Gender in television programs:

Reports

on the research on gender issues

and portrayal and representation of women and men on the programs

of broadcasters for 2013

The research was conducted by the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje, for the needs of the Broadcasting Council (Public procurement br.02-3336 / 1 dated 25.07.2013).

Basic information about research

Under the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men ( "Official Gazette" No. 6/2012), the Broadcasting Council is obliged to submit an annual report on the manner of portrayal and representation of women and men in the programs and also, prepare on an annual basis an analysis of gender issues in the program concepts and content of the media, as a regulatory body competent to supervise boradcasters' programs (Article 17).

In order to implement these commitments, the Council, through public procurement br.02-3336 / 1 dated 25.07.2013 year, commissioned the Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje to prepare two types of analysis, one of the content of the television services of the Public broadcasting and another one of commercial broadcasting companies nationwide, in respect of which the Council is obliged to conductd supervision as follows:

1. Research on gender issues in the program concepts and content of the media and

2. Research on the manner of portrayal and representation of women and men in the program concepts and contents of the media.

This year, for the purposes of realization of the objectives,the Broadcasting Council defined and selected two different samples of television content: for the the first research activity, central daily information programs - news, and for the the second - commercials and videos spots marked as "free airtime ". For these two types of samples various instruments were used (2 types of questionnaires) to conduct the analysis of the said research.

Samples were drawn from the programs broadcast during the months of May, June and July 2013 on television channels at the national level that are broadcast over digital terrestrial multiplex, or in other words, MRT1 and MRT2 (Albanian) of the Public Broadcast Service and Alsat-M TV Channel 5, TV Alfa, TV Sitel and Telma from the commercial sector. These services were chosen because they together have the largest share of viewing, and therefore the greatest potential for impact on the public.

The analysis of gender issues in the program concepts and content of the media, is expected to provide greater comparability of data with those from last year's analysis. Therefore, in the choice of samples the same method as in 2012 was used, although the sample was smaller, i.e. it did not include current - affairs programs. Namely, this year's sample consisted of seven issues of the central - news programs of each of the selected TV stations in the period from the last two weeks of May and the first two weeks of June. To provide insight into topics that were current for a long period of four weeks, a day or two were selected (Monday of a week on Tuesday from another, etc..). Thus, the analysis is conducted on a total of 49 features of news programming broadcast on seven services: June 10 - Monday, 21 May-Tuesday, May 29 - Wednesday, June 6 - Thursday, May 31 - Friday, June 8 - Saturday and 19 May - the week.

To create conditions for a greater level of comparability with last year's data two other aspects were echoed: the same questionnaire was used in the analysis (with minimal modifications), and emphasis was placed on these strategic areas that are now defined in the National Strategy for gender equality 2013-2020: human rights, processes of decision-making, health, social care, education, economic empowerment, women and violence, women and media, women, peace and security. Issues of gender aspects of health and social care were directly addressed through the themes of demography and abortion, which were prevailing in the period in respect of which the sample was taken. Given that these two issues were practically the only concrete coverage of the topics of health and social protection viewed from a gender perspective, they were treated as separate issues in the instrument of analysis.

The choice of the second sample was motivated by the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2013 - 2016 which provides for a selection of the best tv commercial that most effectively fights sexist stereotypes and promotes equality between men and women. To gain insight into the genre context in which, in 2014, tv commercials will be selected, the sample for analysis of the manner of portrayal and representation of women and men in the program concepts and contents included 30 commercials and video spotys marked as "free airtime", shown in May, June and July 2013, on the seven national television channels (MRT1, MRT2, Alsat - M TV Alfa, TV Kanal 5, Sitel TV and Telma). The selection criteria were based on them being aired in prime time (from 17 to 23 am), the videos have men and women appearing in the primary role (close ups / or speaking), and they are usually repeated on most television channels. Thus a sampe was secured of two-thirds of tv commercial spots and one third of sposts designated as "free airtime". This sample was used as a reference source of data for analysis concerning the ways of portrayal and representation of gender in advertisements, and in it almost 80% is accounted for by the themes of demography, family values and abortion, which is why the questionnaire was made for this analysis, with special attention paid to the foregoing.

