

# ACCESS OF THE AUDIENCE TO THE DISCURSIVE ORDER GENERATING PUBLIC OPINION IN THE LIGHT OF PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES OF TVP S.A.

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## STRESZCZENIE

W artykule podjęto próbę odpowiedzi na pytanie, w jakim stopniu strategie programowe oraz praktyka zarządzania TVP S.A. korespondują z normami sfery publicznej takimi jak: równy dostęp widzów do porządku dyskursywnego wytwarzania opinii publicznej. W poszukiwaniu odpowiedzi przeprowadzona została analiza strategii programowych TVP S.A. – w aspekcie udziału nadawcy publicznego w kształtowaniu sfery publicznej – od momentu ukonstytuowania się spółki do 2016 roku. Zaprezentowana została również praktyka działania TVP S.A w tym obszarze, zarówno w sferze programowej, jak i profilowania profilu widowni głównych anten: TVP1 i TVP2. W artykule podjęto również rozważania nad zagadnieniem *wykluczenia cyfrowego* jako jednego z elementów wpływających negatywnie na partycypację widzów w dyskursie publicznym, jak również dokonano podsumowania aktywności TVP S.A. w obszarze kreowania dyskursu społecznego toczącego się w obszarze nowych mediów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** media publiczne, sfera publiczna, opinia publiczna, strategie programowe, wykluczenie cyfrowe

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### *Public sphere and public media*

As John Downey points out, the public sphere is partially created by mass media institutions and relations.<sup>1</sup> The special significance of the latter in the creation and functioning of the public sphere is pointed out by Jürgen Habermas. When analysing the public sphere power structure, the author distinguishes four types of power: political, social, economic and media power.<sup>2</sup> According to Habermas, the media power is based on a mass communication technology. Those who work in politically relevant media sectors (i.e. reporters, journalists, editors, directors, producers and publishers) cannot avoid exercising an influence because they choose and process important political content, and thus intervene in the formation of public opinions. The use of media power is manifested in the selection of information and its format, the shape and style of programmes as well as results of their distribution – in setting goals, or in raising and formulating problems.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it can be concluded that the proper functioning of the public sphere depends, to a considerable extent, on the existence of a media system that guarantees pluralism of opinions and content. As pointed out by Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks, the representation of all relevant interests of society ought to be the basic requirement that should be met by a democratic media system. After all, the media not only teach us about social issues but also affect the degree of importance of the presented problems. The authors emphasize that the concept of the public sphere of society is currently focused on the extent to which the media can help citizens obtain knowledge of the world around them, take a stance on it and decide how to act based on reliable information.<sup>4</sup> As Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska indicates, one of mass media functions in democratic systems is the function of a public debate platform. It is supposed to facilitate the transfer of new opinions, views and points of view not only from elites to citizens, but also in the opposite direction. This is where different concepts and visions should clash, where the public opinion is shaped and where a consensus, which is one of the most important features of democracy, is reached during debate.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Tomasz Goban-Klas indicates that in the contemporary times, the mass media have become, among other things, the main means of transmission and source of information necessary

<sup>1</sup> J. Downey, T. Koenig (2006). Is There a European Public Sphere? The Berlusconi-Schulz Case. *European Journal of Communication*, 21(2), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> J. Habermas (2006). Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research. *Communication Theory*, 16, p. 419.

<sup>3</sup> K. Callaghan, F. Schnell (2005). *Farming American Politics*. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA. Za: J. Habermas, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

<sup>4</sup> P. Dahlgren, C. Sparks (red.) (2007). *Komunikowanie i obywatelskość*. Transl. M. Hudak. Wydawnictwo Astrum, Wrocław, p. 13, [in:] M. Różycka (2017). *Media publiczne a kształtowanie przemian społecznych*. *Naukowy Przegląd Dziennikarski*, 1, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> B. Dobek-Ostrowska (2012). *Komunikowanie polityczne i publiczne*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa, p. 183.

