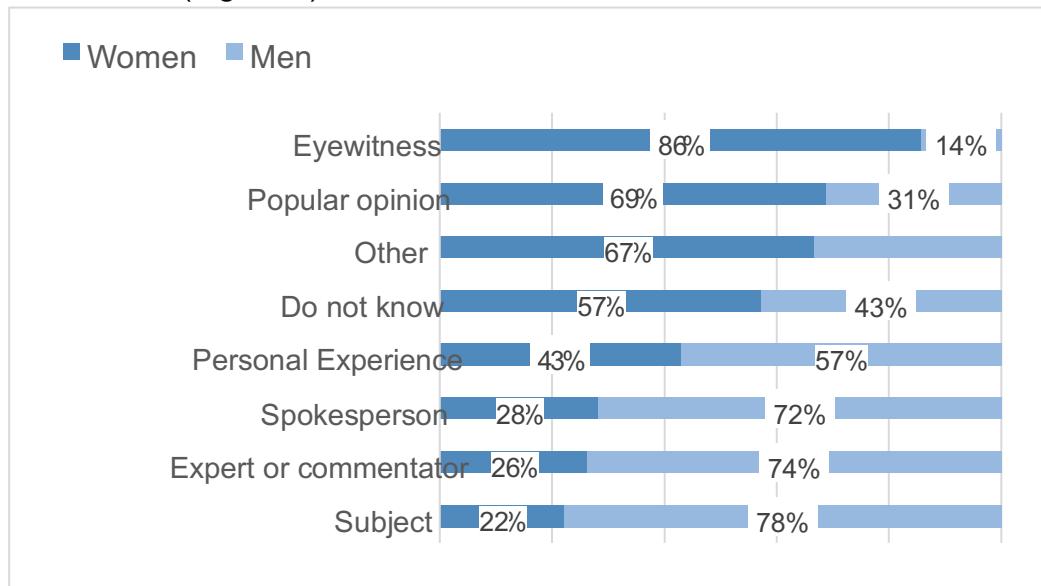


Figure 6. Gender and function of people in the news. GMMP 2025 Poland.

Family status of people in the news

The 2025 results show that identification of people in the news through family roles remains present across media types, but its gendered character varies by platform. Among women, the share of those identified through family status is similar in legacy and online news (11% and 9% respectively), indicating that women's framing through relational descriptors does not substantially change with digital publication (Figure 7).

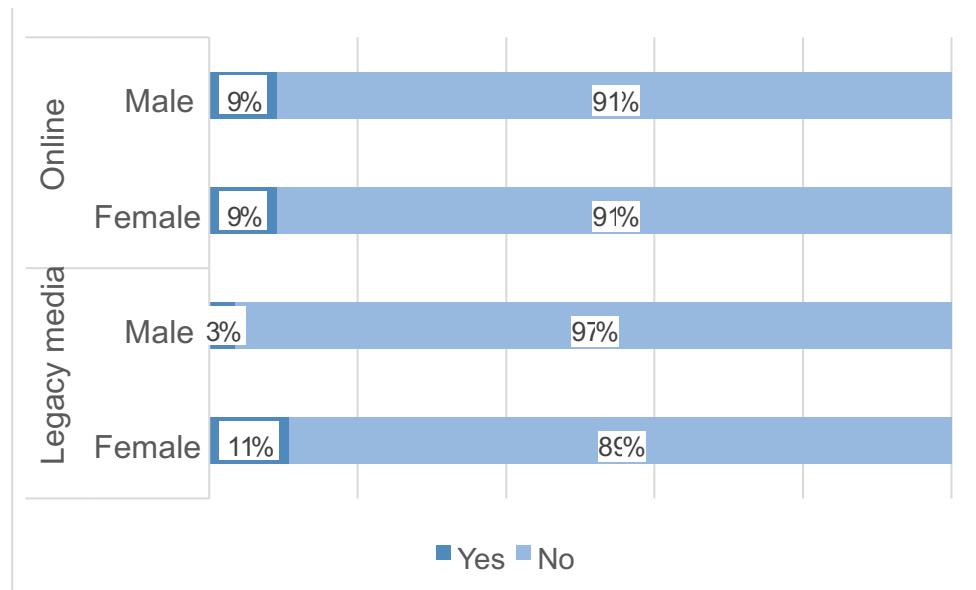


Figure 7. Gender and 'family status' of people in the news. GMMP 2025 Poland. In online news, men are identified through family status at a comparable rate to women (9%), in contrast to legacy media, where such framing of men is rare (3%). This convergence does not indicate a de-gendering of news discourse. Rather, it reflects the incorporation of more personalized and relational narrative styles in online journalism, which extend family-based descriptors to male subjects without displacing their broader association with public authority and agency. Gender and media research has consistently shown that while relational framing of women is routinized and structurally embedded, its application to men tends to be contextual and episodic, leaving underlying hierarchies of visibility and authority intact. For instance, political reporting can redefine victims through family-based framing (Case Study 1), whereas celebrity reporting often makes women newsworthy based on their pregnancies and personal lives (Case Study 4).

Because of the small number of cases, no further disaggregation is possible. However, even at this limited scale, the data point to the persistence of symbolic asymmetries in how relationality and public agency are unevenly normalized in news narratives.

Age of people in television news

Age was coded only in television and press, and only when it was explicitly mentioned or could be inferred from context or an accompanying image. This limits the analysis to those cases where age could be reliably identified.

In television news (Table 6), the largest group were middle-aged adults (31–50), followed by 'young old' 51–64 and 'older adult' 65–79 group. Younger people appeared much less frequently: young adults (20–30) and teenagers (13–19) each made up 5% of identifiable subjects and news sources. Children and adults 80+ were almost entirely absent.

Age of people on TV (total)		Women %	Men%
Middle age (31-50)	213	25%	75%
Young old (51-64)	150	19%	81%
Older adult (65-79)	71	15%	85%
Young adult (20-30)	27	44%	56%
Teenager (13-19)	23	30%	70%
Elderly (80+)	3	0%	100%
Child (12 and under)	1	0%	100%
Do not know	23 (5%)	26%	74%

Table 6. Age of people appearing in TV news. GMMP 2025 Poland.

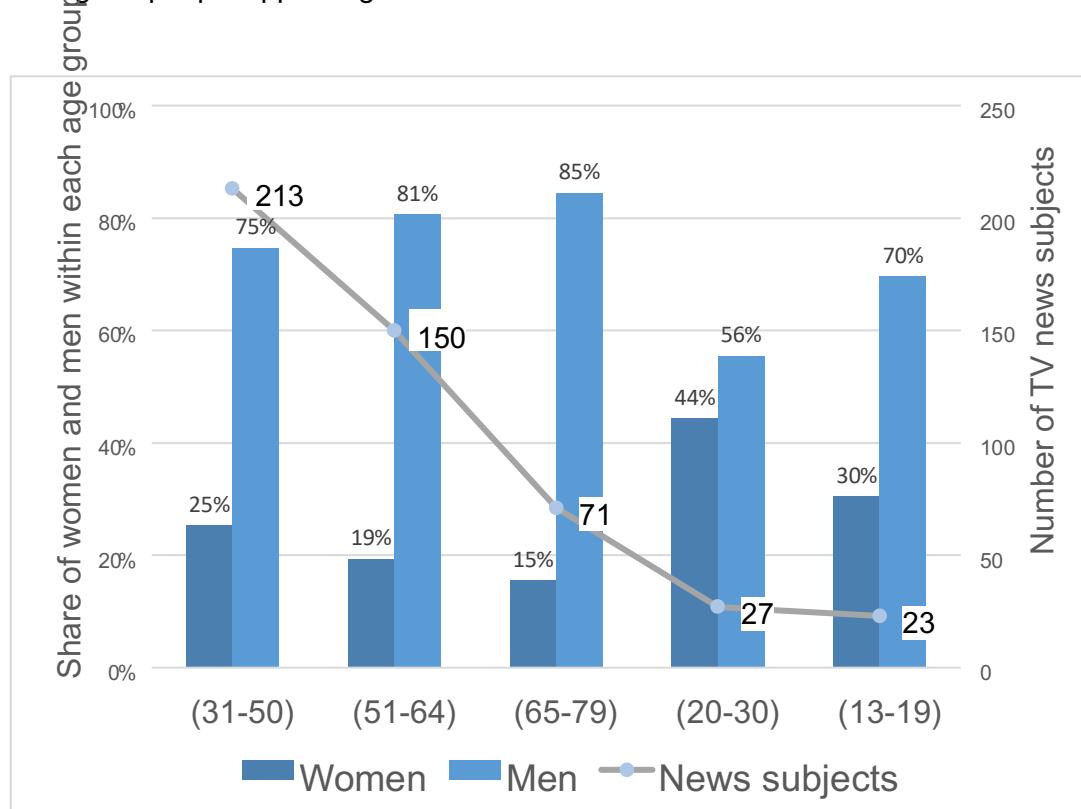


Figure 8. Gender and age of people in TV news. GMMP 2025 Poland⁷.

However, when looking at the age of people in TV news through a gender lens, a very conventional picture of public authority emerges. TV news is built around middle-aged and older adults, but within these groups it is overwhelmingly men who are allowed to occupy the visible, newsworthy roles. Men make up 75% of all people aged 31–50, 81% of those aged 51–64, and 85% in the 65–79 group – exactly the

⁷ Bars show the share of women and men within each age group. The line indicates the total number of people in television news in each age group.

life-course stages where institutional power, seniority and expert status tend to accumulate. In other words, the older and more “authoritative” the age group, the more clearly it is reserved for men. Women’s visibility grows only when both age and authority decline. The highest share of women appears among young adults (44%) and teenagers (30%), but these groups are numerically marginal in the sample. This suggests a familiar gendered pattern of ageing: men gain symbolic capital with age and are kept in the frame as decision-makers and experts, while women’s presence thins out precisely in those age groups where professional experience would be highest. When women do appear, it is more often as young women than as older authorities (Figure 8).

Taken together, the figure illustrates not just that TV news is dominated by men, but that it privileges a very specific subject: the middle-aged and older man as the standard bearer of public voice, and treats women’s visibility as conditional - more acceptable when they are younger, and far less so when they occupy the same life stages in which men are coded as credible and authoritative.

Intersectional analysis

Across all the people appearing in the news on the monitoring day (1,260 subjects and sources), only **61 were identified as belonging to a racial, ethnic, religious, or other minoritized group (5%)**. This extremely low number confirms the persistent symbolic exclusion of minorities from mainstream news in Poland and reveals how tightly constrained the boundaries of public visibility remain.

Gender compounds this marginalization. Of the 61 minority subjects and sources, only 18 were women. While this proportion is slightly higher than the overall representation of women among all people in news (30% compared to 27% overall), the absolute numbers show a clear **intersectional invisibility**: minority women occupy a doubly peripheral position, underrepresented both as women and as members of racial, ethnic, or religious minoritized groups. In practice this means that minority women are severely underrepresented in the news, accounting for **1.4% of all people appearing** in Polish news.

Across media types, the pattern remains consistent. Online news featured 37 persons representing minoritized groups (8 women and 29 men), while legacy media together featured 24 minorities (10 women and 14 men). Minority women remain a small fraction even within this already limited group (Figure 9).