Part of the team at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities -

Skopje last year had the honor to conduct research for the Broadcasting Council which referred to the treatment of gender issues in the media, and the portrayal and representation of men and women in the program content. As already mentioned above, both samples differ from the samples taken in the last year research on gender issues broadcasters. In 2012, the sample of informative programs included information programs in addition to the news ( "If ..." and "Without pardon" on MTV 1 "Tears and joy" on MTV2, "The road to" and "in the center" Alsat-M, "X / O" and "Code" on Channel 5, "Circle" Sitel and "Money market" helma). Also, the contents which last year served to analyze the portrayal and rerepresentation of men and women in the programs of broadcasters on entertainment shows ( "Sidewalk News" MTV1, "Seven" on MTV2, "Pizzicato" of Alsat M "Extra exclusive" on Channel 5, "Backstage" on Sitel, and "The Sixth Day" Telma). Given these differences, when comparing the results from both studies, it is expected, to a degree, that a different type of research results would be generated, which would be due precisely to the change in research samples..

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Аnalysis

of gender issues

in the program concepts and content of broadcasters

(in the news) - Individual findings

1. **Methodological approach to the analysis of gender issues in the news**

For this study, conducted on a sample of seven issues of news on seven television channels (MRT1 and MRT2 in Albanian TV Alsat-M TV Channel 5, TV Alfa, TV Sitel and Telma) a questionnaire was used which was intended to provide data on the presentation of gender issues in the central news of TV stations nationwide, and the manner in which TV stations address the topics from the strategic areas identified in the National strategy for gender equality 2013 - 2020: human rights, decision-making processes, health , social care, education, economic empowerment, women and violence, women and media, women, peace and security, supplemented by topics demography and abortion.

The questionnaire was designed specifically for the sample of the central issues in the news, incorporating in itself most of the questions used in the research on gender issues carried out in 2012, which enables comparison of the data with the last year.

It was conceived in such way that includes both quantitative and qualitative approach to research. The quantitative part of the survey geberates data on the total number of features in the news, about the number of analyzed features from a gender perspective, their duration, and the number of occurrences of women and men writers, editors, journalists, reporters, guests attachments etc. Besides quantitative data, the questionnaire provide discursive analysis with qualitative data. Namely, the method of speech was analyzed: whether affirmative in terms of gender equality or sexist, whether it used established stereotypes and whether it reinforces and produces new, the types of statements that dominate were classified (descriptive, suggestive, prognosticating, etc.). Also, questions of a qualitative nature copud be translated into quantifiable way through encoding.

Sports news, which by their very content do not address these topics, were analyzed in terms of the terminology used to display male and female sports and the number of features that refer to male and female sports.

1. Presence and and the method of coverage of gender issues (quantitative and qualitative data)

The analysis of the information content shows that even when it comes to issues that are commonlym in gender conscious journalistic approach, addressed from a gender perspective, in Macedonia they are often fully absent. What can be seen from the analysis of gender issues this year is the minimum presence of topics that could be addressed from a gender perspective, and even more so the minimum percentage of use of gender-sensitive and gender affirmative approach in terms of equality between men and women in these features.

Expressed in percentages, the rerepresentation of the features that were analyzed from a gender perspective of each of the television media is as follows::

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TV Channel | Analyzed features (of the foregoing strategic areas relevant to gender issues) of the total number of features (%) |
| MRT1 | **5,2** |
| МРВ2 (news in Albanian) | **4,8** |
| TV Alsat-М | **4,2** |
| TV Alpha | **8,6** |
| TV Channel 5 | **9,0** |
| TV Sitel | **5,7** |
| TV Telma | **7,4** |

The above percentages show that in principle TV channels dedicate little room to topics that are considered important for gender issues, or to topics that are part of the strategic areas defined in the Strategy for Gender Equality 2013-2020. The percentage of analyzed features that relate to those topics does not mean their treatment in gender terms, i.e gender sensitive position, using speech that would be considered affirmative to gender equality, or gender-conscious speech.

In this respect, a clearer picture is obtained when comparing the percentages of the results of the type of language used by the authors, as well as with respect to the position concerning genders and on the way a topic is covered by a TV station in features falling in the group "strategic areas"..