for the functioning of public institutions, as well as a predominant source of images and definitions of social reality, and a source of a public meaning system that provides criteria and measures for determining what is normal and what deviates from an official and publicly recognized standard of normal behaviour and opinions in both social and normative dimensions. In his opinion, nowadays, the mass media are also a public forum (arena) on which issues of political life are presented and considered.<sup>6</sup> Teresa Sasińska-Klas also points at the importance of the media in the process of developing the public sphere. She emphasizes that the media are a significant forum for contemporary public discourse.<sup>7</sup> They form a platform for the shaping and massification of public opinion. It is worth stressing here that – as Jürgen Habermas points out – the phrase ‘public opinion’ in singular refers only to an opinion predominant among several public opinions. Such groups of synthesized issues and contributions present simultaneously the importance of cumulative *yes* and *no* attitudes obtained in various groups of audience. According to Jürgen Habermas, public opinions are difficult to define; however, he draws attention to the fact that they exert a certain political influence. The influence of public opinion spreads in two opposite directions, turning to both the government and the audience from which it originally derives. The fact that both elected governments and voters may have a positive, negative or indifferent attitude to public opinion emphasizes the most important feature of the public sphere, namely its reflective character. All its participants can look again at perceived public opinions and react to them having reconsidered the same.<sup>8</sup>

However, in order for this process to take place, it is necessary for the audience to have access to opinions created and presented in the mass media. This task is assigned, to a large extent, to a public television broadcaster. The core philosophy of the public media operations, called the concept of a public service or social mission of a public broadcaster, consists of eight principles, among which – *inter alia* – actions aimed at the public sphere development are indicated. This principle has it that when addressing the audience as citizens, the public media should arouse their interest in public affairs, persuade them think in terms of social interest as well as strengthen their sense of social identity and nationality. Thus, the public media should reflect the entire variety of thought orientations present in public discourse.<sup>9</sup> As indicated by Karol Jakubowicz, the properly operating public media have always been an important factor in the functioning of democracy. Apart from the task to provide the audience with a certain type of content, usually emphasized in a definition of these media, the key element of their public

<sup>6</sup> T. Goban-Klas (2011). *Media społeczeństwa informacyjnego*. W: L.H. Haber (red.). *Komunikowanie i zarządzanie w społeczeństwie informacyjnym. Wybrane zagadnienia*. Zakład Wydawniczy NOMOS, Kraków, p. 53.

<sup>7</sup> T. Sasińska-Klas (2014), *Mediatyzacja a medializacja sfery publicznej*. *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*, 2(218), p. 165.

<sup>8</sup> J. Habermas, *op. cit.*, p. 417.

<sup>9</sup> M. Mrozowski (2001). *Media masowe. Władza, rozrywka i biznes*. Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, Warszawa, p. 230.

service is the obligation to create the public sphere, form the nationwide audience and give events a public nature.<sup>10</sup> In the Polish legal order, the legislator has assigned the public broadcaster a task of creating programmes that should promote the free development of citizens' views and the forming of public opinions, as well as enable the citizens and their organizations to participate in public life through presenting diverse views and positions and exercising the right of control and social criticism.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the question remains how TVP S.A., as a public television broadcaster, has performed this task over the years?

### *Programming strategies and practices of the Polish Television*<sup>12</sup>

In Poland, system changes that occurred in the field of mass media after 1989 abolished the existing state's monopoly in the area of programme creation and broadcasting, thus beginning the reforming process of Polish broadcasting communication. The reform was aimed at creating foundations for a democratic, pluralistic and open social communication system. According to these assumptions, in a set of future tasks developed then for the public media in Poland, it was proposed that they should strive to fully meet the needs of the audience, implement the principle of freedom of speech, create favourable conditions for political and social involvement of citizens and foster the creation of civic society and democratization of the governance system as well as stimulate art and culture. To this end, the broadcasting system was to be of an open, democratic and pluralistic nature, i.e. to provide each significant group and social force with an opportunity to propagate their views, on a scale corresponding to their impact, in order to win supporters and influence the public opinion as well as the authorities.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, in its shape proposed at that time, TVP was to participate in the creation of the public sphere in the democratic system being formed in Poland. In connection with the above tasks, the necessity was advocated to make the air available, in various forms, for purposes of expressing and defending views, opinions and interests of citizens, parties, organizations as well as professional and local groups. This required the development of appropriate journalistic means and forms as well as forms of social access to programmes. What turned out to be of importance here was the principle of pursuing the so-called active pluralism policy, impos-