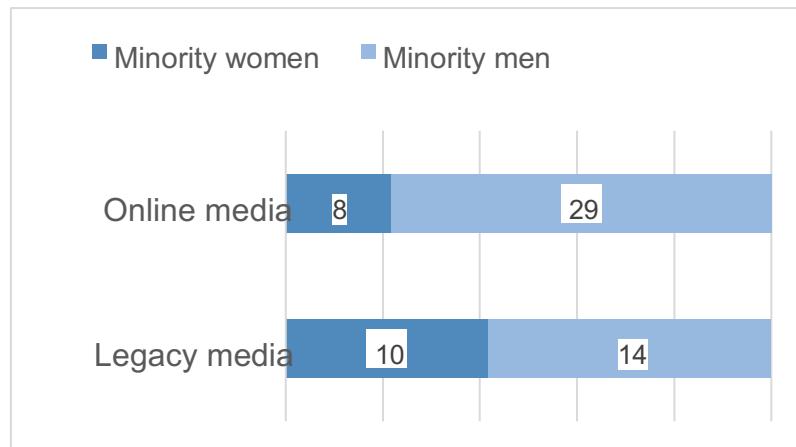


Figure 9. Intersectional analysis – people in the news. GMMP 2025 Poland.

The following insights further illustrate how this invisibility manifests in the Polish news:

Presence mediated by white voices: Even when minoritized groups are the topic of news - such as in the story about migration integration - their presence is mediated by white institutional voices. News on migrant integration centers featured Polish male politicians, while the migrant women and families who would typically live in those centers were absent as subjects or sources (see Case Study 2).

Spectacle-driven Visibility: Minority visibility often relies on exceptional, spectacle driven events rather than routine reporting. That already extremely low number of minority subjects and sources in the Polish monitoring was inflated by coverage of the Met Gala, a foreign cultural event focused on Black male fashion in the United States. More on the actual and problematic coverage of this event can be found in the case studies section (Case Study 4).

JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS

As in previous GMMP rounds, people working in the news were analyzed according to the roles they performed – anchors/announcers, reporters, and ‘other’ journalists who, especially in radio and television, often appear as on-air experts. This role based approach is central for understanding how gendered divisions of labor persist within news production, and how particular journalistic positions become differently accessible to women and men.

In 2025, a total of **548 news personnel**: anchors/announcers, presenters and journalists were identified across all media. Of these, 252 were men (46%), 215 were women (39%), and in 81 cases (15%) the gender could not be determined (Table 7).

Anchors/announcers, reporters and ‘other’ journalists	Total	Women	Men	Gender not known
Radio	128	65	63	0
TV	229	106	123	0
Press	103	18	23	62
Online	88	26	43	19
Total	548	215 (39%)	252 (46%)	81 (15%)

Table 7. Gender of news personnel by media type. GMMP 2025 Poland.

The most balanced representation of news personnel appeared in radio (51% women, 49% men), followed by television and the press, while online newsrooms showed the weakest parity (38% women, 62% men) (Figure 10⁷).

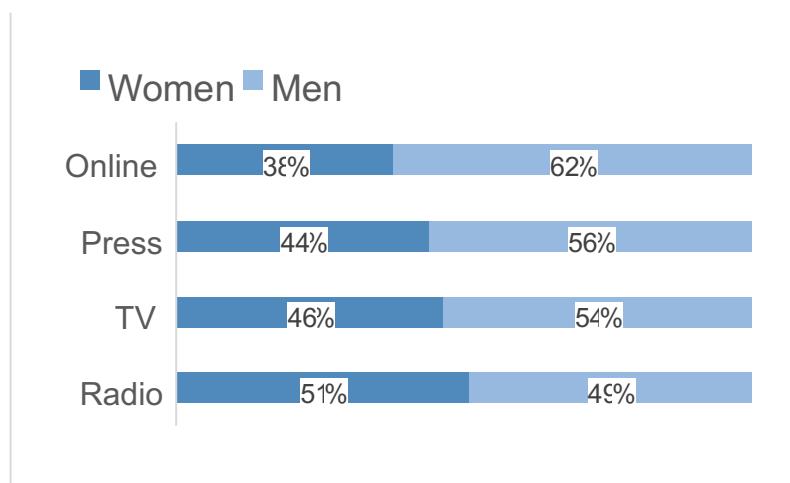


Figure 10. Gender of news personnel by media type. GMMP 2025 Poland.

Across all media, the most common journalistic role was that of a reporter (N=249), followed by anchors/announcers (N=203). This distribution partly reflects the coding

⁷ For figure 10, cases coded as 'gender not known' were removed, resulting in different totals for each medium, specifically N=41 for the press and N=69 for online media.

structure: in both the press and online media only the role of reporter was coded, whereas broadcasting includes anchors/announcers and other journalists as well (Table 8).

		Women	Men
Anchor/announcer	203	121	82
Reporter	249	94	155
Other journalist	15	0	15
Total	467	215	252

Table 8. Gender and role of news personnel. GMMP 2025 Poland.

Women were most present in anchor/announcer roles, making up the majority in both television (64 women vs. 40 men) and radio (57 vs. 42). By contrast, reporting roles were dominated by men across all media: in TV (69 men vs. 42 women), radio (20 vs. 8), the press (23 vs. 18), and online (43 vs. 26). The category of other journalists was exclusively male (15 men total). Taken together, these distributions indicate that women are more present in presenter-type roles - positions linked to continuity and communication - while men continue to dominate reporting and specialized journalistic functions, reflecting wider gendered divisions of labor within news production (Table 9; Figure 11).

		Total	Women	Men
TV	Anchor/announcer	104	64	40
	Reporter	111	42	69
	'Other' journalist	14	0	14
Radio	Anchor/announcer	99	57	42
	Reporter	28	8	20
	'Other' journalist	1	0	1
Press	Reporter	41	18	23
Online	Reporter	69	26	43

Table 9. Gender and role of news personnel by media type. GMMP 2025 Poland.

As reporting is the most numerically dominant journalistic role in the Polish GMMP 2025 sample, its gender composition is particularly important for understanding how

news agendas are produced. Reporters play a central role in selecting stories, choosing sources, and shaping news narratives. Men's dominance in this central role indicates that editorial authority and interpretive power remain structurally male coded. Even where women are more visible in presentational roles, control over the core production of news continues to rest primarily with men, reinforcing gendered divisions of journalistic labor documented across GMMP cycles (Figure 11).

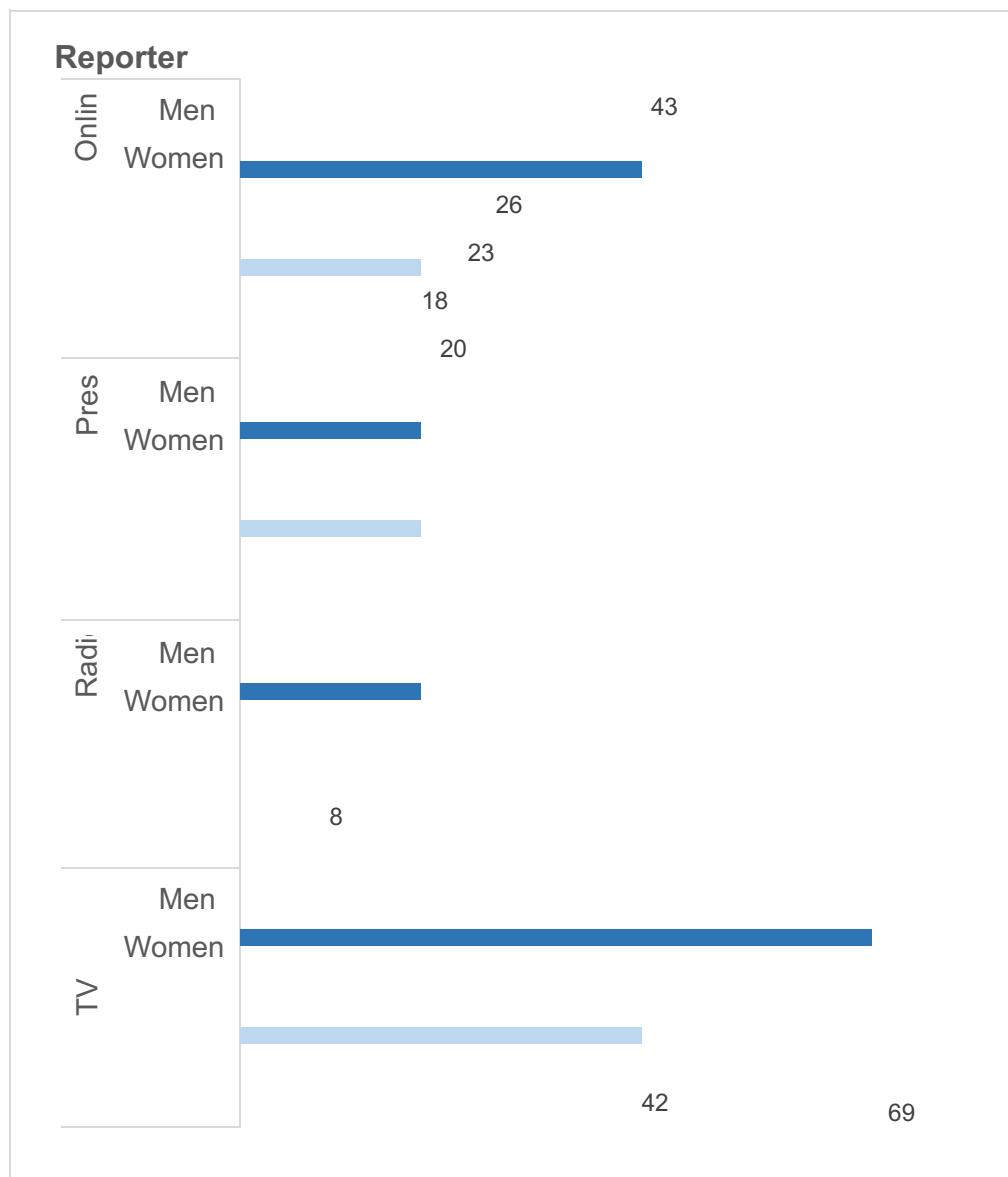


Figure 11. Reporters by gender and by media type. GMMP 2025 Poland.

JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE: ON WOMEN'S CENTRALITY, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND EQUALITY PERSPECTIVES IN REPORTING

We can draw the conclusion that the share of women working across all media (39%), which is considerably closer to gender balance, does not translate into a higher proportion of women appearing in the news (27%). Women may be present within media production roles, yet the stories covered, the voices selected, and the actors granted newsworthy status remain disproportionately male. This gap between organizational participation and representational visibility highlights how gendered logics of news selection persist regardless of staff composition.

Given this persistent gap in numerical visibility, the question then becomes more nuanced: even if women do not appear more often in the news, is there any visible change in how gender is handled within news content? The following section addresses this by examining indicators that move beyond visibility alone, focusing on women's centrality in news stories, the extent to which reporting reinforces or challenges gender stereotypes, and the treatment of gender equality or inequality as a substantive issue in news coverage.

