

VIOLENCE AND WOMEN IN ORGANISED CRIME IN POLAND AFTER 1989 IN SELECTED MEDIA NARRATIVES

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to present the image of women and violence against them in the context of their role and presence in the structures of organised crime in Poland after 1989. Organised crime is one of the frequently used topics in cinematography or television series, which are very popular among the public. It should be emphasized that journalistic publications, in particular articles and books that document the phenomenon of organized crime are no less popular. The bestseller on the Polish publishing market was the record of conversations with the best-known and media-related key witness, which began a series of books on the subject of other criminals. Some stereotypical narrative tropes were found in portraying women in organised crime in the context of violence.

For this purpose a book of former gangster and key witness and journalist was analyzed in terms of the threshold value of the event, predictability, violence or pageantry, which are one of the 12 criteria of the information value proposed by the researchers.

Despite the continued strong stereotyping of women in mafia structures, more and more stories focusing on women. Sexuality is one of the most visible criteria and some kind of narrative in the book. Focusing on the other criteria of information value, it is worth emphasizing the occurrence of intimacy, violence, performance and pictorial representations in the book.

Organised crime in Poland was a new phenomenon in the early 1990s. The interest in the role of women in the Polish crime stemmed from the fact that the image of organised crime created thus far by the media was reserved exclusively for men. Feminine topic has become a trend because of its freshness and unconventional approach to the mafia, especially in Poland.

INTRODUCTION

Regardless of the latitude or age, the world of organised crime is still one of the most popular topics in popular culture – movies, series, books (Langman 1998; Hansen, Peacock and Turnbull, 2018; Buonanno 2012; Puzo 2009) and games (Rowlands, Ratnabalasuriar and Noel 2016). Some of the movies or books have been named iconic, to mention the book “The Godfather” filmed by Francis Ford Coppola, and the acting creations of Marlon Brando, Robert de Niro or Al Pacino still constitute a gangster archetype. If we look at the image of mafia women in the media, we observe its opposite. As Felia Allum said:

“The media’s portrayal of mafia women is often that of a passive and exploited character. Fiction in the Anglo-Saxon world has taken a long time to catch up with this aspect of real life. Gomorrah – the Italian TV series based on journalist Roberto Saviano’s study of the Neapolitan criminal organisation, the Camorra – presents a nuanced picture of strong women who are both violent and active in their group’s criminal activities” (2018).

She continues that in BBC’s series “McMafia” many women are portrayed in traditional and stereotypical way but nowadays this phenomenon is different due to the criminal activity of women. She noticed that in “McMafia” we see the trend of portraying women similar in “The Godfather”. There is a division of women on “insiders” and “outsiders”. Allum describes these types of women as:

“Insiders – wives, daughters, sisters and girlfriends – are presented as pawns who contribute nothing to the business but present a risk as they need protection. Meanwhile outsiders are simply exploited for the money they can make for the family” (2018).

However, it would be a great simplification to say that only popular culture exploits the topic of organised crime. Recently, the role of women in organised crime has been recognized. Treating the phenomenon of crime in a broader scope, e.g. thefts, murders, tributes, rapes, robberies, which are also familiar to criminal organizations, it should be noted that this subject has long been present in the mass media. Over the years, it could be noted that journalists were not limited only to popular crime journals in the press but published a series of articles and TV shows on crime.

The scientific debate on organised crime is interesting enough for various reasons, which translates into in-depth analyses of researchers from various scientific fields, including law, sociology, psychology or gender studies. The complexity of the matter does not exclude an interdisciplinary approach in which, for example, criminologists and media experts try to understand the relationship between the media and crime (Jewkes 2010, p. 3). There are also studies on the asymmetric treatment of women in the media in the context of reporting crimes (Yasmin 2021) and narrative female tropes (Sandman 2021, pp. 243-246). Scientific studies also deal with the subject of the active participation of women on selected examples of mafia structures and their presence in the media, especially in Mexico (Farfán-Méndez 2020, pp. 159-163). An analysis of the media in individual countries would help to explore this phenomenon.