<sup>10</sup> K. Jakubowicz (2013). *Media a demokracja w XXI wieku. Poszukiwanie nowych modeli*. Wydawnictwo POLTEXT, Warszawa, p. 181.

<sup>11</sup> Ustawa z dnia 29 grudnia 1992 r. o radiofonii i telewizji, Dz.U. 1993 nr 7 poz. 34, art 21, ust 2, pkt 3 i 4.

<sup>12</sup> The research used in the article was carried out during preparation of the publication: *Programming of Public Broadcaster in Poland. Essential Determinants of Programming and Distribution of Content (Działalność programowa telewizji publicznej. Kluczowe determinanty programowania i dystrybucja oferty)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Główne założenia reformy radiofonii i telewizji. Komisja do Spraw Reformy Radia i Telewizji (Commission for the Reform of Radio and Television), Warszawa 1990, p. 4ff.

ing the obligation on journalists to reach all important forces and social groups, to learn about their views and take them into account in programmes. Moreover, the broadcasters' responsibilities were complemented with such tasks as participation in the transformation of the country's economic system, popularization of knowledge of market economy mechanisms, popularisation of knowledge on the government's activities and objectives it pursues – providing a comprehensive explanation and analysis of the government's programme, as well as educational activities, performing the culture-forming role and providing cultural patronage.<sup>14</sup> However, the proposed – undoubtedly progressive – solutions as regards the public broadcaster's participation in the creation of the public sphere were not applied in practice. What is more, until the late 1990s, no strategy was implemented in TVP S.A. that would provide an answer to the question: how should the public broadcaster participate, if at all, in the shaping of the public sphere in Poland?

The variability of the context in which the public broadcaster had to operate in Poland in the destabilized state and political system of the 1990s and the lack of internal decisions within TVP S.A. itself caused that the regulator of the electronic market in Poland, the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT), noticed the need to achieve this goal and proposed to assign additional tasks to the public broadcaster.<sup>15</sup> First of all, the National Broadcasting Council indicated the need for the participation of TVP S.A. in the process of building the public sphere in Poland. This was to be achieved by explaining in programmes of TVP S.A. the principles of a new political, state and economic order as well as cooperation with state institutions and representatives of the society, while maintaining its own impartiality and autonomy, in order to gain access to information and to enable them to present their activities and positions directly to the public. Furthermore, TVP S.A. was supposed to satisfy information and communication needs and rights of the society as an element of building democracy and civil society. In order to make it possible to meet these demands, the National Broadcasting Council imposed duties that were to relate to several areas on TVP S.A.

Firstly, the period of the accelerated systemic change in Poland of that time also resulted in the society's intensive demand for information, analyses, explanations and interpretations of the processes taking place. This state of affairs caused that the National Broadcasting Council saw the need to give an important meaning to the informational and educational function of television. This was to manifest itself in the adoption by TVP S.A. of a conscious and thoughtful strategy for imbuing the entire programming and various genres with content that would allow the audience to learn about and understand the processes taking place, find their direction and sense, understand what they meant to an individual and the latter's social environment and what opportunities they created for and what threats

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> *Przyszłość Telewizji Publicznej w Polsce. Tezy do dyskusji*. Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji (Commission for the Reform of Radio and Television), Warszawa 1995, p. 10ff.

they posed to that individual. This task was to be one of the basic objectives of the programming activities, implemented by a multitude of forms and genres. Therefore, the public broadcaster's programming was to be saturated with the news, documentaries, commentaries, educational programmes about nature and films.

Secondly, the situation of the accelerated change gave rise to particularly lively political and social activities of various social groups, e.g. in the form of the need to articulate their views and interests in the public forum. According to the National Broadcasting Council, the public television was to meet this need.