Women's centrality

Women's centrality in the news is assessed as whether a news story is primarily about a woman or a group of women, or about issues that particularly affect women. This measure focuses on the narrative center of the story, rather than on the presence of women as sources, experts, or secondary actors.

The results show that most news stories across all media did not center women in the narratives. Out of 362 news stories monitored, only **39 stories (11%)** centered women. Print media recorded the highest share of stories that centered on women (23 stories/ 22%), followed by online news (13 stories/ 17%). In contrast, television and radio rarely centered women, with only 2% of stories in each medium focusing on a woman or a group of women (Table 10, Figure 12).

	Yes	No	Total
Print	23	80	103
Radio	1	56	57
Television	2	122	124
Online	13	65	78

Table 10. Women's centrality in news by media type. GMMP 2025 Poland.

■ Yes ■ No

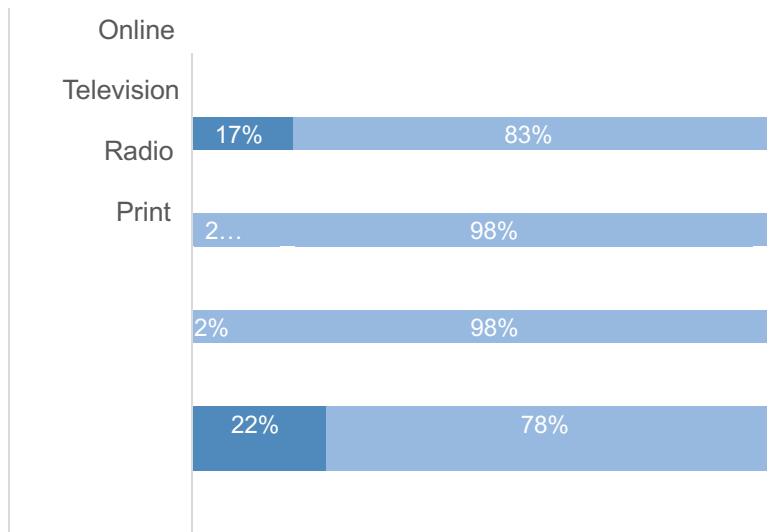


Figure 12. Women's centrality in news by media type. GMMP 2025 Poland.

This pattern indicates that women's limited numerical presence in the news is reinforced by low levels of narrative centrality, particularly in broadcast media, where women are seldom positioned as the primary subjects (as individuals or as a group) around which stories are structured.

The thematic distribution of stories in which women are placed at the center of the narrative reveals a strongly gendered logic of newsworthiness (Figure 13). Women's centrality is concentrated in crime and violence and gender-based violence stories (both 26%), as well as in celebrity, arts, and media (23%). It declines markedly in sports (15%) and in politics and government (10%), and is **entirely absent in coverage of the economy, science and health, and social and legal affairs (0%)**. This pattern reflects entrenched journalistic routines that masculinize agenda-setting beats, while assigning women's centrality primarily to violence-related and cultural domains. As a result, women are most often made central in stories where authority, expertise, and institutional power are least at stake. For example, in Case Study 4, footage of women plays a central role, yet they appear mainly as celebrities or potential mothers, rather than as interpretive authorities.

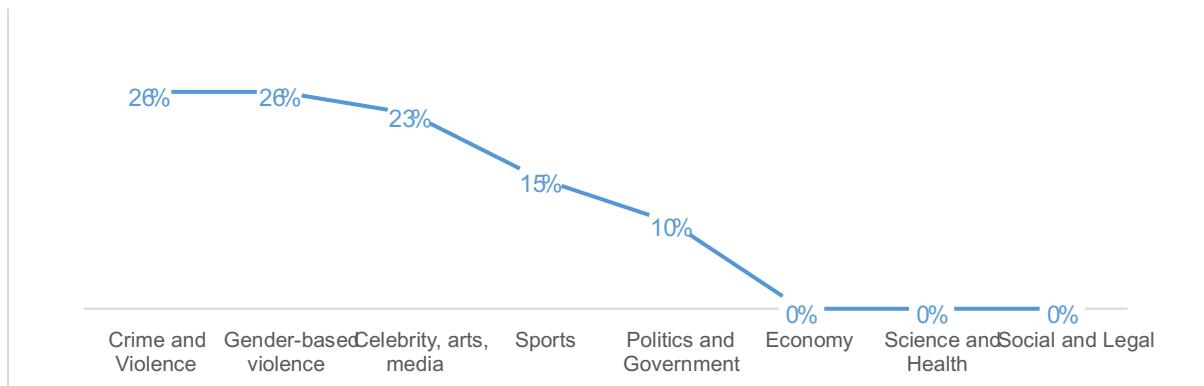


Figure 13. Women's centrality in news by major news topic. GMMP 2025 Poland.

Gender stereotypes

Each news story was assessed for whether it clearly challenged or reinforced gender stereotypes. Coders evaluated the language, imagery, and narrative framing of stories to determine whether they reproduced widely shared assumptions about women and men, or whether they explicitly disrupted such assumptions by presenting counter-stereotypical roles, competencies, or perspectives.

The results show that **stereotype-challenging reporting was virtually absent** across all media platforms. In online news, 60 stories were coded as reinforcing gender stereotypes (77% of all monitored stories), while none were coded as clearly challenging them. In legacy media, 112 stories (39%) were identified as perpetuating stereotypes, compared with only one story that explicitly challenged stereotypical gender assumptions (Figure 14). Two case studies included in the report illustrate how gender stereotypes can be reproduced in different thematic contexts (see Case Study 3 and 4).

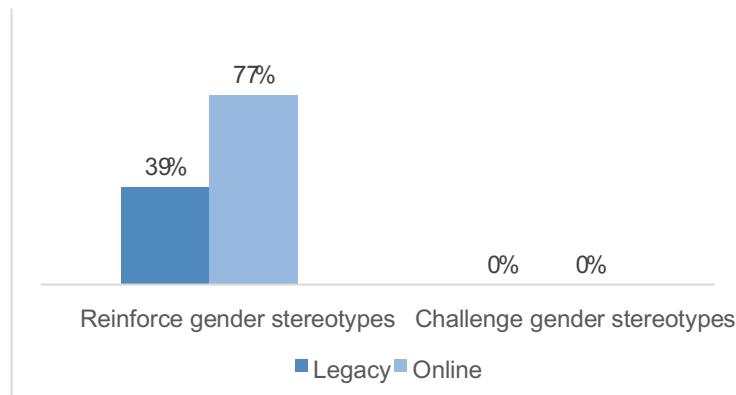


Figure 14. News challenging/reinforcing gender stereotypes by media type. GMMP 2025 Poland.

These findings indicate that, within the monitored sample, news coverage overwhelmingly relied on conventional gender frames. While many stories did not meet the threshold for being coded as explicitly stereotypical, instances where journalism actively questioned dominant gender assumptions were virtually absent.

Gender equality and inequality in news content

This part of the analysis examines whether news stories explicitly address issues of gender equality or inequality between women and men. Stories were coded as doing so only when they directly addressed structural disparities, such as unequal access to resources, discrimination, or gendered differences in outcomes or opportunities. Stories were coded as 'yes' when gender inequality constituted an explicit focus of

the coverage. They were coded as 'no' when gender equality or inequality could reasonably have been addressed - given the topic or actors involved - but was not. A third category, '*not applicable*', was used for stories in which questions of gender equality were analytically irrelevant, such as sports coverage, technical or logistical news, or event-driven reporting without a social or policy dimension.

This distinction makes it possible to differentiate between stories that omit gender inequality where it could have been addressed and stories for which such a frame is not relevant, thereby avoiding an overestimation of gender-blind reporting. The results show that across all media, more than half of news stories (**199 stories, 55%**) had the potential to engage with gender equality or inequality, as they covered topics in which such issues were relevant. This pattern was most pronounced in online news, where 78% of stories (61 out of 78) fell into this category, compared with 49% (138 out of 284) in legacy media (Table 11). Similarly, Case studies 1 and 3 demonstrate missed opportunities to link highly gendered issues, such as care arrangements and fertility, to structural gender inequality.

	Number of stories	% (of total stories in medium type)
Legacy media	138	49%
Online media	61	78%
All media	199	55%

Table 11. News relevant for gender equality/inequality analysis by media type. GMMP 2025 Poland.

Despite the relatively large share of stories in which a gender equality or inequality perspective was applicable, neither online nor legacy media translated this potential into substantive engagement. In online news, none of the applicable stories addressed gender equality or inequality, while in legacy media this was true for 1% of cases (Figure 15).

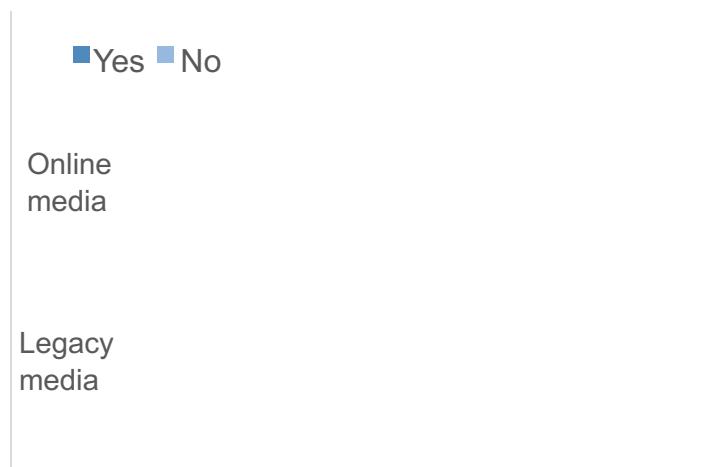




Figure 15. Inclusion of gender equality/inequality perspectives in relevant news by media type. GMMP 2025 Poland.

The fact that online media contained a higher proportion of stories in which such a perspective was applicable is analytically significant. It indicates that online news more often operates in thematic areas where questions of gender equality could be meaningfully raised. However, this greater potential is not matched by greater engagement. Instead, it points to a pattern in which online media reproduce conventional reporting frames even in contexts where gendered inequalities could be made visible.

FOCUS ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a “blind spot” in global news coverage. While this type of violence affects one in three women and girls worldwide, it accounts for less than 2% of total news stories. In Poland the picture is very similar. **Gender based violence** remains marginal in all media, with only **12 (3%) stories covering** it. In **legacy media (press, TV and radio)** **4 (1,4%)** of stories focused on violence against women and noticeably more in online news – **8 (10%)**. In the 12 stories that covered GBV on the day of the monitoring – 33 people (news subjects and sources) were included, of which 12 were women. This means that women’s visibility was higher in GBV news (36%) compared to the news in general (27%). This increased visibility of women in GBV-related news **showed a different gender pattern** than news coverage overall.

Polish GBV coverage is strongly concentrated on intimate partner violence against women. Of the 33 people appearing in GBV-related stories, 31 were associated with intimate partner violence, while only 2 cases referred to other forms of gender-based violence, particularly femicide and trafficking of women and girls. This narrow thematic focus in media coverage mirrors administrative data, which indicate that domestic violence is the most prevalent and most frequently recorded form of violence against women in Poland, followed by sexual violence and femicide.