In Poland before 1989 under conditions of undemocratic state and media dependence on the authorities, organised crime was absent from media coverage. This state of affairs was influenced by the media censoring authority – the Central Office for Press Control, Publications and Performances (GUKPiW in Polish). Dazzling the media with violence could cause social unrest, for example, panic, which was not in the interest of the political authorities. This information gap was somewhat filled with the “997 Criminal Magazine” of which Michał Fajbusiewicz was one of the most recognizable hosts. It’s worth noting that program was created in 1986 and was modelled after the British crime program. As this journalists mentions, in the 1990s, organised crime appeared as one of the topic. According to the editor:

“In the early 90s, the police did not cope with organized crime. I did not broadcast the programs that I was preparing twice because I got a warning from the headquarters that they were not able to provide me with security

and it was better not to tease them. This concerned Mr. S. from Gdansk, who, later, was blown up with a bomb. He dealt mainly with theft of cars in Germany” (Pajewska 2016).

Along with the political transformation of the early 1990s, the public experienced a flood of information about organised crime, which was previously unknown (Buczowski et al. 2012, p. 103-106). In retrospect, some journalists believe that during this period “everyone has become overwhelmed with crime” (Polish Radio 24, 2016). The mediatisation process of organised crime proceeded very quickly, as evidenced by numerous articles describing the activities of criminal groups in the national press as early as in 1990, e.g., by “Gazeta Wyborcza” (Hoffmann 2016). The words of one of journalists writing about the crime of Piotr Pytlakowski testify to the legitimacy of this border date, who said that

“at the beginning of the 1990s, I was involved in a reportage in “Życie Warszawy”, but the then secretary of the editorial office, Broniek Wildstein, decided to give me more duties and to look after journalists writing about crime. This is when all these mafia shootings began, bombs, we were racing with “Super Express” (Polish tabloid journal – author’s note) who will be the first to discover a mafia” (Mazurek 2008).

Not without significance is the fact that in the public debate politicians often refer to actions as incompatible with mafia law. This kind of element of rhetoric, such as the fight against various types of crime, has been an important element in political discourse since the 1990s (Skrabacz 2016, pp. 150-159).

Multithreaded analyses were the result of journalistic investigations published, among others, by Jerzy Jachowcz, Piotr Pytlakowski, Ewa Ornacka. It should be noted that journalists from other former states of the Eastern Bloc also dealt with organised crime after 1989. By revealing the backstage operations of the mafia, they sometimes pay the highest price for it. In recent years, we have witnessed the deaths of journalists: Bobi Cankow (Bulgaria, 2010), Jan Kuciak (Slovakia, 2018). It should be clarified that these surnames are exemplary, because over the years this circle has been systematically growing with journalists not only writing about Polish organised crime, but also about

the foreign mafia world. This peculiar trend has been diversified with books based on interviews with former gangster mafia structures, e.g. the series of publications by Artur Górski and Jarosław Sokołowski pseud. “Masa”, and one of them will be subject to this analysis. Although this work is not pioneering on the Polish publishing market (Pytlakowski 2014) due to the existing publications by the mafia people like Henryk Niewiadomski pseud. “Dziad” (Title in Polish: Świat według Dziada, 2002); Andrzej Z. pseud. “Słowik” (Title in Polish : Skarżyłem się grobowi, 2001); Ryszard Wierciński pseud. “Śledź” (Title in Polish: Kryptonim srebrny książkę, 2013). In practice the greatest media publicity accompanied the books written by “Masa”.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND RESEARCH METHODS

Undoubtedly, the nature of the activities of Polish criminal groups described by the media and combated by law enforcement agencies corresponds to the exemplary definition of organised crime. It should be noted that there are many definitions of this concept that has evolved over the years. For the purposes of the article, a specific definition was used that reflects the nature of the criminal groups in Poland in the context of the analysed issue. For the purposes of the work, it was assumed that it was

“cooperation of three or more people, for an indefinite or long time, suspected or convicted of committing serious criminal offenses, in order to obtain benefits or power” (Karpel 2017, p. 5).