Thirdly, the programming of the TVP S.A. should leave space for various groups of Polish society to present their views and hold discussions. Therefore, the programming could not have served to deepen differences of opinions, to exacerbate conflicts that divide the society, to promote any orientation or to condemn any set of views falling within the limits of human rights.<sup>16</sup>

Changes taking place on the media market at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century posed even greater challenges to TVP S.A. in terms of its influence on the public sphere. The development of paid analogue and digital television, a change in the manner of watching TV, fragmentation of the audience and the process of erosion of viewers' loyalty towards television stations are only some of the challenges that the public broadcaster had to face in the new media reality. To counteract the above-mentioned phenomena, it was postulated in TVP S.A. to adopt a strategy assuming a change in the philosophy of the programming policy of that time. The core of the planned change was the assumption that when competing for the audience, TVP had to make such programming changes that would provide it with a satisfactory level of audience, especially during prime time. The solution was not to consist in adopting the same strategies as applied by commercial broadcasters, but to refer to the idea of public service. These decisions were to prove fraught with consequences in the future, also in terms of the participation of TVP S.A. in the process of generating public opinion. As a result of the actions taken, the following years meant that TVP S.A. would abandon in its strategic decisions the idea of creation of a programming offer that takes into account the task of shaping the public sphere.

However, it should be pointed out that despite the lack of assumptions of a strategic nature, some attempts were made to perform at least part of this task in TVP1 by offering programming that aspired to be opinion-forming or a forum for exchange of views. The program strategy adopted in 2004<sup>17</sup> defined rules for the construction of TVP1 programming, based on news services that were to set the rhythm of the day. There was indicated the need to create new programme forms and genres, as well as the necessity to apply the principle of differentiation of the audience and adjustment of programme forms to the latter. In addition, it was assumed that dur-

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> Strategia programowa Telewizji Polskiej do 2004 roku. Telewizja Polska S.A., Warszawa 2001.

ing prime time, i.e. from 7.00 pm to 10.30 pm, attractive programmes, such as live debates, current documentaries or Polish movies, would be broadcast. Such a repertoire was supposed to distinguish TVP from the offer of commercial broadcasters. Despite the fact that the core of the offer was to consist of films, series and soap operas, it was planned that commentaries were to be the second predominant genre in TVP1. Their share was assumed at the level of 15%. The programmes were to focus on social, economic and commentary issues, and a live show was to become a preferred form that was to enable the participation of viewers by phone and through the Internet. The share of feature programmes and documentaries was assumed to be at the level of 10%. It was planned to increase the amount of news reports, which were to constitute 8.6% of the programming offer. It was assumed to create a chain of longer and shorter news reports with a content-related specialization of individual editions adapted to time slots, recipients and the subject matter. The news was to be broadcast either as an independent programme or within clearly separated segments containing commentaries on current events or ongoing processes.<sup>18</sup>

In the Company Development Strategy for 2002–2006<sup>19</sup> the previously adopted solutions regarding the programming policy did not change. Only the share of commentaries was increased to 17%. The subsequent years did not bring any significant changes in the programming policy of TVP.

Activities of TVP S.A. (or rather the lack thereof) as regards the public broadcaster's participation in the development of the public sphere seem to be the more surprising because participation of the media in this area was one of the tasks included in the "Strategy of the Polish State in the field of electronic media."<sup>20</sup> It follows from that document that the fulfilment of democratic functions of the electronic media (i.e. facilitation of free formation of citizens' views and public opinion, providing citizens and their organizations with an opportunity to participate in public life and exercising the right to control and social criticism) requires the presence of specific genres (the news, commentaries, documentaries) in the programming offer. While other citizens can use various sources of information and forms of participation in the public debate on issues relating to life in their area, residents of smaller towns and rural areas may be deprived of it, especially in view of the press concentration and transformations in the local press belonging to large press corporations. Therefore, it is important to protect the informative and commentary functions in local radio and television stations.<sup>21</sup> While the said postulate was addressed to local broadcasters, the public broadcaster's participa-