In 2022, police recorded 51,935 women victims of domestic violence, accounting for 73% of all victims identified through the “Blue Cards” procedure. Despite these figures, violence remains substantially underreported: EU survey data indicate that 12% of women in Poland have experienced physical or sexual violence by a domestic perpetrator, while only 31% of women affected by intimate partner violence report these incidents to the police. Sexual violence is also overwhelmingly gendered. In 2022, women constituted 95% of recorded rape victims (585 cases) and 94% of victims of sexual offences overall (916 cases). The most extreme form of gender-based violence – femicide – claimed the lives of 91 women, representing 34% of all homicide victims, often following prolonged patterns of domestic abuse. Furthermore, current data collection in Poland faces limitations, as there is no disaggregated data available for specific forms of violence (physical, psychological, or economic) or for protection orders specifically granted to women (EIGE, 2024). These patterns are further shaped by significant accountability gaps: although 55,426 men were reported for domestic violence, only 11,786 were sentenced (EIGE, 2024).

Compared with news coverage overall, GBV-related reporting in Poland displays both a **narrower role structure and a sharper gender division of roles** (Figure15). In general news, women constituted 22% of news subjects, 28% of spokespersons, and 26% of experts or commentators, while men dominated these positions. In GBV coverage, women’s presence as subjects increased to 42%, indicating greater

narrative inclusion. At the same time, expert and spokesperson roles were occupied exclusively by men (100%), while all eyewitnesses were women (100%). Moreover, GBV news relied on a limited set of subject functions - subject, eyewitness, expert or commentator, and spokesperson - excluding other functions present in the broader news sample.

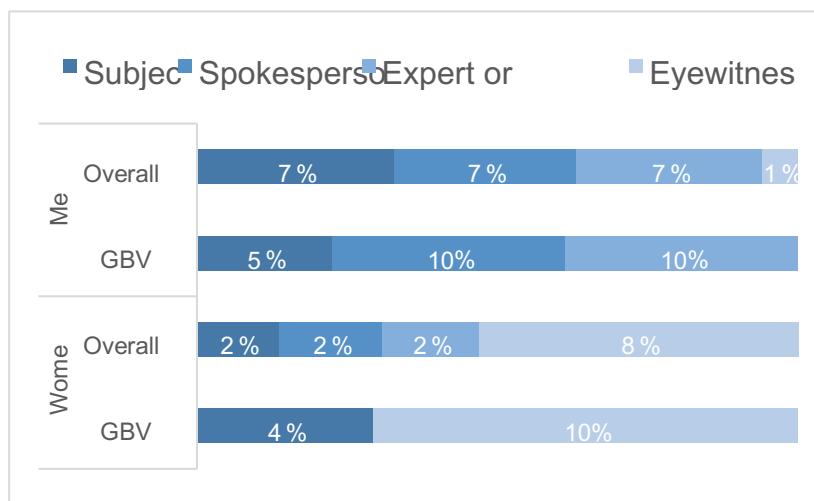


Figure 16. Gender and function of people in overall and GBV-related news. GMMP 2025 Poland.

This pattern is problematic for two reasons. First, it places interpretive authority over gender-based violence predominantly in the hands of men, despite men being statistically the primary perpetrators of such violence. Second, it excludes women from being recognized as experts or authoritative voices on violence that directly affects them. Taken together, GBV reporting in Poland presents a mixed picture: women gain greater narrative presence but remain structurally marginalized in terms of expertise and legitimacy.

Digital violence against women

Globally, technology-facilitated violence remains marginal in news coverage of gender-based violence, accounting for only 9% of GBV stories. **In the Polish media sample, no stories addressed digital forms of violence against women.** This absence is notable given mounting evidence that online harassment, threats, and coordinated attacks constitute a significant and escalating problem globally, and in Poland, including for women journalists. ICFJ UNESCO global study shows that digital violence is used to undermine professional credibility, silence reporting on politically contested issues such as reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ equality, or migration, and often spills into offline intimidation. Despite its documented impact on journalistic practice, contributing to self-censorship, beat avoidance, and withdrawal from public visibility, technology-facilitated violence remains entirely invisible in Polish news coverage of GBV during the monitoring period. It is important to note that, although the issue of online harassment was raised in relation to the femicide of Maja, it was not categorized as technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, nor did it incorporate gender rights-based signposting (see Case Study 5).

CASE STUDIES

The case studies that follow examine how gender and intersectional inequalities are reproduced through routine journalistic practices across very different news situations. The cases span moments of political controversy, demographic data, migration-related moral panic, cultural spectacle, and the reporting of femicide. What connects them is mechanisms through which authority, credibility, and social value are created and distributed in news narratives.

Across the cases, women and other marginalized actors appear frequently, yet their presence is tightly constrained. Testimony is instrumentalized or discredited, visibility is detached from interpretive authority, and structural forms of harm are reframed as individual, moral, or emotional issues. The cases show how gendered and racialized hierarchies are sustained through framing choices, sourcing routines, and visual storytelling, including who is allowed to speak as a knower, whose experience counts as evidence, and which lives are treated as politically consequential. Taken together, the cases illustrate how exclusion is reproduced not only through overt bias, but through ordinary reporting conventions that appear neutral, factual, or merely descriptive. They provide qualitative depth to the quantitative findings by making visible the narrative logics through which inequality is normalized across diverse genres of Polish news media.

Case Study 1: Gendered harassment and the instrumentalization of women in political news

This case study is developed from a multi-layered political and media controversy surrounding Karol Nawrocki, President of the Institute of National Remembrance and a presidential candidate. The controversy emerged following media reports that Nawrocki owned a studio flat (kawalerka) in Gdańsk which, according to critics and various media outlets, was not clearly disclosed in his official asset declarations. Subsequent reporting focused on the circumstances of the property's acquisition. The flat was allegedly transferred in 2017 by an 80-year-old man, Jerzy Ż., to Nawrocki and his wife under a care-related arrangement, commonly described as a life annuity-type contract. Media accounts highlighted that Jerzy Ż. later moved to a state-run social care home (DPS), with *Rzeczpospolita* reporting that the costs of his care were covered by the City of Gdańsk rather than by the property's new owners. Nawrocki's political team and IPN representatives rejected these allegations.

While the initial controversy concerned questions of legal compliance and financial transparency, this case study focuses on the care-related dimension and on what happened when media attention shifted toward the testimony of a female care worker who publicly challenged the narrative of fulfilled care obligations. Some of the coverage centered on Anna Kanigowska, who had been looking after Jerzy Ż. and went public with claims that Nawrocki "did not interest himself" in his ward, directly contradicting the premise of the property transfer agreement. Her entry into this

highstakes political narrative triggered a strong gendered backlash. Kanigowska reported becoming the target of what she described as a “wave of hate,” which was ignored or barely mentioned by most outlets, yet actively amplified by others to attack her. The Kanigowska case serves as a focal point in the GMMP 2025 Poland report to illustrate how women’s voices are instrumentalized and subjected to gendered harassment in political news. Particularly relevant is the contrast in how two politically opposed television outlets framed her role in the controversy. This case compares coverage in the main news bulletins of two broadcasters: the public broadcaster TVP1 and the private, religious outlet TV Trwam. TVP1 (19:30) briefly acknowledged the harassment directed at Kanigowska, presenting her as a victim of political retaliation for speaking out. By contrast, TV Trwam framed the situation as a “political attack” orchestrated by pro-government media, portraying the care worker as a tool used to undermine the candidate. Her credibility was subsequently questioned through references to her alleged political activity and “vulgar” social media posts directed at Nawrocki.

Instrumentalization as a “political tool”

This case illustrates how women’s testimony is treated in a polarized media environment. In TV Trwam’s coverage, the witness was not positioned as an independent source of information but reduced to a political instrument, reinforcing a classic GMMP pattern of authority denial. Rather than engaging with the substance of her claims, the outlet focused on personal and moral scrutiny, a strategy consistent with the GMMP-identified “authority gap,” whereby women’s voices are discredited through character-based attacks rather than factual debate.

Delegitimization and credibility attacks

TV Trwam further undermined the caregiver’s authority by shifting attention away from the substance of her claims toward her personal characteristics. Rather than treating the care arrangement and property transfer as the main public-interest issue, the segment portrays the controversy as a media campaign against the male candidate. The opening sentence establishes a macrostructure of victimization, in which the alleged wrongdoing becomes secondary and the presumed motive of the messenger becomes primary. The reporter states: ‘Pro-government media used a social welfare worker to attack the candidate... The woman claims Karol Nawrocki was not interested in her ward. However, the caregiver’s credibility is undermined by her political activity and vulgar online posts about Karol Nawrocki’. This is a clear example of reframing evidence as motives: the care worker’s account is acknowledged only long enough to be dismissed. This involves acknowledging the caregiver’s accusations only as subjective claims, while simultaneously recasting potentially verifiable information about the care arrangement as partisan opinion—thereby objectivizing political motives and subjectivizing factual issues. Nomination and predication play a significant role in this process: the caregiver is reduced to an occupational label (‘social welfare worker’) and gendered deictics (‘the woman’), and is then characterized as politically suspect and morally tainted.

This conservative, right-wing Catholic news outlet emphasizes her political and feminist stances to discredit and demonize her. Rather than verifying what happened, what the contract entailed, what care was provided, what the municipality paid for and why, the key journalistic move is to destroy credibility through character cues ('political activity', 'vulgar posts'). This mode of delegitimization aligns with a recurring GMMP pattern: women's voices are discredited through personal and moral scrutiny rather than through engagement with professional expertise or factual claims, reinforcing the gendered authority gap in political news.

The Gendered face of hate

TVP1's handling of the harassment further illustrates the symbolic marginalization of gendered violence. In their main 19:30 bulletin, the segment on Nawrocki's apartment lasted 5 minutes and 20 seconds, while the harassment directed at Kanigowska was mentioned for approximately 30 seconds. The sequence went like this:

- "Everything is fine," said Nawrocki
- "The question is: for whom?" asked the journalist in voiceover - "A wave of hate poured out on me," stated Kanigowska (Photo 1).



Photo 1. Individual footage from TVP1 19:30, 6 May 2025. GMMP 2025 Poland.

While her experience of harassment was acknowledged, it remained peripheral and was not developed as a substantive issue in its own right. The case also reveals patterns of selective silencing. Most outlets monitored by the GMMP in Poland omitted Kanigowska's testimony entirely from their coverage of the apartment controversy, effectively erasing her from the narrative. Even where her experience was briefly mentioned (as in TVP1), it did not become a story in itself, nor was it framed as a form of gender-based violence or addressed through a rights-based perspective.

Traditional tropes vs. professional reality

Finally, the case highlights the tension between traditional gendered roles and professional authority. In TV Trwam, the care worker, positioned in a feminized, lower-status domain of public service, was easily discredited, while Nawrocki's wife and child were presented as the "proper" victims of an "obscene attack on the family." The story reallocates credibility: it shifts attention away from the care arrangement and toward who is deemed morally worthy of sympathy. The story tells audiences which witness counts and which does not, and it does so by displacing the care worker's substantive account with a character argument. The second quoted voice intensifies this reversal. PiS politician Śliwka reframes the victim of the story as the candidate's private life, stating that 'an attack on the family is an attack on Dr Karol Nawrocki's wife and child in the most disgusting way'. This rhetoric reasserts status and solicits moral sympathy, shifting the focus from an elderly dependent man and the public care system to the emotional realm of a besieged public figure and his family. Instead of illuminating gendered care labor, vulnerability in old age and the politics of welfare, the story is reduced to partisan counter-attack and reputational delegitimization.