In this context, the concept of mediatisation is also important, understood here as the process of mediating the media in learning the world of organised crime by their recipients, who drew information from media messages, such as articles, TV programs, books. In addition, the media were not only a carrier of content, but also had the power to create reality through the way information is transmitted (Skrabacz 2016, p. 149). On the other hand, the concept of information value proposed by Yvonne Jewkes, which is nothing more than a judgment of a journalist or publisher regarding the attractiveness

of this information to the audience and whether the information is in the public interest (Jewkes 2010, p. 37), was made a starting point for the analysis in terms of media studies. According to the researcher, we can measure this quantitatively: poor sales/view results mean lack of attractiveness for the recipient. When talking about the public interest, it depends on external factors, e.g. corporate or political pressures (Jewkes 2010, p. 38). The journalistic ethos is no less important, of which one of the key elements is the implementation of information and control function towards society, as well as the defense of universally accepted values.

The identification and categorization of information values shaping the coverage of events proposed by Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge in 1963 during the Oslo conference (O'Neill and Harcup 2009, p. 164) turned out to be a breakthrough. They distinguished the following criteria: relevance, timeliness, simplification, predictability, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, elite peoples, elite nations, negativity. The set of the following qualifiers is the supplement: frequency, amplitude, clarity, meaningfulness, predictability, continuum, composition (Brighton and Foy 2007, p. 7). They observed that the probability of informing about events increased when they appeared unexpectedly or had a high dramatic or negative tone, which in practice had its application in reporting crime (Jewkes 2010, p. 39).

In addition, this trend of research was developed by, among others, Steve Chinball in 1977 (Jewkes 2010, pp. 38-39). It is worth noting that the journalists of a particular editorial office decide on the choice and presentation of messages, e.g., by exposing the violence of criminals. It should be added that the information value criteria may vary depending on the country or culture (Jewkes 2010, p. 40). The researcher identified 12 criteria for the value of information shaping crime relations regarding the British media. Therefore, the following research questions are justified:

- Why is the subject of women in organized crime in Poland valuable in the media?
- What criteria are present or not in the analysed publication?
- What information does the recipient learn from the gangster's memories?
- What is the attitude of the former gangster against the media and journalists writing about the Polish mafia?

Table 1. Information value criteria.

Criterion	Characteristics
Threshold value of the event	Achieving the threshold value of significance or drama. The value of the topic depends on the scale of the described phenomenon (range: local, national, international). Maintaining the viability or reactivation of the topic by creating new threshold values, e.g. drama of the reported story, a known person, sexuality, horror, bizarreness, humour, curiosity, grotesque, nostalgia, etc.
Predictability	The first issue: although the aspect of unpredictability refreshes the topic, the predictable information can be valuable when it is planned to publicize it and to distribute tasks between journalists, in particular collecting information from reliable sources (the police, ministers, politicians, public institutions). The knowledge of journalists about the planned implementation of a program to combat crime may cause publicization of these matters before the event takes place. The second issue: a media agenda constructed in an orderly and predictable manner.
Simplification	The possibility of reduction to a minimum number of themes or topics in the information relationship. In the case of criminal messages, the recipients can express indignation and condemn the violation of the law by the individual. The news about sudden, unforeseen events are published most frequently, as well as focused on people and not abstract ideas. Binary oppositions such as "gangster" versus "ordinary citizen" are often used.
Individualization	The media prefer individualized crime reports, in which they explain this individual effect of the unit as the so-called "human element". Most criminals are described as pathological units, with the dominating image of a dangerous psychopath, the victims of whom are "innocent people".
Risk	The media devotes little attention to avoiding crimes, the level of prevention or personal security (exception: an appeal for caution in relation to a serious criminal who is free). In the current media discourse, criminal relations are increasingly being built around the motif of the victim and crimes committed by strangers, i.e. "everyone can be a victim".
Sexuality	Present in almost all media. As a result of framing information about sexual offenders, there is a perception that all men are capable of violence against women. In addition to the informational value in articles, there is also an almost pornographic representation of women.
Celebrities or high status people	A greater opportunity to publicize the topic and interest of recipients exists when a celebrity/a person performing a function who committed a crime (e.g. a misdemeanour, prohibited sexual act) or has fallen victim to it.
Closeness	It refers to the location in space (location of the event) and the cultural closeness ("relevance" of the event to the audience). A combination of many other factors.
Violence	The most common criterion of information value. Violence makes it possible to report the event in the most dramatic way. Nowadays we are dealing with the commodification and objectification of violence and crime, which testifies to the need to experience violence as a spectacle.
Spectacle and image representation	"Spectacle" of media coverage blurs the boundary between truth and deception in television productions. Emphasizing authenticity can be achieved by using, for example, industrial camera recordings, photos, etc.
Children	As victims/criminals, they guarantee a high information value of the topic and the media running the "morality campaign"
Conservative ideology and political diversion	The media agenda promotes prevention, increasing the number of police, tightening penalties for criminals. Mutual impact of media policy and discourse in the aspect of penal policy.