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ТV channel | Gender blind and gender neutral approach to a topic (%) | Gender sensitive and affirmative approach to gender equality (%) | Sexist, objectivizing approach to a topic(%) |
| MRT1 | **83,3** | **16,7** | **0** |
| МРВ2 (news in Albanian) | **60,0** | **40,0** | **0** |
| TV Alsat-М | **66,7** | **16,7** | **16,7** |
| TV Alpha | **100** | **0** | **0** |
| TV Channel 5 | **72,7** | **9,1** | **0** |
| TV Sitel | **42,9** | **14,2** | **42,9** |
| TV Telma | **66,7** | **28,6** | **0** |

These data indicate that those features relating to strategic areas important for gender equality or topics that are important for gender issues are not generally addressed from a gender perspective, that is, they exhibit a "gender-blind" approach.

Randomly selected sample of the central issues of the news, with the period corresponding to the last year's (selected in May and June) overlapped with the events and the news about the draft law on termination of pregnancy, and now the official law on termination of pregnancy (Off. Gazette 87/2013). In fact, more than half of all analyzed features related to these topics (features on the bill on abortion, the adopted law on abortion with embedded amendments, statements by the Bishop Peter about abortion, etc.). As regards this topic, which directly affects women's rights and health, attitudes of the government and the church were contrary to the views of some of the NGOs and male / female activists whose mission is the promotion of gender equality and women's rights and those of the parliamentary opposition . The way in which the television channels reported about this showed marked differences in treatment by them, or some of them (TV Sitel and MRT1) did not show both sides, but only statements which supported the bill on abortion. Such reporting is contrary to the basic principles of news reporting which is under the obligation to present the positions of both sides. This way disallowed not only impartial but also gender-sensitive approach to news.

In view of this news in some TV broadcasters, there was a notable omission of statements by women, an issue that directly affects the autonomy of the female body. The following table presents quantitative involvement of men and women interlocutors, i.e. those who give a statement about the news regarding the bill on abortion. Qualitatively speaking, the statements coming from women who were screened in the features in general were in the interest of the party supporting the new law on abortion, in other words, in general, women were included with statements if their attitude was consistent with the views of supporters of the law - again talk about policy of taking sided regarding women's issues, and not by applying a gender sensitive approach to the issue..

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TV channel | Statements by men (Law on abortion) (%) | Statements by women (Law on abortion) (%) |
| MRT1 | **50,0** | **50,0** |
| МРВ2 (news in Albanian) | **100** | **0** |
| TV Alsat-М | **66,7** | **33,3** |
| TV Alpha | **84,6** | **15,4** |
| TV Channel 5 | **37,5** | **62,5** |
| TV Sitel | **54,5** | **45,5** |
| TV Telma | **43,8** | **56,2** |

Exclusion of the views of women (such as women MPs from the ruling party and the opposition, women protesters, gynecologists, women activists, women dealing with issues of women's human rights and gender rights, etc.) from these features by some television broadcasters (MRT2 news in Albanian, TV Alfa), in addition failing to promote gender equality, puts women in marginalized childish position of a person who is not of a "working capacity" to make a decision and have an informed opinion and stance on an issue that directly concerns women. At the same time, this process reinforces passivity and exclusion of women in public life and decision-making processes, even on issues that concern them.

The reason the Broadcasting Council of the Republic of Macedonia has an obligation to make an analysis of gender issues and the portrayal and representation of men and women in the broadcasters' programs stems from the power of electronic media to influence the public and the building of public opinion. It is this power of the media that imposes a greater accountability concerning the way in which these topics are treated and the manner of portrayal and representation of men and women and their involvement in public life.

Despite the numerical account of the involvement of men and women in the statements on the subject of abortion, a general analysis was also made of the involvement of men and women in the features that were germaine to gender issues (the above mentioned strategic areas), which were more or less treated form a gender perspective

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| --- | --- | --- |
| TV channel | Statements by men (%) | Statements by women (%) |
| MRT1 | **71,4** | **28,6** |
| МРВ2 (news in Albanian) | **90,9** | **9,1** |
| TV Alsat-М | **62,5** | **37,5** |
| TV Alpha | **89,3** | **10,7** |
| TV Channel 5 | **72,2** | **27,8** |
| TV Sitel | **58,8** | **41,2** |
| TV Telma | **52,4** | **47,6** |
| Total | **71,2** | **28,8** |

Data from the randomly selected sample of issues of central news show a picture of a strong gender asymmetry (with the exception of TV Sitel and TV Telma) in terms of the opinions that are regarded as relevant by the television houses. Cumulatively speaking, other than the male or female reporte, in the features analyzed men were represented by making statements with 71.2% and women with only 28.8%.