Digital violence as a blind spot

Despite the centrality of online harassment to Kanigowska's experience, none of the outlets meaningfully addressed digital violence as a structural problem. This omission reflects a broader GMMP finding: technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), remains a major blind spot in news coverage. Globally, only 9% of stories on gender-based violence address online harassment, despite its prevalence and its documented consequences, including self-censorship and withdrawal from public life. In Poland, women's visibility in online news has increased to 32%, yet this visibility has not translated into greater authority. As this case demonstrates, women's presence in political news remains conditional - permitted primarily as targets or symbols within political conflict rather than as authoritative sources in their own right.

Case Study 2: The racialized security threat: Moral panic, dehumanizing metaphors, and the symbolic annihilation of migrant voices

This case examines the media construction of migration as a security threat and a trigger for moral panic in Poland, specifically within the partisan coverage of TV Republika. It explores how migration is used as a "political weapon" rather than a complex social or policy issue.

TV Republika (Telewizja Republika) is a private, conservative news and talk-show television channel launched in 2013. While for much of its existence it functioned as a niche cable outlet, its position in the Polish media landscape shifted significantly after the 2023 parliamentary elections. Following the change of government and the

restructuring of the public broadcaster TVP, a substantial number of high-profile journalists and presenters associated with the former pro-government line moved to TV Republika. This coincided with a sharp increase in the channel's audience, transforming it into one of the most influential news outlets among conservative and right-wing audiences in Poland. By 2024-2025, TV Republika regularly ranked among the most-watched news channels nationally. The channel adopts an openly partisan editorial stance. Its programming emphasizes national sovereignty, security, and traditional values, and is strongly critical of the current governing coalition. Migration, border control, and public safety are recurrent focal points, frequently framed as matters of state survival and social order. TV Republika's flagship news programme, *Dzisiaj* ("Today"), is broadcast primarily online. This digital-first distribution model allows for extended news segments that often exceed the length of conventional television news items. Individual stories may run for three to four minutes, enabling sustained narration, repeated visual sequences, and the accumulation of aligned political voices within a single report. This combination of extended, digitally distributed news segments and a narrowly aligned political voice creates particularly favorable conditions for the cumulative construction of migration as a security threat, rather than as a subject of policy deliberation or social complexity.

The case highlights several key journalistic and representational failures as seen in two news stories, first and fourteenth story in main news programme of the day. The first news item focuses on domestic political debates and social reactions to migration policy within Poland. The report opens with proposals advanced by politicians associated with the Law and Justice party (PiS), calling for stricter naturalization rules. In particular, the item highlights demands to extend the minimum residency period required to obtain Polish citizenship from three to ten years, presented as a necessary measure to align Poland with selected European countries and to enhance national security. The story places strong emphasis on deportation policy, repeatedly stressing the need for mandatory deportation of undocumented migrants as well as legal migrants who commit criminal offences. These measures are framed as essential tools for protecting public order and the safety of citizens. A central part of the item is devoted to opposition against plans to establish 49 Centers for the Integration of Foreigners across Poland. The report documents what it describes as "stormy discussions" during local council meetings in towns such as Radomsko and Piotrków Trybunalski. Residents and activists affiliated with the Border Defense Movement are shown expressing concerns about rising crime, threats to local communities, and the perceived "legitimization" of migrants' presence through institutional support structures. The item concludes by situating migration as a key issue in the context of upcoming presidential elections, suggesting that the current government is disregarding public fears and prioritizing ideological commitments over citizen security.

The second analyzed news item shifts the focus from domestic migration policy to international relations, particularly Poland's relationship with Germany. The report

alleges that German authorities are systematically transferring migrants into Polish territory. It claims that German police are “dropping off” migrants at or near the Polish border and states that more than 9,000 migrants have entered Poland in this way within the current year. Migrants are described using strongly charged language, including references to them as “ballast” or “problematic individuals,” framed as people whom Germany is attempting to remove in order to reduce its own internal security pressures. The item criticizes the current Polish government, led by Donald Tusk, for allegedly allowing these practices to continue, portraying Poland as the only European country that does not resist such actions at its border. The story concludes by situating these alleged migration transfers within a broader geopolitical narrative. Migration is framed as an escalating crisis with potential electoral consequences in Poland, particularly in the context of the upcoming presidential elections. The report further links migration to claims of German dominance within the European Union, portraying Berlin as pursuing hegemonic ambitions in Europe while simultaneously experiencing internal political instability.

Taken together, these stories construct migration as a continuous, multi-level security threat: domestically as a source of social disorder and politically as a test of state authority, and internationally as evidence of foreign pressure and national subordination.

Racialized Masculinity as a Shorthand for Danger

Beyond narrative framing and policy claims, the construction of migration as a threat is reinforced through a highly consistent visual regime that racializes danger and simplifies complex social realities into immediately legible images of risk. The coverage focuses almost exclusively on racialized men from African and Asian countries, using them as a “visual shorthand” for “otherness” and threat. There is significant absence of images featuring women, families, or students, which serves to strip the migrant population of its diversity and ordinariness. The threat framing is established both at the level of narration and visually and associates migration with disorder, danger, and loss of control.

In Story 1 repeated close-ups and mid-range shots of racialized men in everyday settings, such as individuals standing by windows or speaking on mobile phones act as visual shorthand for ‘foreigner/migrant’ and are selected to emphasize their ‘otherness’ rather than ordinariness or diversity (hence images of women, families, workers and students are not included).

Even though the story concerns local political debates over integration centers, the visuals repeatedly heat up the narrative by showing images of migrant violence, street fires, and disorder, on top of what seems to look like random crowd imagery, including footage of large groups of people gathered near buses or vans. Such scenes visually transform migration into a collective phenomenon, turning individuals into an undifferentiated mass. Quantity itself becomes the message, aligning with

metaphors of “waves” or “mass migration” and supporting a crisis narrative in which scale, rather than rights or biographies, is foregrounded. Symbolic distancing and group depiction (showing people from afar or without distinguishing features) helps to categorize them as an outgroup rather than as individuals, making it easier to view them through preloaded threat scripts. The cognitive effect of such an “invasion” aims to provide a visual proof that migrants bring “hell” to “ordinary people”. For example, the footage includes scenes of a person standing on top of a car and fires in urban settings (Photo 2).



Photo 2. Compilation of footage from TV Republika 19:00, Story 1, 6 May 2025. GMMP 2025 Poland.

By juxtaposing “stormy” political discussions in Poland with footage of riots (from other countries), the material creates a direct visual link between the government’s integration policies and a future of public disorder. The journalist’s voiceover states that ‘the migration problem in Poland is growing’. This type of coverage is intended to have a cognitive effect, making audiences feel overwhelmed or under attack, even when the report does not provide evidence of concrete harm to the people depicted. The meaning is created by combining two elements: speech about migration and security, and imagery of violence and unrest. This is an affective shortcut that bypasses the ‘do no harm’ principle by treating fear as a substitute for evidence.

This visual logic is not confined to the domestic policy story but is reproduced and intensified in the international frame of Story 14. Here visuals depict police lights, smoke, damaged storefronts and disorder in the streets, showing dramatic unrest when speaking about migrants. This converts ‘migration’ into ‘violence’ in terms of

perception, even when the footage is not demonstrably connected to the specific policy claims being made in the narration. The presence of date and location labels also suggests that the footage may be from different times and places, making the montage more rhetorical than evidentiary (Photo 3).



Photo 3. Compilation of footage from TV Republika 19:00, Story 14, 6 May 2025.
GMMP 2025 Poland

The sense of threat is intensified through manipulated geopolitical and domestic narratives. Germany is depicted as a pressuring actor, the Polish government as submissive, and migration as a security threat and political test. An image of a handshake between Donald Tusk and Olaf Scholz, the Polish and German political leaders (Photo 4) is used to symbolically confirm the narration's claim that the Polish government will not oppose Germany. This is a common rhetorical device used in TV reporting, where diplomatic footage is presented as evidence of subordination or complicity, regardless of the actual policy details.



Photo 4. Individual footage from TV Republika 19:00, Story 14, 6 May 2025. GMMP 2025 Poland

Furthermore, the imagery of police vans and border control infrastructure is accompanied by the narrator explaining this is the moment when “German police, unchallenged by anyone, are already freely dumping unwanted migrants on the Polish side” (Photo 5). The segment does not explore governance questions that add public value, such as international legal frameworks, bilateral agreements, how

returns and readmissions work, documented migration flows, and the limits of available data. Instead, visual evidence is mobilized to substantiate an accusatory narrative in which external threat is foregrounded to depict the Polish government as passive, complicit, or incapable of defending state sovereignty, thereby aligning migration coverage with a broader critique of governmental failure.



Photo 5. Second compilation of footage from TV Republika 19:00, Story 14, 6 May 2025.
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Dehumanizing Metaphors and Language

Both items utilize a semantic field of danger and crime. Migrants are described using dehumanizing terms such as "ballast," "unwanted," or "problematic individuals". For example, one of the segments in story 14 opens with claims that Germany has a huge problem with 'illegal Islamic immigrants' who have 'turned the lives of ordinary people into hell'. The framing uses language associated with moral panic ('hell') and combines legal status ('illegal') with religion ('Islamic'), emphasizing cultural threat over policy complexity.

Several lexical choices are significant here:

- Migrants are described as "unwanted" and "problematic", and described as "ballast", which is a dehumanizing metaphor (people as burdens to be disposed of);
- Narration states that the German police "dump" migrants on the Polish side and claim that "this is only the beginning". The hyperbolic metaphor is numerically anchored, invoking the figure of 9,000 migrants (and counting) to lend the framing a sense of scale, inevitability, and an impending future threat;
- Another quote links migrants with the criminal world via their "migration background", thereby reinforcing group-based suspicion rather than reporting on specific, contextualized cases.

The Authority Gap and Symbolic Annihilation

Both stories frame migration as an urgent security problem structured through political conflict rather than policy deliberation. Both stories privilege a narrow range of voices, including opposition politicians, aligned commentators and activists, and local politicians who are largely presented in a single interpretive direction. 'Experts'

and other journalists, all present the same one-sided perspectives (white right-wing). The result is a closed interpretive loop in which claims are reinforced within the same ideological bandwidth. As a result, expert status is used to stabilize the preferred frame while silencing institutional and research counter-voices that could challenge the claims using data, law or documented processes.

Migrants themselves are not sources, and no migrant organizations, integration professionals, independent researchers or public institutions providing data or context are presented as meaningful counterweights. This creates a closed sourcing circuit in which interpretation is repeatedly routed through individuals positioned as the legitimate white definers of the problem, while racialized migrants are primarily constructed as the subjects of discussion rather than as active participants.