Source: own study acc. to Y. Jewkes, Media and crime, 2010, pp. 41-62

In order to answer the questions, the information value criteria proposed by Yvonne Jewkes will be used, as illustrated in the following table.

For the needs of the work, one publication was selected, entitled “Masa on Polish mafia women” in the form of an interview by Jarosław Sokołowski and Artur Górski, which is devoted mainly to Polish organized crime, with particular emphasis on the role of women and examples of violence against them. Górski is journalist, writer, deputy editor-in-chief of “Focus” and “Focus Historia”. The book also focuses on other thematic topics: key bosses, selected mafia interests, conflicts between criminal groups. The method of qualitative and quantitative content analysis, narrative analysis and a case study were used.

RESULTS

“IMPORTANT, QUITE IMPORTANT AND COMPLETELY UNIMPORTANT” – WOMEN IN THE WORLD OF POLISH MAFIA ACCORDING TO “MASA”

The book in the form of an interview entitled “Masa on Polish mafia women” began the cooperation of the most media former gangster and key witness, Jarosław Sokołowski pseud. “Masa” with the journalist, Artur Górski. This cooperation resulted in a book that turned out to be the 2014 Empik Bestseller in the “Literature of the Facts” category (Kuc 2015). This cultural plebiscite is information about what books, movies, CDs and press titles were reached for by the Poles (Plejada.pl 2015). What is important, this book won with another publication of “Masa” and Górski entitled “Masa on the money of the Polish mafia” (Empik 2015). The following factors could have influenced the success of this position: the previously absent issue of women in the organized crime world as in this book, the few women’s profiles reported in the media in the context of high-profile murder killings or lawsuits, women as partners in the articles of investigative journals, e.g., of Jerzy Jachowicz writing about the wife of one of the mafia bosses from Pruszków, Monika Z., as well as the popularity of this topic in other countries (Rogacin and Kowalska 2013).

Before we go to the analysis, it is worth asking what is the role of women in the mafia? According to journalist Alex Perry, patriarchy in the mafia environment is strong, which consists in that

“because it’s the same combination of intolerance, hard-line brutality and rejection of modernity. The medieval, male-dominated Mafia hierarchy totally enslaved women. Wives give birth to future Mafia soldiers, and underage girls are married off in arranged marriages, whereby men resolve conflicts or advance in structures. Women who oppose this are imprisoned, humiliated and beaten. And if they reveal the secrets of the mafia, they will pay with their lives” (Blich 2018).

Despite the continued strong stereotyping of women in mafia structures, more and more stories focusing on women. This area is of interest to experts who have noticed the presence of women in mafia activities countries such as Mexico and Brazil (Jaroschewski and Peteranderl, 2019). According to a 2013 report by the Italian National Anti-Mafia Directorate, women assumed a leadership role when their husbands and partners were imprisoned (Arovska and Allum 2014, pp. 1-2).

In the preface, Artur Górski cooperating with Sokołowski, drew attention to several issues regarding the phenomenon of organized crime in Poland. He includes among them the already published books of other gangsters on the subject, while the memories of “Masa” stand out against this background with their authenticity, information resources incomparably greater than the media or law enforcement agencies, as well as his participation in the creation of the mafia of Pruszków, which translated into a significant position in the gangster hierarchy (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 5-6). The brutal behaviour in the discos of future gangsters at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s are assumed as the beginning of the birth of the Polish mafia. The turning point was the effective police action in 1990, during which two criminals from Pruszków were killed, which was used as a myth to build criminal structures in the realities of the new political and economic system (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, p. 6). According to Górski, Sokołowski was in the very circle of bosses, but he has never been a boss in the full sense of the word, which turned out to be crucial for him being a key witness (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 7).