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> Strategia rozwoju Spółki Telewizja Polska S.A. 2002–2006, Projekt. Telewizja Polska S.A., Warszawa 2002, p. 11 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Strategia państwa polskiego w dziedzinie mediów elektronicznych na lata 2005–2020. Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji (Commission for the Reform of Radio and Television), Warszawa 2005.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 32.

tion in these activities seems obvious. Unfortunately, neither was the situation of TVP S.A. improved by a document setting out rules for the public service mission of TVP, developed by TVP S.A. in 2005. It included provisions directly defining responsibilities of TVP S.A. in the area of shaping the public sphere in Poland. As it follows from that document, “considering the special role of television in the process of individual and public opinion-shaping, TVP strives to present phenomena, positions and views in their many aspects; TVP avoids sensationism, glaring simplifications and creation of an unjustified sense of threat; it shows facts and phenomena in a broad context.”<sup>22</sup>

A change in the perception of the role of TVP in the process of shaping the public sphere did not occur until the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Then the issue of involvement of TVP S.A. in the shaping of the public sphere became one of factors determining standards of commentary programmes. As it follows from the Management Board’s Report for 2011, “commentary programmes are aimed at presenting and thoroughly explaining problems and phenomena, taking into account different aspects, arguments and points of view. These programmes serve as a public forum where activities of the government, political parties, employees ‘and employers’ organizations and other public and social life entities are presented. They often take the form of a debate in which viewers participate, and their live broadcast gives their viewers a sense of participation in the discussion.”<sup>23</sup>

Continuing the process of involvement of TVP S.A. in the shaping of the public sphere, it was indicated in assumptions to the Strategy of TVP for 2012–2015 that the objective of TVP’s operations was to rebuild the role of the public broadcaster as the main opinion-forming medium and to hold a dialogue with viewers and public domain circles. These activities were to result in significant engagement of TVP in building the social capital. To this end, it was proposed to undertake activities in the programming and functional areas, consisting in:

- triggering debates on the most important civilization issues;
- inspiring and conducting social campaigns;
- supporting the fight against negative social phenomena, such as social exclusion;
- making the air and the Internet website available for debates on issues most important to Poland;
- interactive forms of television broadcast (an element supporting the debate and building a civil society);

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<sup>22</sup> Zasady realizowania przez Telewizję Polską S.A. misji publicznej. Załącznik do Uchwały Zarządu TVP S.A. (Annex to the resolution of the Board TVP S.A.) No. 108/2005 of March 29, 2005. Telewizja Polska S.A., Warszawa 2005, pkt 23.

<sup>23</sup> Sprawozdanie Zarządu z wykorzystania przez Telewizję Polską S.A. wpływów z opłat abonamentowych na realizację misji publicznej w 2011 roku, Załącznik do Uchwały Zarządu Spółki TVP S.A. (Annex to the resolution of the Board TVP S.A.) No. 144/2012 of March 14, 2012. Telewizja Polska S.A., Warszawa 2012, p. 24.