The “Replacement” Logic

In Story 1 the ‘state interest’ framing escalates into demographic anxiety through the claim that migration should not disturb the balance or proportion between indigenous residents and those Poland accepts. This formulation carries an implicit ‘replacement’ logic: the outgroup is represented as a demographic risk rather than as individuals with rights and varied life stories. Even when the segment uses technocratic language, such as ‘waiting time for citizenship’ and ‘rules’, the recurrent semantic field is danger, crime and demographic threat - an ideological frame rather than an evidentiary one. Although numbers are presented (e.g. waiting times for citizenship and the claim that 49 integration centers are planned), the segment does not provide any sources, methodologies or context (e.g. criteria for citizenship in different countries, the purpose of integration centers, their funding sources and the services they provide). Quantitative hyperbole is a recurring strategy in discourse about migrants and minorities. Numbers (or vague magnitudes) create an aura of objectivity, but they can still primarily serve a threat macrostructure, such as ‘they take our space/threaten our security’. Here, the ‘use of data’ without explanation becomes rhetorical support rather than providing public information.

In this way, demographic abstraction functions as the final stage of symbolic annihilation, replacing migrant voices, biographies, and rights with numbers, proportions, and imagined threats to the national body.

Case Study 3: Saving the nation, silencing women: Gendered narratives of demographic crisis

The case analyzed here emerged from a seemingly routine publication of new fertility indicators, yet it quickly exposed a deeper convergence in how demographic decline is narrated across the Polish media landscape. In early May 2025, updated estimates circulated by the international tracker Birth Gauge, first taken up and contextualized by *Rzeczpospolita*, indicated that Poland’s total fertility rate had fallen to approximately 1.03, with births continuing to decline compared with the already

record-low year 2024. While the figures themselves were not unprecedented, their media translation proved revealing. As the story travelled from *Rzeczpospolita*, a business-oriented daily, to *TVP* public television and to *Nczas*, a far-right portal, ideological differences receded and a shared interpretive frame took hold. Despite clear political divergences, all three outlets reproduced a common, gender-blind narrative in which fertility decline was constructed as an existential national emergency, while women appeared primarily as objects of concern rather than as rights-bearing agents or authoritative voices. This alignment is not accidental. It reflects a deep structural blind spot: demography is treated as neutral, technical knowledge, even though it is profoundly gender saturated. As a result, gendered assumptions travel seamlessly across the ideological spectrum.

Alarmist metaphors and demographic panic

Across all three outlets, fertility decline is framed through alarmist metaphors that generate demographic panic rather than social explanation. *Rzeczpospolita* runs the headline “Fertility in Poland is scraping the bottom,” accompanied by a subheading emphasizing scale and finality: “Births in 2025 will be less than half of the replacement level and the population could shrink to 10 million by the end of the century.” *TVP1* opens its main bulletin with a crisis-and-urgency frame that cues alarm rather than explanation. The anchor describes the figures as “shocking” and the decline as occurring at a “terrifying pace,” using an evocative metaphor of disappearance - “as if a whole city the size of Bytom vanished” and immediately linking fertility to economic consequences such as lower pensions and labor shortages. This rhetorical move positions childbirth primarily as a national economic resource problem rather than as a complex issue shaped by lived constraints, rights, and choices. It establishes a narrative of “demographic emergency” before evidence is unpacked. *Nczas* uses similarly dramatic projections, suggesting that Poland’s population could shrink to 15 million or even 10 million by the end of the century.

All three outlets also invoke the trope of national extinction. *TVP1* features an analyst warning of “a real collapse, and ultimately the extinction of the Polish nation,” introducing a nationalist survival register that intensifies fear rather than clarifying drivers of change. The report layers several population forecasts and comparisons (official GUS data, UN projections, and a Birth Gauge-based forecast shown on screen) in a way that risks confusion and exaggerated impact. A particularly striking moment presents an extremely low population figure as a simplified model and a “thought experiment.” Even with this caveat, the extreme figure appears first and is likely to remain as the dominant emotional takeaway, while methodological disclaimers arrive too late and too softly to correct the impression. *Nczas* radicalizes the “demographic catastrophe” narrative by quoting media commentator Krzysztof Stanowski, who asks whether Poles will act strategically or “slowly die out” and be remembered like the Mayans. This comparison was prompted by a viral animation by analyst Krzysztof Szczawiński illustrating an extreme long-term scenario in which Poland’s population could fall to three million by 2150. *Rzeczpospolita*, while more

restrained in tone, still frames fertility decline primarily through its consequences for pensions, healthcare, and state-financed services. The underlying logic is shared: fertility is treated as a national resource whose depletion threatens collective survival.

The authority gap: 100% male prognostication

A second unifying feature is a clear authority gap. Interpretive authority is granted almost exclusively to men, such as Mateusz Łakomy, Krzysztof Szczawiński, and Krzysztof Stanowski, positioned as analysts and strategists diagnosing the problem from a distance. Women, by contrast, appear mainly as vox pops expressing fear or uncertainty, or as statistical abstractions: the “average Polish woman,” the fertility rate, the reproductive cohort. They are the objects being counted rather than the subjects defining the discourse or interpreting the crisis. As a result, gender is treated as a demographic variable rather than as an equality dimension, and the coverage underplays structural drivers such as care burdens, workplace penalties, housing affordability, and reproductive health policy.

The “career versus motherhood” trope

The most persistent gendered trope linking the outlets is the opposition between career and motherhood. In TVP1, this appears explicitly when a female professor frames fertility declines as a value shift away from motherhood: “Women, mothers... career is placed first.” This normalizes a moral narrative in which women’s work and autonomy are cast as causes of demographic crisis, while men’s roles, unequal care burdens, and structural barriers remain largely unscrutinized. There is one counterbalancing human voice: a young woman explains that she does not want children because she lacks financial security and feels afraid. While significant, this testimony appears only as a brief illustrative soundbite rather than as a gateway to evidence-based discussion of housing, childcare systems, job insecurity, reproductive healthcare, or gender-equality policies. *Rzeczpospolita* echoes this logic more subtly by pointing to women’s educational migration to cities as a barrier to relationship formation. The article argues that the state should not only support existing families (e.g. nurseries, child support programme) but also reduce barriers to forming lasting relationships. It cites research that a high proportion of people in their 40s are childless due to a lack of suitable partners and explains one gendered structural factor: women migrate to big cities more often than men (linked to higher education), creating ‘two worlds’ that hinder forming relationships. Nczas radicalizes the trope by framing fertility as a biological and cultural war, proposing “the tradition of multichildness” as the only hope for survival and citing wealthy Catholic families as a model to emulate. Across outlets, women’s autonomy, education and employment choices, are symbolically disciplined as socially deviant and costly, and women are recast as the moral source of the problem rather than as rational actors responding to constraints.

Structural invisibility

Finally, all three outlets share a striking silence on structural conditions. The focus consistently falls on persuasion, changing attitudes, values, or cultural models, rather than on policy or material constraints. Housing affordability, job insecurity, childcare provision, reproductive healthcare, and the unequal distribution of care work remain largely invisible. Men's roles in domestic labor and family decision-making are similarly absent. Gender is present everywhere, but primarily as biology and demography, not as power or inequality. In TVP1 for example, the story concludes with the claim that successive governments have "failed to persuade future mothers and fathers," framing the issue as a problem of attitudes rather than conditions. Women are repeatedly constructed as the measurable site of the problem, "the average Polish woman gives birth to only one child", while men are not meaningfully discussed as co-producers of fertility outcomes through care work, domestic labor, or policy preferences. *Rzeczpospolita* briefly references migration and states that large-scale immigration cannot realistically solve the demographic problem, but without sufficient contextualization of time horizons or policy scope. In the Polish media context, this risks being absorbed into politicized anti-migration narratives rather than contributing to a structural analysis.

The narrative convergence observed here occurs because motherhood is naturalized as a national resource rather than recognized as socially organized labor embedded in unequal conditions. Questioning women's reproductive choices is therefore framed as legitimate concern for national survival rather than as gendered policing. In this hierarchy of narratives, nationalism overrides partisanship: men are positioned as producers of strategy and interpretation, while women are positioned as producers of fertility. Even when women are visible, they lack authority. They are not recognized as experts on the conditions that shape family life, work, and care. In this sense, the media functions as an institution of exclusion, reproducing a unified demographic alarm that counts women relentlessly while systematically excluding them from defining either the problem or its solutions.

Case Study 4: Met Gala as a proxy for diversity

In a media environment where race and ethnicity remain marginal topics in Polish news agendas, coverage of the 2025 Met Gala is one of the rare occasions when Blackness appears prominently in mainstream Polish news, albeit often in ways that separate image from meaning. Against the backdrop of the report's intersectional invisibility—the very low overall presence of marginalized groups and an even narrower space for marginalized women—the Met Gala functions as a proxy stage on which Polish journalism either broadens or restricts what is treated as legitimate knowledge about race and Blackness. While the gala's 2025 theme offered a clear opportunity to engage with African American cultural history and menswear, Polish outlets followed sharply divergent editorial paths. Some prioritized Black history and cultural memory, while others focused on celebrity spectacle or gendered tabloid narratives, including the reduction of a Black woman to a news story about

reproduction. This case compares three distinct journalistic styles as observed in TVN, TVP2, and TV Republika, showing how the same global cultural event is translated into meaning in different media environments.

Divergent Media Approaches

In TVN Fakty 19:00, the Met Gala is presented not as a celebrity parade but as a significant cultural event. Rather than relying on the usual red-carpet vocabulary that sexualizes women's bodies or reduces them to "beauty" and personal lives, the segment constructs a narrative about history, belonging, and cultural memory. Significantly, Black female celebrity Cynthia Erivo (Photo 6) is not used merely as decorative filler but is given interpretive space. She frames the gala as a rare moment of collective presence in an elite space, explicitly connecting fashion to history and loss: "It's a big deal. We rarely get the chance to be in spaces like this with a large group of us and express what fashion means to us and our history in fashion. A lot of that has been lost".



Photo 6. Individual footage from TVN Fakty, 19:00, 6 May 2025. GMMP 2025 Poland.

This represents a departure from more common patterns in which women appear as emotional witnesses while men provide explanatory frameworks. Overall, compared with other outlets, TVN's sourcing is less gender biased. Black women appear as directly quoted agents whose words carry meaning, and fashion is elevated to the level of history and art rather than trivialized as entertainment.

In contrast, coverage in TVP2 Panorama 21:45 follows a pattern of trivialization and pro forma coverage. Although the segment initially announces the theme of Black menswear, this framing is quickly abandoned in favor of a standard red-carpet roundup emphasizing celebrity names and memorable moments. Attention gravitates towards globally recognized figures, with a "Polish accent" placed on the success of Magda Butrym. An event centered on Black men's style and the history of menswear thus becomes a spectacle in which Black people appear primarily as glamorous figures rather than interpreters or experts. Even when "excellent tailoring" is praised and placed in a nostalgic frame, such as the 1950s and 1960s, it is not connected to the announced focus on Black style or the social meanings of menswear in racialized contexts. When Black guests do appear, they are limited to generic celebration

soundbites such as “honored to be here” or “great night,” positioning them as grateful participants rather than agents with interpretive authority over their own cultural history. Overall, the coverage fails to explore the gendered nature of Black tailoring, including how masculinity, respectability, protection, and public presence have historically shaped Black menswear in relation to power and exclusion.