This year's analysis of news concern the existence, the method of coverage and general treatment of the news which are considered important for gender issues, but the general absence of women was notable (both physical presence and as interlocutors through given statements) in the news features, of whatever type they may be. This picture can be said to correspond to social reality and the position of women in society, but the TV stations are precisely those that the have influence to change this image through the inclusion of women (of particular area) in statements and through the use of gender sensitive approach to the themes that are emerging as strategic areas for gender equality, or simply events with outcomes that carry different social implications for both men and women.

In addition to the theme of the Law on abortion, other topics were treated as well in the areas that concern gender roles. The results of this analysis indicate that some of these issues were addressed in a generic imperceptible manner with the use of sexist or objectivizing speech in the announcements. For example, regarding the news on new code of conduct for health professionals and workers, Sitel TV announcement at the beginning of the news was the following: "Sexy nurses will remain history! No more short skirts and cleavage."

On the other hand, important statements or topics related to gender issues were completely ignored by most TV stations, or were represented without gender sensitive and affirmative approach. For example, an important statement in terms of gender issues, the news of June 6, 2013 MRT1, showed the US Ambassador Wohlers talking about the "Regional Conference on networking mentors":

"If we want to leave a prosperous and just world, we cannot leave of half the population behind us, we cannot successfully face the challenges relating to security, education, the economy, development and everything else, if women are not involved in every segment of society. And this is as true for Macedonia, as well as the United States and other countries. "

This statement was aired only by MRT1, but the news presented went without any comment or treatment of gender issues by the journalist. Other TV broadcasters did not even aier this statement of the Ambassador in their features on the Regional Conference of mentor networking. The central and the only statement, which did not refer to gender issues at all, and was reported by all the TV stations that broadcasted this news, was the statement of the President.

MRT1 stands out as a positive example for including gender issues in the feature on the position of women in certain religious communities, whereby the subject was addressed with the use of gender-responsive approach and treatment of news from several perspectives.

News concerning a gender issue has also been neglected by all TV broadcasters, apart from the news in Albanian language on MRT2. Namely, on 19.05.2013 no other TV station covered the possibility of using maternity (or paternity leave) by husbands, whose wives can experience complications with serious health problems after childbirth, or whose wifes are employed in specific jobs. The statement by the Health Insurance Fund representative, Arben Saliu, was as follows "There are cases where unfortunately the mother during childbirth could die or her job is such that she cannot be absent, and in this case, the leave is the entitlement of her husband." was shown only on MRT2.

News in Albanian language on MRT2 stand out as a positive example with another gender sensitive news, shedding light on an important issue of women's representation in local government institutions. On 29.05.2013 only this TV channel (mixed gender composition of editors) released the news of representation of women in institutions, indicating that after 12 years of the framework agreement, in only 3 municipalities was women's representation higher than 30%. This news, in addition to highlighting the issue important for women's rights in terms of economic empowerment, takes into account the neglect of the issue at hand, specifically in the "smaller communities" the interviewed person stated, "the gender issue is neglected and usually smaller communities do not take seriously into account the needs of their specific groups. " These rare examples of gender-aware news and editorial approach are unfortunately the exception in the media practice.

As a special category of analysis, which did not refer to the strategic areas and topics relevant to gender issues, was the representation of information in the news about sports for women. In last year's gender analysis of the news noticable was the minimal presence or complete absence of features on women's sports and in particular the descriptio of female athletes with the terms "women", "gentler gender" and so on. as something normative in terms of sports. Reference to male sports in general did not have the adjective "male". This year there is a slight improvement of this picture in terms of the increased number of features on women's sport, particularly on television channels in Macedonian language and in terms of categorizations that hint of "weaker, gentler sex".