In 2000, the gangster decided to cooperate with the justice system. He disclosed a number of important information about the Pruszków group, and in return he received the status of a key witness (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 8-9). In the course of work on this book, the journalist admitted that at first he was sceptical, but the complexity of the mafia problem in Poland was so multidimensional and interesting that he decided on the cooperation. The selection of the topic for the first book was dictated by its popularity in popular culture and an attempt to portray the role of women in the Polish mafia (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 17-19). The information circulating in the media was full of stereotypes of mafia women, for whom money and fun were crucial (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, p. 113). As the gangster himself explained, the books on the publishing market do not reflect the nature of the Polish mafia in the context of the disseminated information, and the articles of investigative journalists were full of errors. In his opinion, the journalists did not verify the information obtained for various reasons, instead there were numerous speculations and pseudonyms assigned to the criminals by journalists, and the cinema also created its own vision of this environment, which had an impact on public opinion (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, p. 11 - 13). The co-author found out some analogies between the mafia of Pruszków and the American one from the 1920s in terms of lifestyle, as well as media interest (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 43-47).

Speaking of mafia women, the former gangster uses several categories to define their role: the actual group leader, gangster's spouse aware or not of the partner's activity or sexual object. In addition, he divided the mafia women in gradation into „important, quite important and completely unimportant” (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 36-37). The analysis of the disclosed information on mafia women will be based on 12 criteria, the frequency of which will be indicative of the value of the information subject.

The threshold value in this case is evidenced by two main features: the importance of the topic and drama, which were often combined in the context of the fate of the described women. The book includes the story of a Pole who, after her husband's arrest by the police, run one of the Italian clans of ,Ndrangheta – Calabrian criminal organization modelled on Cosa Nostra or Camorra The roles of women in the Polish mafia environment have not been

the subject of a broader description so far, although the women's thread was reported in the media. In this publication, which does not exhaust the issues, there is a visible way of presenting the roles of women:

- activity in mafia structures;
- limiting to the role of a wife/partner/mistress.

The former gangster includes the former wife of the gangster, Andrzej Z. pseud. "Słowik" among the women-icons of the Polish mafia – Monika. In 2013, she was detained by the police on suspicion of belonging to a criminal group of an armed nature. Together with other people, she was charged with corruption crimes, drug trafficking and the introduction of counterfeit banknotes into circulation (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 157-161). She was not only aware of her husband's activity, but she herself was involved in this type of activity over the years (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 163-170). Another active woman was the wife of another gangster, Barbara, whose influence on decisions in the criminal group of her husband was significant (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 191-201). In the group of women active in the mafia environment, there were also those who were ready to avenge their partner (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 181-185). As the former gangster explains, an important role was also played by women referred to as "git-falbana". The sources of this phenomenon should be sought in pathological subculture that does not care about violence and violation of the law existing in the Polish People's Republic, which resulted in a stay in prison. Their aspirations were related to influencing the group or achieving a significant position. Among the so-called "git-falbana" women, the former gangster included women of several criminals, which does not exhaust this catalogue. Some of them advised their husbands and also participated in numerous crimes (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 186-188). Sokołowski pointed out that women of this type spent time together in the fashion of their husbands/partners, and were ruthless for other women (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 190-191).

Considering the next condition, that is drama, it should be emphasized that it appeared in the descriptions of male-female relationships (violence, rape) and the fate of specific women who suffered the consequences of their actions. However, this drama also applies to several examples of the mother-son

relations. Sokołowski used the category of “mothers of gangsters”, which means mothers approving son’s crimes or being indifferent. He pointed out that the media were also interested in “mothers of gangsters”. In this context, the figure of Anna Mazza from the Italian mafia should be mentioned, who did not show any moments of weakness in connection with the death of her son due to mafia settling its score. The mother of the murdered gangster walking in the funeral procession is considered to be her Polish equivalent (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 213-214). At the same time, he stressed that the environment in which future criminals grew up – various pathologies and poverty, had a big impact on the choice of a way of life. These two factors are crucial for Sokołowski (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 214-218).