A further reduction occurs in TV Republika Express 17:20, where the Met Gala is stripped of its cultural dimension altogether and reduced to a single tabloid hook: Rihanna’s pregnancy announcement. The segment opens with the statement, “Sometimes, you can say a lot without saying a single word. That’s how the worldfamous singer Rihanna announced the good news about expanding her family to the world.” The entire item lasts around 30 seconds and consists solely of the reporter’s narration over footage of Rihanna and her partner. There is no attempt to explain the Met Gala’s theme, include Black voices interpreting Black style history, or provide expert commentary on fashion, culture, or the exhibition context.

Gendered and racialized reduction of agency

Across the three outlets, a consistent asymmetry of knowledge production is evident. Even the TVN segment relies on celebrity and institutional authority rather than incorporating the expertise of a Black curator or historian who could deepen the gendered and racial dimensions of the theme. Anna Wintour, the white editor-in-chief of Vogue, is the only person positioned as an expert or symbolic elite voice. Similarly, the TVP report misses an obvious sourcing opportunity by excluding Black curators, historians, or fashion scholars who could have moved the piece beyond celebrity logistics such as guest lists, ticket prices, and attendance figures.

Moreover, while the event explicitly centers on Black men’s style and menswear, coverage repeatedly shifts attention to women’s celebrity bodies and intimate life events, such as pregnancy, or to women as symbols of glamour and gatekeeping. This does not constitute gender awareness but rather reflects a gendered hierarchy of news values in which women become central as spectacles or family narratives rather than as historians, curators, critics, or authoritative interpreters. Historically, controlling images have organized Black women’s public legibility around sexuality, morality, domesticity, or spectacle. This makes pregnancy news appear as a legitimate headline while Black expertise remains optional. Rihanna and her partner are introduced in one of the broadcasts as a couple. In this narrative she is positioned as a partner and as a reproductive subject, described as “the beauty from Barbados” and defined through the announcement of another pregnancy rather than through her artistic agency.

Representation versus meaning

A recurring pattern in Polish media coverage is the stripping of representation of its meaning. Blackness may be present at the level of the image but remains absent at the level of interpretation. It is treated as spectacle, glamour, or celebrity presence,

while its historical, cultural, and political dimensions are marginalized or erased. Even when a global event is explicitly shaped by Black cultural history, its social meaning is neutralized through trivialization, tabloidization, or national re-centering.

This dynamic is particularly evident in Republika's representation of the Met Gala and the case of Rihanna. An event shaped by Black cultural history is reduced to a series of celebrity hooks, where a Black woman is rendered intelligible through reproductive and sexualized scripts rather than through professional achievement or cultural expertise. Pregnancy takes center stage in this coverage as primary news value (Photo 7).



Photo 7. Compilation of footage from TV Republika Express 17:20, 6 May 2025. GMMP 2025 Poland.

The reporting employs language that both exoticizes and moralizes Black womanhood, echoing long-standing racialized stereotypes around hyper-fertility. The coverage relies on classic tabloid gender scripts:

- Woman-as-body/reproduction-as-news: The pregnancy is treated as the primary piece of information, which positions a woman's public relevance through her family status rather than her achievements or voice.
- Exoticizing and othering language is used: Rihanna is introduced as 'the beauty from Barbados', foregrounding her race, gender and national background rather than her profession.
- Moralizing commentary about fertility by the journalist: 'The couple already has two sons, but apparently it's still not enough', which frames reproductive decisions as a legitimate target of public appraisal and ridicule, at the same time alluding to a racist stereotype about Black people's hyper-fertility.

Case Study 5: Spectacle without accountability: Maja's femicide and the erasure of gendered violence

This case examines the media coverage of the femicide of a 16-year-old girl, Maja, from Mława, focusing on how two Polish news outlets framed the event and its broader social meaning. Despite operating within distinct journalistic logics — a mainstream, issue-oriented frame in Wirtualna Polska (WP) and a tabloid, sensational frame in Super Express — the coverage produced a similar outcome.

Both outlets erased the gendered nature of the violence and failed to frame the femicide in terms of rights, safeguarding, and prevention.

The Homicide and Procedural Narrative

The initial reporting phase was dominated by a procedural crime update macrostructure. News items focused on the timeline of Maja's disappearance, the discovery of her body, preliminary autopsy findings indicating repeated blows to the head, and the detention of a 17-year-old suspect in Greece during a school exchange programme, followed by information on extradition procedures. These reports emphasized investigative steps, legal processes and official statements, presenting the femicide primarily as a criminal case in progress rather than as a social problem requiring contextual interpretation.

For example, an article in *Super Express* analyzed the sequence of events as established facts, stating that the perpetrator lured, brutally murdered and hid the victim's body (prior to any court ruling). It then moved on to a series of rhetorical questions and neighbor speculation: "How could nobody have noticed any traces?", "Was anyone seen wearing bloodstained clothes?", "Someone must have hidden his things", "Why was the phone only found after two days on the railway tracks?", "Did someone try to mislead the investigation?". This mechanism encourages the reader to participate in suspicion-building. Even when an official statement appears at the end, detailing investigative efforts such as checking every lead, analyzing CCTV footage and awaiting extradition, it functions largely as a thin layer of legitimacy after the insinuation has already done its work.

Framing the Crisis: From Gendered Killing to Generic Youth Pathology

Alongside this procedural framing, *Wirtualna Polska* attempted to shift toward an issue-based narrative by linking the femicide to peer violence and online harassment. The article provides an overview of coordinated online abuse through so-called "hate profiles" (HP) and outlines their psychological consequences for young people. Through a Q&A with a child and adolescent psychologist, it emphasizes that such harassment can lead to despair and long-term psychological damage. It references the case of Bartosz G., who was targeted by an HP, and links this to the high-profile femicide investigation involving the 16-year-old Maja from Mława. The headline, "Attack of dozens of hate profiles. This is how teenagers destroy their peers", and the opening sentence referring to death wishes that "sometimes become reality", appear alongside references to the Maja case. The visual montage further reinforces a simplified causal sequence: online hate → psychological breakdown → lethal outcome. This framing risks reducing a complex femicide investigation to a morality play in which bullying becomes the primary explanatory factor. The article does not clearly distinguish between (1) cyberbullying as a phenomenon, (2) the mental health harms it causes, and (3) the legal and factual uncertainties surrounding a specific femicide case. Additionally, the story is gender blind. The victim's gender is absorbed into the generic category of

“teenager”, erasing gendered patterns of harm — such as sexualized harassment, reputational violence, coercion and threats — that disproportionately shape girls’ experiences of online abuse and offline risk. The use of the male form further reinforces the tendency to treat the generic subject as implicitly male. Consequently, Maja becomes a symbolic marker of tragedy rather than a prompt to examine gendered vulnerabilities.

Tabloid coverage by *Super Express* intensified this process through visual and narrative sensationalism. The visual design of the article (Photo 8) creates a sense of urgency and outrage before the reader engages with the content. Oversized red typography on a black background conveys danger and alarm. The strapline above the main headline, “Close ones and acquaintances of the deceased teenager appeal”, positions the story as an emotional appeal, while the headline “Check whether someone helped the killer”, presented as a command and visually anchored as the page’s central element, presumes guilt.



Photo 8. Page 8 from *Super Express*, 6 May 2025. GMMP 2025 Poland.

The visual imagery converts grief into proof. A photograph of an adult woman holding white roses and a printed photo of the victim with her face obscured is paired with images of mourners grieving at the site where the body was found. Another image shows a large crowd participating in a silent march, transforming grief into a narrative of collective outrage. Finally, the bottom-right image constructs a villainous figure: a teenage boy with a black bar over his eyes, labelled “Murderer”, accompanied by information about detention and extradition.

The Authority Gap and Source Narrowness

Problematic framing was further reinforced by a narrow range of sources. *Virtualna Polska* relied almost entirely on a single expert voice — a psychologist — without input from schools, child protection services, platform safety specialists, law enforcement units dealing with cybercrime, or organizations working on violence

against girls. This limited source range shifts attention toward individual psychology and peer cruelty, rather than systemic accountability, including gender-based violence, institutional safeguarding, school responsibility, platform moderation, legal tools and social norms.

The absence of organizations combating violence against girls and of safeguarding experts further narrows what becomes visible in the case, making gendered harm and institutional responsibility harder to recognize. Despite strong language describing a “mass attack” and its “devastating impact”, the article provides no data, no gender-disaggregated evidence, and no guidance on reporting pathways or available support. In a story explicitly referencing suicidal ideation, the absence of signposting to support services constitutes an additional ethical weakness.

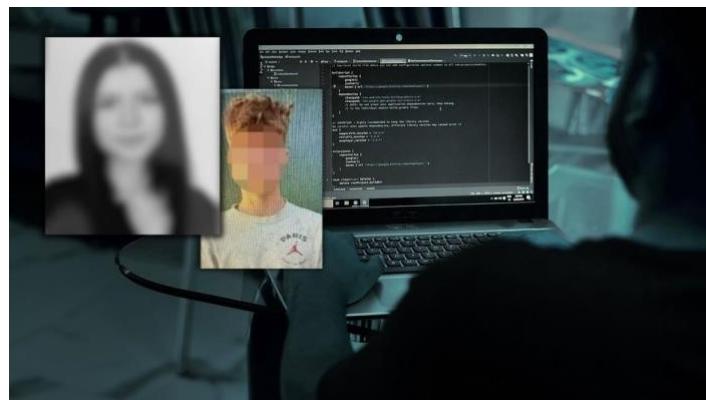


Photo 9. Individual footage from *Wirtualna Polska*, 6 May 2025. GMMP 2025 Poland.

Super Express similarly used official sources only marginally, primarily to offer procedural updates and legitimize the narrative rather than shape its meaning. Emotional voices dominate, including a named family member’s suspicions (highlighted in captions) and “neighbors” as a collective source. Despite graphic language describing the killing and its consequences (Photo 9), neither outlet offered data, gender-disaggregated evidence, or guidance on available support services.

Gender Tropes and the Erasure of Gendered Harm

Across both outlets, a consistent pattern of gender blindness emerges. In *Super Express*, the victim is framed through the familiar “good girl” convention — fashion interests, dreams of becoming a stylist, and likeability — yet the case is not used to examine gendered vulnerabilities or broader patterns of violence against girls. There is no contextualization of gendered dynamics in youth violence, such as entitlement, coercion, reputational violence or sexual harassment, nor any prevention-oriented framing. The story functions primarily as sensational crime drama, prioritizing outrage and intrigue over prevention and accountability. At the same time, the *Wirtualna Polska* article illustrates perpetrator-centered ambiguity. By emphasizing that the boy had previously been harassed and by visually linking him to imagery of attack and suffering, the coverage can be read as contextualizing, and partially excusing, male violence through prior victimization. Meanwhile, the female victim is

rendered voiceless and reduced to an icon, while the suspect gains narrative depth through psychological explanation. This reproduces a familiar pattern in which male violence is reframed through suffering, while the lived vulnerabilities of female victims remain unexamined.