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| --- | --- | --- |
| TV channel | Men’s sport (%) | Women’s sport (%) |
| MRT1 | **67,6** | **32,4** |
| MRT2 (вести на алб. јаз.) | **96,3** | **3,7** |
| ТВ Алсат-М | **93,7** | **2,7** |
| ТВ Алфа | **72,7** | **27,3** |
| ТВ Канал 5 | **91,8** | **8,8** |
| ТВ Сител | **77,8** | **22,2** |
| ТВ Телма | **79,3** | **20,7** |

As regards the nouns used for universal human categories, the picture obtained in the last year's analysis for the needs of Broadcasting Council about this issue, as prepared by Katerina Kolozova, PhD. remains identical.:

„ Discursive invisibility is achieved not only by avoiding topics relating to women, not only with simple failure to portray them, but also through the use of supposedly gender-neutral language. Use of nouns to refer to universal human categories ( "director", "professor", "doctor", etc.) exclusively in the masculine gender is a form of discursive exclusion of women. The pretense of universality or universal representation of one gramatical gender versus the other constitues a form of subordination or hierarchical relationship, and socially exclusive speech. Failure to use inflexions in feminine gender when referring to offices ( "Minister", "President" and so on.) Is a form of gender-insensitive speech because, in addition to being a form of exclusion in the form of cancellation of gender differences and reducing the gender of a male / female official to irrelevant data (which certainly it is not), suggests that the term contains dimension of dignity and universality if used in the masculine. As though it is implied that female inflexion reduces the dignity of the office. Fortunately, this practice disappeard in Macedonia for a period, but lately we have noted some neo-conservative tendency of a come-back of nouns pertaining to social functions in "gender neutral gender" (contradiction is apparent in the formulation, and it is a symptom which calls for analysis.) “[[1]](#footnote-2)

This year there also gender-neutral language and nouns were used, such as students, doctors, teachers, teacher, messenger, messengers, citizens, president ... this type of gender-neutral language is used in public discourse, so for those to which the law on termination of pregnancy (women) pertains the term citizens was used, which further contributes to the invisibility of women in this society. Also, in terms of gender neutral categorization, we can point to an example of a statement made by a journalist on MRT1 reporting on the position of MP Ljiljana Popovska, President of the Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, about the bill on abortion, whereby she was presented as follows: "the law sparked an outcry from some Members of Parliament." (our italics) - with this comment and where we come across an authoritative presence of women in politics with a particular expertise, gender is "neutralized" by avoiding the use of the feminine suffix and by announcing the name of the female MP. So instead of noting and promoting the participation of women in politics, an opportunity was thus missed to give visibility to the MP to which the news concerned.

These illustrations of exclusionist and gender "blind" paradigm that appears not only on television channels with news programs covered by this study, but also in public discourse used by representatives (mostly men) of state institutions is a form of discursive exclusion of women. And as pointed out in the last Kolozova's analysis of gender issues in the media:

 „The very pretense of universality or universal representation of one gramatical gender versus the other is a form of subordination and hierarchical relationship, and socially exclusive speech. The fact that it is implicit that the masculine gender (but not the feminine) can lay claim to universal validity, and include, and refer to the feminine gender "represented" by universal = male designation is already an apparent form of gender asymmetry.“[[2]](#footnote-3)

Singling out statements only or with a strong predominance of male interlocutors produces a kind of erasure of women in public life and their participation in politics. This picture ( alleged absence of women from public and political life) instead of further asserting the need for inclusion of gender issues in media content of news programs (news), turns out to be supported by the media with "facilitattion" of its further definition and reinforcement, in their presentation of asymmetric positioning of genders in the statements aired, and in their neglect of gender issues and usage of gender sensitive treatment..

1. **Conclusions and recommendations**

Raising of public awareness regarding gender issues is crucial in terms of improving the conditions with equal opportunities for men and women and promoting gender equality and rights. The need to introduce a gender perspective in the coverage and placement in the news broadcast on the media appears as a necessity for achieving the commitments and objectives arising from the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2013-2020, as well as the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men .

Frequently used expression in gender analysis - low social visibility of women, is unfortunately the final outcome of the analysis of the treatment of gender issues in the news on national TV broadcast via digital terrestrial multiplex. Taking into account all obtained data, we come to the basic insight that the public media space, which is dominated by men, establishes a general division (visual and discursive) that can be described as follows: The contents of the news are generally devoid of sensitivity in terms of gender issues. Overall, certain subjects or events that carry different implications for genderare presented in a gender blind or gender neutral language.