Undoubtedly, the scope of the described phenomenon was nationwide and international in the context of criminal interests, including in Russia (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 166-180). There are also other elements present in the memoirs of Sokołowski, such as the well-known person, ubiquitous sexuality, horror, bizarreness, humour, curiosity, grotesque, nostalgia. We have a cross-section of elements in each of the quoted stories, not only involving women but also other gangsters.

Bearing in mind the former gangster as a source of knowledge about organized crime, we expect a variety of forms of violence, because this is due to the specificity of this environment. In the context of predictability, it is worth emphasizing that the language of the former gangster’s words contained vulgar and obscene words, in particular in relation to the described male-female relationships. In the statements of Sokołowski, there were words from the language of the prison subculture, which were used in colloquial communication. This offered the effect of authenticity. Often the descriptions of vicious acts of violence (beatings, treatment of women) constituted a frame from a gangster movie.

If we are talking about simplification as one of the criteria of informational value, it occurs in the form of a relation reduced to a specific motif or topic, e.g. a woman, acts of violence, the structure of the Polish mafia. The presented information causes a number of reactions from the recipients, such as moral indignation about the way women are treated and condemnation of acts of gangsters. A very important aspect of this criterion is the ubiquitous

personalization, meaning the preference of stories about specific people associated with the world of mafia, e.g. gangsters and women mentioned by name or pseudonym; anonymous women and victims of crime. There are numerous binary oppositions in the book that leave no shadow of doubt to anyone who should be considered a gangster, a criminal, a dangerous person or a person without moral principles, e.g. one of the described women, Janina (gangster's sister)

“raised her two sons to be gangsters, because both she and they were just impressed by this. Being a gangster in her environment was the highest form of social development...”; (...) she could terrorize the president of a housing cooperative to give her the parking area almost for free” (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 207-208).

In the annex containing the most important male figures of the Polish mafia, there are terms such as: “sadist”, “exceptionally perfidious and brutal person”, “sexual maniac”, “he, but not only, treated women objectively and with a form of sadism”, “brutal”, “old recidivist” (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 225-227).

Speaking of individualization, often combined with simplification, it is worth noting that it concerned the presentation of diverse stories of mafia women and gangster activities not only reported by the media in the past, but also completely new. In these examples, the “human element” has been emphasized, which affects the perception of events as a consequence of actions and reactions of a person – wife/partner/sister of gangsters, e.g., Monika, Barbara, Janina. Interestingly, Sokołowski focuses on social, political and economic issues affecting the choice of the criminal path. Although the characteristics of the Polish mafia world presented by Sokołowski does not deviate from the well-known public opinion of the media environment, unknown information about specific crimes or acts of violence is revealed. The next criterion, which is the risk, is also an important element of the narrative about the criminal world. It concerned situations that are dangerous for women (e.g. a relationship with a gangster, accidental acquaintance), but also gangster meetings or mafia interests.

Sexuality is one of the most visible criteria and some kind of narrative in the book. This is evidenced by the vulgar language and numerous stories in

which women are treated only as a sexual object by a gangster community. One example is the disclosure of the backstage of the popular beauty contest at the beginning of the 1990s (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, pp. 57-66). The topic of celebrities or high status people also appears in the book in the context of people leading beauty contest, jurors (names), winners of the competition (names), as well as known club-goers, e.g. businessmen or celebrities (actors, sportsmen).

Focusing on the other criteria of information value, it is worth emphasizing the occurrence of intimacy, violence, performance and pictorial representations in the book. The closeness is present in the coverage of the most important events of the 1990s in Poland, including the activities of criminal groups, as well as the deaths of famous gangsters and the minister of sport. The next criterion, namely violence, is exposed to the same level as sexuality. From the information contained in the book, the recipient learns about the scale of the phenomenon, its forms (beatings, intimidation, threats, rape) and victims (women, ordinary citizens, gangsters). In a way, this is connected with the criterion of the spectacle and performances appearing in numerous accounts by Sokołowski, in particular descriptions of brutal beatings, male-female relations. However, the other two criteria – children and conservative ideology and political diversion – are marginal in nature. In the memories of the former gangster, there are occasional, e.g., growing up in a pathological environment, first contact with crime (children) and unambiguously negative statement of his son about criminal activity.