- strengthening the news and commentary offer and supporting integration of communities and environments in regional programs and on regional websites of TVP;
- dialogue with viewers;
- introduction of a system for winning the public opinion and opinion-forming circles (using the Internet to communicate with viewers, establishing a Team for Contacts with Viewers and appointing a Spokesperson of Viewers);
- presence on opinion forums, in social networks, building its own community and development of civic journalism.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, the discussed strategy maintained the previous definition of TVP1 as a nationwide and universal channel addressed at a wide audience. Originally, TVP1 was to increase the share of demanding, open-minded and ambitious viewers. In terms of its profile, it was to remain the most universal television channel building civic aspirations and encouraging involvement in public affairs. As regards preferred programme genres, TVP1 was to exhibit the news, commentaries, documentaries, feature films and series of the Polish and foreign market, as well as broadcasts of prestigious (sports, cultural and public) events. Its objective was to build civic aspirations among viewers and engage them in public affairs, develop and educate Polish society, including in the field of law and economics. TVP1 was also supposed to provide an explanation of the state policy, and also meet the needs of the youngest audience.<sup>25</sup> The following years brought continuation of activities in the area of shaping the public sphere by TVP S.A. at the level of strategic plans. In the “Company Strategy for 2016–2020”<sup>26</sup> it was planned to return to the assumptions from before 2002 and end the harmful programming competition with commercial broadcasters. Actions were planned to help TVP to follow the processes occurring on the media market, including to promote civic education, and its fundamental role was to explain the reality. Specific goals in the programming area assumed, among other things, activities in the field of public debate. They were to engage the public broadcaster in the public debate through involvement of leading news programmes in the process. Furthermore, TVP S.A. was to introduce the exclusivity of its own production in the area of news and commentary programmes. Moreover, the public broadcaster was to create its own formats for civic and economic education as well as journalism. Activities in the area of public debate were also to include the reconstruction of programmes of regional televisions, creation of formats for news programmes, commentaries and

<sup>24</sup> Strategia TVP na lata 2012–2015. Funkcjonalna strategia programowa. Telewizja Polska S.A., Warszawa 2012, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Based on: Analiza strategiczna TVP; Funkcjonalna Strategia Programowa. Strategia TVP S.A. na lata 2012–2015; Strategia Zarządu Spółki Telewizja Polska S.A. [in:] Strategia TVP S.A. na lata 2012–2015. Telewizja Polska S.A., Warszawa 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Strategia Spółki TVP S.A. 2016–2020. Telewizja Polska S.A., Warszawa 2015. Based on materials provided by TVP S.A.

documentaries, as well as diversification of sources of programmes obtained from external producers.<sup>27</sup> TVP1 was still to remain the most universal TV channel in the public broadcaster's offer. It was to be engaged in public affairs, and its main task was to build civic aspirations. The programming assumed exhibiting news programmes, commentaries, documentaries, feature films produced on Polish and foreign markets as well as broadcasting prestigious sports events. The channel was also to support education of society and create a forum for discussion on the most important social, political and economic issues. The main programming tasks focused on strengthening the position of news reports and commentaries, ensuring broadcasts of the most important state and church celebrations, as well as creating a platform for journalistic debates relating to events at home and abroad. TVP1 was to maintain the current strategy of offer serialization, which translated into continuation of the existing time slots.<sup>28</sup>

When analysing the issue of participation of the public broadcaster in shaping the public sphere, it is impossible to pass over the impact of technological changes on distribution of the TVP programming offer, and thus its availability to the potential audience. The development of parallel or alternative content distribution platforms based, to a large extent, on access to the Internet, causes that a lack of skills or possibility to use them can become a reason for the so-called *digital exclusion*. As indicated by Władysława Jastrzębska and Anna Jastrzębska, the process of constructing the Internet network infrastructure does not occur evenly in all countries. This has resulted in uneven pace of spreading the new technology, which has contributed to the so-called *digital exclusion*, or *digital divide*. According to the OECD definition, this is a phenomenon of social inequality, or even a gap among individuals, households, enterprises and regions at the level of social and economic development relating to the access to and use of information and communication technologies in all spheres of economic activity.<sup>29</sup> As it follows from the "National Development Strategy 2020"<sup>30</sup> in Poland, the axes of division between people proficient in digital technologies and those who do not have such skills include age, place of residence and level of education. While the use of the Internet is quite common among young people, digital exclusion of older people is becoming a significant problem. It should be emphasized here that in the case of the second group, digital competencies have not constituted a natural component of the socialization processes and are strongly correlated with the level of education.<sup>31</sup> As a result, the basic problem in reducing the phenomenon of digital divide and the barrier to the widespread use of new information and

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Based on materials provided by TVP S.A.

<sup>29</sup> A. Jastrzębska, W. Jastrzębska. Wykluczenie cyfrowe – przyczyny, zagrożenia i bariery jego pokonania. Studium przypadku, p. 92 [www.ur.edu.pl/file/20797/09.pdf; 26.03.2015].