Regarding the creation of opinion and awareness raising, the media are in a position of being a deeply influential social force that can support and help in achieving these goals. In addition to the precise, accurate and impartial information, they are able to make a choice, how and in what way they will report, what kind of statements will be aired, what language will be used in the presentation of information, moreover, they can recognize what kind of social implications will an event or news on men and women bring. Simply put, the media not only depict, they actively participate in the creation of reality, not only in terms of discourse, but also in terms of visual presentation. And hence their ability to take proactive action aimed at a much faster and more efficient implementation of the mission of constant awareness raising regarding gender issues.

Along these lines are the recommendations provided in this analysis, which refer to the proactive attitude and involvement of television channels in promoting the values of equality between men and women. The fact that the recommendations that follow do not show significant differences from last year, talks about the status quo and a picture (or minimally changed in some media) transmited by the television in terms of gender issues. With the hope that this report will reach the media, especially television, what we would recommend is the following:

- Introduction of topics that directly affect the issues of equal gender representation in decision-making structures in the social and political spheres and the issue of overcoming gender stereotyping in culture and public discourse.

- Increased presence of women in the role of expert and political authorities, especially on issues that directly or exclusively affect women.

- Introduce topics of essential interest for gender equality in Macedonia, for example, the percentage of participation of women in state institutions, visible and invisible forms of discrimination (the lowest wages in sectors in which the primary workforce is female - such as the textile industry ) various social implications that certain events have on men and women and so on.

Supporting recommendation:

In order to increase the competence of journalists and editors in terms of the topics of gender equality and to raise their awareness of the importance of these issues, we recommend that training events and public debates be ogranized. We recommend that the contents of these events and the methods of transmitting them be designed in a way that corresponds to the needs of the target group to which they is intended.

Analysis

of the manner of portrayal and representation of women and men in the program concepts and content of broadcasters (In commercials and clips specified as "free airtime") - Individual findings

1. **Description of methodological approach and quantitative data**

For the research regarding the portrtayal and representation of men and women in the program concepts and content of the media which the Broadcasting Council is obliged to supervise, a sample of 30 advertising spots and spots marked "free airtime" was used. They were analyzed on the basis of a specially designed questionnaire.

The questionnaire designed for the commercials brings knowledge of the manner of portrayal that prevails in our country. The questionnaire used issues of qualitative and quantitative nature. As an illustration, for quantitative questions were asked the following quantitative indicators: the proportion of male and female voice as narrators, the representation of men and women as voices of actors in the commercials, the number of appearance of men and women in commercials was then calculated. However, crucial to this analysis are qualitative questions, for example: (a) "How are gender roles in the feature (active / passive, traditional / non-traditional, victim / perpetrator, smart / lightheaded, woman as a problem / man as a problem, tender and delicate / rough and less sensitive, power / powerlessness, decoration, attracting attention to physical appearance) ?; (b) In what social role do men and women appear in commercials; (c) whether topics that relate directly to gender roles in family life and in terms of sexuality are present and what speech prevails in their coverage (patriarchal, objectivizing, sexist or affirmative in terms of gender equality) ?; (d) How much importance is attached to the physical appearance of women and men and how it is relevant to the situation; (e) Is the showing of body / overall physical appearance of women and men objectivizing (reduced to a sex object) ?; (f) What is the positioning (dominance) of the bodies in space?

Questionnaires concerning the commercials gave qualitative and quantitative data on the portrayal and representation of men and women. We will start with the presentation of quantitative data. What can be observed in the data is a generic asymmetric representation in favor of man, in the form of: the voice of the narrator, the voice of the character, as well as number of men in advertisements (whether it is a commercial advertising or the spots marked "free airtime").

Man and women characters in commercials and spots:

men: 62,5% women: 37,5%

Man and women narrators in commercials and spots:

men: 72% women: 28%

The voice that is heard most often in the form of character or female/male narrator is a male voice. The message that these data carry is that the active subject, one whose voice is heard, is that of a man. The woman is mostly "absent", i.e. the representation of women in the commercials portrays them in a subordinate position in relation to men. Men in turn are the authority that has the right to speak, and whose voice can convince us, assure us, deliver a message.