CONCLUSIONS

Organised crime in Poland was a new phenomenon in the early 1990s, which became the subject of interest for independent media. Journalists have described the illegal interests of the mafia people, e.g. the smuggling of alcohol, cigarettes or drugs, and the scores of criminals that often ended tragically. The media reported court trials of gangsters and the attention was paid to the testimonies of the key witness, Jarosław Sokołowski. It can be said that this was the first step towards the mediatisation of the mafia under Polish conditions. To a large extent, journalists have contributed to this, and some of them specialized in this

topic. The politicians who spoke about the fight against various forms of crime also played a big role. The entities shaping the phenomenon of mediatisation of organised crime in Poland should also include former gangsters who describe the environment from their own perspective, while criticizing the media and popular culture. Through them, the image of the Polish crime was created that does not match the reality (Górski and Sokołowski 2014, p. 5).

The proposed subject matter of the publication, which is the record of the former criminal's memories, is characterized by high information value, as there are 11 out of 12 criteria. The proposed criteria have proved not only useful for the analysis of the phenomenon of Polish organised crime in the media (in this case, the book), but also universal. Based on the analysis, it was found that they occur in different intensity, which results from the subject of the book and the information contained. Three groups of criteria were distinguished due to the intensity:

- high intensity: threshold value of the event, sexuality, violence, spectacle and pictorial representations, individualization, risk
- medium intensity: simplifications, predictability, celebrities or high status people,
- low intensity: children.

The interest in the role of women in the Polish crime stemmed from the fact that the image of organised crime created thus far by the media was reserved exclusively for men, and the woman was a marginal topic. As the information in the book shows, this cognitive perspective has become obsolete in the light of the revealed facts, and the mafia woman has many faces. There is no doubt that in recent years the subject of organised crime in Poland has undergone a new form of mediatisation, namely due to the recognition of books of former criminals. This is evidenced by the great interest of readers, which translates into high expenditures, and thus into the next publications on this subject. It is worth noting that the classification of women in the analyzed book corresponds to the formulated conclusions of quoted Felia Allum. We can also find some narrative tropes in portraying women in organised crime in the context of violence.

The interest of the Polish directors should be considered a measure of the informational value of this subject, who in recent years have been exposing

this thread in movies and TV series, especially by Polish director Patryk Vega who made two films “Kobiety mafii” in 2018 and “Kobiety mafii 2” in 2019 (in English: “Women of mafia” and “Women of mafia 2”). It is worth mentioning that one of the heroines (Monika) of this book became a celebrity. In 2017 both Monika and Sokołowski in cooperation with Artur Górski published a book titled “Słowikowa i Masa. Twarzą w twarz” (in English: “Słowikowa i Masa. Face to face”). She also appears in main Polish tabloids and gossip websites. Monika describes her private life in the context of organized crime: husband; women; violence; brutality; crimes; jail. Her ties to the criminal world in various areas made her famous and being a celebrity which echoes findings of Lindsay Steenberg on the subject (2017). In her opinion Patryk Vega’s film is the most feminist movie she has ever seen (Szt Tyler-Turovsky). She also noticed that women were portrayed as sexual objects, weaker than men and often naive despite few exceptions. Monika positively rated the film for the whole:

“I think Vega made a credible film, the script was written by one of the members of the Mokotow Mafia (Polish mafia – author’s footnote) and he knew what he was writing about. Dialogues are good, set in the realities of that time. But the film was made by men, so it shows women through their eyes” (Szt Tyler-Turovsky).

The next publications of Artur Górski and Jarosław Sokołowski, although not a pioneering undertaking, have a competition in the form of books by other gangsters, which confirms the new version of the mediatisation of organized crime. It is necessary to mention the next books by Sokołowski and Górski, such as: “Masa o pieniądzach polskiej mafii”, “Masa o porachunkach polskiej mafii”, “Masa o killerach polskiej mafii”, “Masa o bossach polskiej mafii”, “Masa o życiu świadka koronnego”. This topic was gaining the interest of public opinion. For this reason, others ex-gangsters and some of their life partners published memories about Polish mafia after 1989. Feminine topic has become a trend because of its freshness and unconventional approach to the mafia, especially in Poland.

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