Overall, this case illustrates a missed journalistic opportunity. Rather than using the killing of a teenage girl to illuminate gendered vulnerabilities, rights-based concerns and systemic failures, media coverage remained confined to procedural updates, sensational crime drama and individualized explanations. The result is a spectacle of violence without accountability, in which gendered harm is normalized, prevention sidelined, and the structural dimensions of violence against girls left unaddressed.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the GMMP 2025 Poland national report reveal that progress toward gender equality in news media has slowed significantly, reflecting a broader global stagnation where digitalization has largely reproduced existing gender hierarchies. While the Polish media landscape has entered a transitional post-crisis phase following institutional shifts in 2023, the representation of women in the news remains caught in a pattern of visibility without authority, a pattern further illustrated by the qualitative case studies, which show how visibility is routinely decoupled from authority in everyday news practice (Case Studies 1–5).

The 27% total of female news subjects and sources (people in the news) in 2025 is a one-percentage-point drop from the 28% recorded in 2020. In traditional formats (press, radio, and television), the share of women decreased from 27% in 2020 to 25% in 2025. Online media maintained their 2020 level, remaining at 32% in 2025.

The Visibility-Authority Gap

The most significant gain over the last decade in Poland occurred in digital news, where the presences of women doubled, rising from 16% in 2015 to 32% in 2025. This quantitative online gain is complicated by a qualitative deficit; **online visibility does not translate into gender-aware or transformative journalism**. While 78% of online news stories covered topics where gender inequality was structurally relevant (meaning it would have made sense to discuss it), 0% of those stories actually addressed the issue. Furthermore, online media are not using their digital space to break barriers; instead, **77% of online stories were found to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes**, while none (0%) clearly challenged them. The case studies demonstrate how this gap is produced in practice, through mechanisms such as source exclusion in migration coverage (Case Study 2), the instrumentalization and delegitimization of women in political conflict (Case Study 1), and the

concentration of interpretive authority among male experts in demographic crisis narratives (Case Study 3).

Structural Marginalization and Stereotypes

Multiple dimensions of the data point to the continued symbolic marginalization of women in the news:

Occupational Power: Women approach parity in anchor and announcer roles. However, reporting roles, which remains the most numerically dominant and agenda setting journalistic function, are overwhelmingly male. As reporters shape story selection, sourcing, and framing, men's dominance in this role signals that editorial authority in Polish news production remains structurally male-coded, even where women are visibly present on screen or on air.

Interpretive Authority: Men in news account for 86% of politicians and 85% of business leaders, while women are concentrated in less powerful or relational roles, often identified through family status. Men also continue to account for 74% of experts and 72% of spokespersons across all media, meaning women are heard as authorities less often.

Narrative Centrality: Only 11% of monitored stories centered women in their stories, and these were largely confined to topics of violence and celebrity rather than domains of political or economic power. This pattern is echoed in cultural coverage, where minority women may be visually prominent yet excluded from meaning making and expert interpretation, remaining largely present as spectacle rather than authoritative subjects (see Case Study 4).

Age and Authority: Television news overwhelmingly privileges middle-aged and older men as standard-bearers of public voice. Men constitute 85% of people appearing in news aged 65–79, precisely the stage associated with seniority and expertise, while women's visibility declines sharply as professional authority would be expected to peak. By contrast, women are most visible when they are young (44%), while their presence thins out as they reach the ages associated with professional seniority and authority.

Intersectionality: Intersectional invisibility remains acute. Only 5% of people in the news belonged to racial, ethnic, or other minoritized groups, and **minority women accounted for just 1.4% of all news subjects and sources**, rendering them almost entirely absent from routine news coverage and occupying a doubly marginal position within an already highly constrained space of visibility.

The "Blind Spot" of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

One of the most consequential findings of the monitoring concerns gender-based violence (GBV). Despite high national rates of domestic and sexual violence, GBV

accounts for only 3% of the total news volume and was entirely absent (0%) from monitored television bulletins. Digital media are more responsive, with 10% of online stories covering gender-based violence, but the quality of the reporting remains poor.

When GBV is reported, it is framed through individual tragedy rather than structural, political, or rights-based perspectives. Alarmingly, even in stories about violence against women, men occupied 100% of expert and spokesperson roles, while women were relegated to the function of subjects or eyewitnesses. This pattern strips women of interpretive authority over violence that disproportionately affects them and reinforces a gendered division between experience and explanation, where men define causes, meanings, and solutions. The qualitative analysis of femicide reporting further illustrates this dynamic, showing how violence against women and girls is framed as isolated tragedy or sensational crime rather than as a rights-based or preventative issue (Case Study 5).

Conclusions

Overall, GMMP 2025 Poland demonstrates that the news media continues to function as a public institution of exclusion rather than equality. Across the case studies, these exclusions are shown to be actively produced through routine journalistic practices, visual conventions, and sourcing hierarchies that appear neutral but are structurally gendered (Case Studies 1–5). More than half of all monitored stories (55%) were analytically relevant to questions of gender equality or inequality, yet virtually none addressed these dimensions explicitly. Rights-based framing remains exceptional rather than routine, and reporting that clearly challenges gender stereotypes is almost entirely absent.

Ultimately, the Polish news agenda continues to prioritize white, middle-aged male experts to define the world's problems and solutions, while women remain invisible in the domestic sphere or marginal in the public square. The persistence of these patterns suggests that neither digitalization nor post-crisis institutional change is sufficient to transform gendered news practices on its own. Without deliberate editorial strategies, accountability mechanisms, and a sustained commitment to gender equality as an epistemic necessity rather than a reputational risk, Polish news media will continue to reproduce rather than challenge structural inequalities in the public sphere.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN 2026-2030

Over the past decade, Poland has developed a comparatively rich ecosystem of gender-equality monitoring, research, and corrective tools in the media sector. Large-scale initiatives such as the Global Media Monitoring Project have provided a longitudinal evidence base, already identifying a pronounced authority gap in the early 2020s, when women constituted only 13% of experts consulted in the news despite near parity among journalists. Regular audits conducted under the *#MediaBezKobiet* initiative further translated these findings into public debate by documenting the persistence of all-male panels in flagship news programmes, particularly during politically salient periods. Academic research has deepened this diagnosis: the Diversity Management as Innovation in Journalism project demonstrated that while Polish newsrooms increasingly express ethical support for diversity, they lack the operational structures required to enforce it, a weakness that becomes especially visible during periods of crisis and geopolitical threat. At the organizational level, corporate tools such as *Equal/Voice* have introduced AI-based, real-time monitoring of women's visibility in some digital outlets, while initiatives like *Ekspertki.org* have addressed sourcing inequalities by systematically expanding access to female experts. In parallel, the National Broadcasting Council has started to monitor gender stereotypes in advertising and fictional content, contributing an institutional regulatory perspective on gender norms in Polish media culture.

At the same time, GMMP 2025 Poland demonstrates that awareness, monitoring, and technical solutions alone are not sufficient to transform gendered news practices. Despite increased measurement, improved tools, and ethical support for diversity, the core structures of authority in Polish news remain largely unchanged. Women's visibility has increased, particularly online, yet interpretive power, expert authority, and agenda-setting functions continue to be concentrated among men. This gap confirms that the next phase of action must move beyond counting, nudging, or symbolic inclusion toward structural and editorial change. Gender equality needs to be treated not as a reputational asset or diversity add-on, but as an epistemic requirement for credible journalism in a democratic society.

Strategic priorities for 2026-2030

1. Shift from visibility metrics to authority metrics

Media organizations should complement existing visibility indicators with systematic monitoring of **who speaks with authority**: experts, spokespersons, analysts, and commentators. Targets should focus on decision-making roles, not only on presence in headlines or visuals.

2. Embed gender equality into editorial routines

Gender considerations should be integrated into everyday newsroom practices, including story commissioning, source selection, and editorial meetings. This requires clear internal guidelines, accountability mechanisms, and editorial leadership commitment, rather than voluntary or ad hoc initiatives.

3. Protect diversity work during crises

Evidence from Poland shows that geopolitical and security crises trigger regression toward traditional, male-dominated authority structures. Media organizations should **develop crisis-proof diversity protocols to prevent the systematic sidelining of women and minority perspectives during periods of heightened political or military tension.**

4. Address intersectional exclusion explicitly

With minority women accounting for just 1.4% of all people in the news, **intersectionality must become a core concern of newsroom policy.** This includes targeted sourcing strategies, long-term relationships with minority experts, and recognition that extreme scarcity itself constitutes exclusion, even where proportional figures appear less skewed.

5. Invest in newsroom capacity and safety

Research shows that online harassment and gendered abuse function as silencing mechanisms, particularly for women journalists covering high-stakes beats. Media organizations should **implement institutional responses to digital violence**, including legal support, moderation policies, and editorial backing for journalists facing coordinated attacks.

Gender-Based Violence: Priority Recommendations

Drawing on the GMMP 2025 Global Report, the following actions are essential to improve the quality and social impact of GBV reporting in Poland:

1. Journalism must shift from framing GBV as a private tragedy to recognizing it as a systemic violation of human rights, embedded in social, legal, and cultural power relations. Coverage should move away from victim-centered scrutiny toward examining perpetrators, institutional responsibility, and the conditions that normalize violence. Media organizations should routinely draw on national legislation and international conventions, strengthening public accountability and awareness of available justice mechanisms.

2. Improving GBV coverage also requires organizational change. Evidence from the Global GMMP shows that stories produced by women journalists are significantly more likely to address gender inequality, underscoring the need to strengthen women's participation in reporting and editorial decision-making, particularly on

highstakes beats. Investment in survivor-centered training is essential to ensure ethical standards that prioritize dignity, agency, and harm reduction, in line with UN Women recommendations.

3. Finally, responsible reporting has measurable social impact. Research cited in the GMMP Global Report demonstrates that visibility can save lives; coverage of femicide has been shown to increase calls to help-lines by an average of 11%, underscoring journalism's social responsibility and potential to directly support survivor safety rather than merely document harm.

Taken together, these recommendations outline a shift from monitoring gender inequality to actively dismantling it. The challenge for 2026–2030 is not the absence of tools or knowledge, but the political and editorial will to reconfigure authority, responsibility, and voice within Polish news media.

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Annex 1. Methodology

The Polish component of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2025 followed the standardized GMMP methodology, ensuring comparability with previous monitoring rounds and with findings from other participating countries.

The monitoring was conducted on 6 May 2025, capturing an “ordinary news day” across print, radio, television, and online news media. A total of 362 news items were monitored, drawn from national outlets selected on the basis of audience reach, political relevance, and media-type diversity, in line with GMMP sampling guidelines.

Data were collected by a trained national team of volunteer coders using the GMMP electronic data capture system. Coding focused on four core dimensions:

- (1) characteristics of the news story (topic, scope, and placement);
- (2) characteristics of news subjects and sources (including gender, role, occupation, age where identifiable, and minority status);
- (3) characteristics of news personnel (anchors/announcers, reporters, and other journalists); and
- (4) journalistic practice indicators, including women’s centrality, the presence of gender stereotypes, and references to gender equality or human rights frameworks.

In addition to quantitative coding, the national team provided qualitative contextual analysis, including a narrative account of the news agenda on the monitoring day and selected case studies illustrating dominant patterns of representation. This mixed-methods approach supports both statistical analysis and interpretive insight into gendered news practices.

The GMMP 2025 relied exclusively on electronic data capture and applied a harmonized coding framework across all participating countries. Detailed information on the global methodology, sampling procedures, data validation, and analytical framework is available in the [GMMP 2025 Global Report](#)

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