Similar is the situation with the presence of men and women in advertisements. But in terms of whether it is about commercial ads or spots tagged with "free airtime" there is little difference. The data are presented in the table below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Type of advertising message | Presence of men(%) | Presence of women (%) |
| Commercial advertising | **66,7** | **33,3** |
| Sposts tagged as „free airtime“ | **56,7** | **43,3** |
| Aggregate result of the two types of commercials | **64,3** | **35,7** |

It is noticeable that in both types of advertisements men dominate with their physical presence in terms of numbers. In addition to men dominating by voice, they dominate in terms of visibility, as physical bodies. This disparity is identified as equivalent to disparities in the involvement and presence of mente and women in the news, which shows the analysis of the day - information programs conducted in parallel with this research.

Despite the presence of men and women in advertisements, their positioning in space, ie what kind (of the main female/male actors in commercials and music videos) has a dominant, central position is important. In this respect there is no difference as tp whether it is for commercial advertising or a spot tagged "free airtime"..

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dominant position in space of female/male actors | Man (%) | Woman(%) |
| Commercial advertising spot | **45,5** | **54,4** |
| Spot tagged „free airtime“ | **70** | **30** |
| Aggregate result of the two types of advertising | **53,1** | **46,9** |

Greater symmetry of showing the main actors and actresses is seen in commercial advertisements, unlike non-commercial, where we have a pronounced male dominance in space. The cause of approximately identical dominance in the space of the main actors / actresses in commercial spots is also due to the fact that commercial advertisements attache more importance to physical appearance of women than of men. Also, showing the physical appearance of women in commercial advertisements more frequently (five ads) is objectivizing (reduced to decoration or sexual object), versus the appearance of men (in one commercial). Women's appearance in commercial advertisements boils down to decoration, but with the status of a passive agent, because the voice heard is predominantly male.

1. **Gender portrayal and representation – qualitative data**

What speaks volumes about the portrayal and representatiuon of men and women are the social roles assigned to them and the promotion of gender roles. Noticable is the usual representation of women in the spots marked "free airtime" as mothers, wives and housewives third. In contrast, commercial advertisements normally portray women as housewives (one is responsible for the cleanliness of laundry, cooking, hygiene in the home, while expressing pleasure and amazement as soon as she finds the means that would better clean stains and dirt). The message these ads are sending in terms of portrayal and representation of gender roles indicates that the area in which women "rule" is the home, and the only "authority" enjoyed by women is the one in terms of household chores.

Unlike them, men usually appear in the commercials outside their home, in a cafe, in their car, in the office building - they are active players in public life. In commercials when they are in the role of fathers and husbands, they are usually clumsy and incapable of housework (cleaning, laundry), making these activities stereotypically presented as "women's work" and duty. This representation of men puts them in a childish position of "adult children" that need to be taken care by women's maternal figure.

The videos that are marked as "free airtime" are mostly part of the Government's campaign to strengthen family values and for large families. In these ads men are commonly found in the role of "the problem", one must be convinced that marriage and family are the right options for him. These spots are strongly colored by patriarchal elements in convincing the partner not to have abortions, so that he would be more pleased with "preferred" gender of the baby, the spouse speaks to him the following words: "I feel that the boy will be just like you ". Similarly, the visual portrayal of the video named "Jana's hysband," shows a man in a dominant position, someone who decides, someone who speaks, authority, while "Jana" has been marginalized as a silent figure. The video ends in a scene replicated from the old black and white photographs of couples where the husband - authority is sitting in a chair, and the woman is standing beside him. Also, in terms of family duties the spots and and commercial advertisements usually send a message and show men and women in a stereotypical form, of a clear division of household and parental responsibilities, with men as passive subjects in the home (eg. in the video named Both family and school, the husband is in a typically patriarchal position of someone who sits and reads the newspaper, while the woman is in the kitchen and serves the children). Departure from the stereotype of women's role can be found in the comercial with the doctor who is a mother of 4 children, as well as the spot named "pregnant while studying" where the lead character, in addition to the role of a mother stresses that she is employed and that the decision for marriage has been shared with her partner, but hidden visual message in this video is that in the achievement of this "family values" in rearing three children the grandmother (second female subject) was also involved, suggesting that growing more children is hardly likely if left only to two parents who are both employed, and even more of parents who have low incomes and whose everyday life is not even close to idyllic, meaning that these messages do not operate with all categories of families.