<sup>30</sup> Strategia Rozwoju Kraju 2020. Ministerstwo Rozwoju Gospodarczego, Warszawa 2012, s. 115. Dokument przyjęty uchwałą Rady Ministrów of September 25, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

communication technologies is not a lack of access to computers and the Internet, but motivation, knowledge and skills to use them.<sup>32</sup> According to data of the Central Statistical Office, 77.9 per cent of households had at least one computer at home in 2015 whereas 75.8 per cent of households had access to the network.<sup>33</sup> However, in the area of digital exclusion, there are still older and less educated people. These two factors: age and education primarily determine the accessibility of the Internet, and it is not only about elementary digital competences that allow one to enter the network itself, but also about the skills to navigate it, search for content, use services and functions.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, it should be assumed that traditional television is becoming, to a large extent, the only platform that enables the elderly and less-educated people to participate in shaping the public opinion and in the public sphere. Taking into consideration the above observations, attention should be given to the policy applied by TVP over the years in the area of profiling the audience. While the legislator has placed the public broadcaster under the obligation to provide a programming offer to the whole society and its individual parts, the policy adopted by TVP over the years seems to deny the idea of a public broadcaster. TVP S.A. entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century mainly with a mature viewer, who grew up with traditional television and for whom television was the main source of information about the world, a place for shaping views and opinions. However, this viewer was not attractive from the commercial point of view. As a result, TVP S.A. launched activities aimed at “rejuvenation” of the audience and getting closer to a commercial group of viewers.

Thus, although in 2000, TVP1 was still dominated by viewers over 55 years of age, in 2003, it was planned that the audience of TVP1 would mainly consist of people of the age group of 40 years and more. In terms of the structure of education and professional groups, in 2000, the viewers of TVP1 were mainly people with secondary and higher education and people in managerial positions, practising prestigious professions. Moreover, viewers of TVP1 were also unemployed and retired people as well as housewives. Such a significant dissonance within the main group of viewers resulted in 2000 with divergent expectations and needs that the programming offer was to satisfy. In 2003, the programming was to be addressed to people with vocational and secondary education and, at the same time, to active people and those with higher professional aspirations.

In the case of TVP2, in 2000, its audience mainly consisted of viewers aged 46 and more, with higher than vocational education. These were people living in small towns of up to 100,000 residents, the unemployed, the retired and house-

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<sup>32</sup> Strategia Rozwoju Kapitału Społecznego 2020. Załącznik do uchwały Rady Ministrów (Annex to the Resolution of the Council of Ministers) No. 61 of March 26, 2013 (poz. 378) w sprawie przyjęcia Strategii Rozwoju Kapitału Społecznego 2020, s. 18ff.

<sup>33</sup> GUS: ponad 75 procent Polaków ma dostęp do Internetu. PAP 20.10.2015, <https://www.polskieradio.pl/42/273/Artykul/1533636,GUS-ponad-75-procent-Polakow-ma-dostep-do-Internetu;> 21.08.2017.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*.

wives. Similarly to TVP1, it was also planned in respect of TVP2 to rejuvenate the audience over a period of three years. It was assumed that in 2003, the viewers of TVP2 would be people over 35 years of age. It was also planned to change the structure of the audience and address the programming to professionally active people who live in large cities. As in the case of TVP1, it was also assumed to address part of the offer to children and young people.<sup>35</sup> In addition, in 2001, TVP S.A. adopted a document titled: “Programming strategy of the Polish Television until 2004.”<sup>36</sup> As regards the audience profile of the main channels, it was assumed then that TVP1 would expand its audience by children of up to 9 years of age and people aged 16 to 49, as well as residents of villages and small towns. Therefore, it was the moment when the public broadcaster officially began to shape the programming offer taking into account the commercial target group. In the case of TVP2, the audience was to be expanded to include young people from 9 to 15 years of age and people aged 35 to 45. It was also planned for the programming offer to reach viewers with higher education, higher income and living in large cities. Thus, TVP2 remained, in the assumptions, outside the commercial group. It was supposed to address its offer to children and young people of up to 15 years of age, and then the programming was to be dedicated to viewers over 35 years of age.<sup>37</sup> The adopted policy eventually resulted in the fact that in 2006, in TVP S.A., the programme evaluation system considered audience figures only in the so-called commercial group, i.e. aged 16 to 49, treating viewers over 50 as, *de facto*, second-class viewers. Therefore, the programming offer was adjusted to the needs of the commercial group while ambitious programmes were marginalized at the same time. In this way, TVP gave up trying to create its own audience.<sup>38</sup>

However, the practice showed that the actions taken by the broadcaster aimed at rejuvenating the audience not only proved ineffective, but also resulted in the outflow of loyal viewers. In 2012, in terms of age, TVP1 and TVP2 were still channels with an older audience with overrepresentation of the audience over 45 years of age. In terms of the place of residence, TVP1 was more often chosen by people living in the countryside or in smaller towns than people living in cities. In the case of TVP2, the situation was very similar to that of TVP1. In terms of education, TVP1 was a station most often selected by people with basic education, and there was a decrease in viewers with secondary and higher education. TVP2 was also chosen mainly by people with basic education and, similarly to TVP1, with a deteriorating profile of viewers with secondary education.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Based on: Strategia programowa TVP S.A. Telewizja Polska S.A., Warszawa 2000, p. 9ff.

<sup>36</sup> Strategia programowa Telewizji Polskiej do 2004 roku. Telewizja Polska S.A., Warszawa 2001, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>38</sup> More about: W. Świerczyńska-Głownia (2017). Działalność programowa telewizji publicznej. Kluczowe determinanty programowania i dystrybucja oferty. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków, p. 215ff.

<sup>39</sup> Strategia TVP SA na lata 2012–2015. Analiza strategiczna. Telewizja Polska S.A., Warszawa 2012, p. 30ff.

## Conclusions

As the practice showed, the audience profile of the public broadcaster at the beginning of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century remained similar to that from the late 1990s. It is also a mature viewer, for whom traditional television has always been the medium of first choice and a place for seeking information and shaping opinions. Showing concern for this viewer, as well as enabling them to participate in the public sphere, seems to be one of the main tasks currently faced by TVP S.A. As it follows from internal analyses of the public broadcaster, these are the viewers who will remain its loyal audience. As a result, the audience of TVP S.A. will continue to grow old.<sup>40</sup>

It also remains significant that, despite efforts, the programming offer of TVP S.A. has not attracted younger viewers,<sup>41</sup> and the public broadcaster has not managed to come into existence effectively in the new media. Although the Polish Television started activities in the area of providing content with the use of various tools as early as in 1989, in the following years the public broadcaster has failed to develop a long-term strategy in this area. First of all, TVP S.A. has not created its own distribution platform for multi-platform broadcasting. As a result, the digital offer of the public television has been available through a dozen or so large Internet websites and several hundred services with different coverage. This state of affairs has prevented TVP S.A. from creation of a single, identifiable platform for presenting positions and opinions. The weakness of TVP S.A. has also been a lack of identical offer in all distribution channels, which caused that it was impossible for the user to become familiar with the full offer on any chosen device. As a result, the public broadcaster has been virtually eliminated from the social discourse taking place in the area of the new media.<sup>42</sup>

Taking into consideration all the above remarks, it can be pointed out that over the years TVP S.A. has failed to use the opportunity to create a platform for discussion, exchange of thoughts and shaping of the public opinion. The program strategies adopted by the broadcaster as well as the actions taken have resulted in the elimination of TVP S.A. from the process of shaping the public sphere. A change that has occurred in recent years in the approach to this issue on a strategic level allows one to assume that in the future, TVP S.A. will become an active participant in public discourse. Whether or not this will be the case will be determined by the manner and form adopted by the public broadcaster to pursue the assumed goals.

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>42</sup> More about: W. Świerczyńska-Głownia, *op. cit.*, p. 250ff.

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