1. **The problem of stereotyping gender roles and low visibility of women in TV commercials**

The results of the analysis of commercial advertisements and spots marked as "free airtime" present a paradoxical picture of gender asymmetry in portrayal on television: female gender is often not shown, or with a minimum visibility, and most often the visibility leads to subordination and marginalization. A conclusion offers itself of low social visibility, which in the commercials boils down to stereotyping of women as socially inferior, placed in positions of lower decision making power, a less authoritative role, and in several cases they are objectivized or reduced to decoration or sexual object. Findings show predominant leaning towards the other extreme, which is equally dangerous, brining dow the role of women exclusively in the private sphere, family and close within the home. The effects of such campaigns that reduce women to a mother, housewife and wife, were typical of the 50s and 60s of last century in the United States, a period identified by the degradation of the status of women and women's rights.[[3]](#footnote-4)

Men on the other hand, dominated visibility in advertisements, and in the overall media space[[4]](#footnote-5). They have the roles of "heads" in the family, authority, public figures, leaders, decision-makers.

In fact, the visual and discursive portrayal and representation of women and men in commercial advertisements and non-commercial videos, the trend of stereotypical presentation of gender roles, reducing women to two roles (mother and housewife) which operate exclusively in the home, while male subjects are agents who are active, authoritative and whose principal area of activity is outside the home. The differences between commercial advertising and music videos marked as "free airtime" is that in commercial advertisements women are used to attract attention to physical appearance, highlighting their decorative function.

Stereotyping is pronounced in commercial and non-commercial advertising spots marked "free airtime" where mothers and housewives prevail. Where a woman is an active and dominant personality, it refers to domestic chores such as hygiene, cleaning, cooking. The most graphic example is thje commercial named: CIF - Knight and cauldron in which the knight eventually revealed his identity to a woman, she is in a superior position relative to the male actors, but only in terms of cleaning efficiency, for which men ( according to this ad, and in other advertisements) do not have ability. The end conclusion is that the kitchen, the home is the only "kingdom" where a woman "reigns" supreme. “

1. **Conclusions and recommendations**

Raising awareness of gender equality is not only a commitment to women's non-governmental organizations or groups of activists, but it is also a legally prescribed duty of the country, and a value to which that democratic societies aspire. The media certainly have a responsibility in terms of the reality that they create with their daily editorial decisions and that they convey to the audience / citizens. The situation in terms of advertising is somewhat different, because television does not produce advertisements. The argument in favor of the private TV stations is that they are financially dependent on the number of TV commercials and commercial content aired . However, in broadcasting commercial content, they have legal obligations which they must not neglect, including those that ads must not endanger human dignity, nor be based on highlighting gender differences. Therefore, in order to promote the value of gender equality, we recommend electronic media to proactively approach the issue of gender sensitivity in screening.

In terms of commercials and spots marked as "free airtime" we would recommend:

* - If TV channels get advertising or non-commercial spots (marked as "free airtime") whose content violates the dignity of women and men and creates a discourse that threatens the rights of women and men, as specified in international documents ratified by the Republic of Macedonia ( for example, the international Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women-CEDAW), they should refuse top air or they should demand that corrections be made;
* - They should act proactively: through their programming content, for example in entertainment shows, or shows advertising is broadcast, they should introduce content that would be "neutralizing" to unwanted hidden messages and stereotypical objectivizing representation of men and women in TV commercials.
1. Excerpt from the analysis of gender issues in the program concepts and content of the media, in 2012, prepared by prof. Katerina Kolozova. PhD. available on <http://www.srd.org.mk/images/Izvestai_od_analizi_na_rodovi_prasanja.pdf>, p. 17-18 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Excerpt from the analysis of gender issues in the program concepts and content of media, for 2012, part 3. the Problem of "gender invisibility" of women reflecting the *marginalization of the issue of gender equality,* prepared by prof. Katerina Kolozova, PhD. available on <http://www.srd.org.mk/images/Izvestai_od_analizi_na_rodovi_prasanja.pdf>, стр. 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. American feminist writer Betty Friedan writes about this, calling this widespread condition of dissatisfaction and depression in women, "the problem with no name". It refers to women who seemingly had everything: marriage, family and home, but deep down they were unhappy with their own lives, but the American culture and campaigns that went in the form of advertisements insisted that women can experience their fulfillment and happiness only in their roles at home: Friedman, B. (1963) the Feminine Mystique, Norton, New York  [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Such dominance is reflected in the analysis of the news, moved ahead in this report [↑](#footnote-ref-5)