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Foreign Capital in the Women's Press in Poland in 1989-2019 – Attempted Summary

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Abstract

Press companies with foreign capital have been functioning on the Polish media market since 1990. In the nineties, women's press was dominated by four media giants with German capital: Bauer Media, Burda Poland, G+J Poland, and Axel Springer Poland ('The Big German Four'), which were later joined by Edipresse Poland and Marquard Media. In the years between 2001 and 2016, mergers and acquisitions took place which led to a concentration of the press market. As a result, in 2019 Bauer Media became the definitive leader, systematically expanding its press range in the group of multi-thematic magazines. Despite taking action, neither Edipresse Polska nor Burda International was able to compete with the media giant. The aim of this article is to analyze changes in the segment of women's multi-thematic magazines which took place between 1989 and 2019. The research used the method of system analysis, a research approach used in social sciences, which considers the notion of a system and its analysis as crucial for the understanding of social phenomena. It was assumed that the women's press published in Poland is a part of the Polish media system. It is a closed subsegment. Considering this multi-thematic magazine group as a whole without dividing it into subsegments, it is obvious that Bauer Media was the ultimate leader – owning 13 titles i.e. 56.5% of the available magazine range. The remaining 10 magazines (43.5%) were owned by Burda International (5), Marquard Media (2), Edipresse Polska (1), Agora S.A (1), and Wydawnictwo Zwierciadło (1). In the years 2018-2019, the media giant Bauer Media

extended its magazine range and gained a monopoly in the advice and gossip magazine subsegment.

Keywords: Women's press, segmentation, foreign capital, ownership concentration

Introduction

The development of information and communication technologies has led to changes not only in many aspects of public life but also in traditional media i.e. press, radio, and television. Publishers of women's press have also had to adjust to these new operating conditions and have introduced new forms of contact with their readers.

The nineties saw foreign publishers investing; deliberate over the place of foreign capital in Polish press (including women's press); Polish-language copies of Western magazines; a growing number of titles; unbelievable print sales revenue etc. For women's press, 2001-2010 was a time of capital concentration, increased market segmentation, price dumping, magazine freebies, and the evolution of the luxury magazine subsegment. From 2011 onwards, we can also observe publishers' growing interest in social media. Thus, appeared the first attempts to create magazine profiles on Facebook, investment in e-publishing, and women's networking sites which unite several periodicals from the same publisher. The sites were linked by topic (e.g. parenting, fashion, celebrity gossip) or the affiliation of the title to a specific subsegment of women's press (advice, lifestyle).

The subject of this research is women's press in Poland during the years 1989-2019, namely, an attempt to summarize the three decades of the existence of this media sector in the Polish market. It is important to note that researchers are aware of the lack of wider analyses regarding women's press. McRobbie (1997) maintains that research on women's press has never been at the forefront of media studies. Consequently, there is no comprehensive approach to this issue. Similar observations are found in one of the articles of Menéndez (2013): 'periodicals dedicated to women (usually known as *women's press*), have aroused little interest as a subject for research, despite their long history and undeniable importance to the publishing market'. For media research expert Bussy-Génevois (1996), the study of women's press is important because 'one cannot analyse the press and its history without taking into account [...] women's magazines, which allow access to information on the history of civilisation; habits, customs, and everyday life'.

The time frame under analysis has been precisely defined. The first date is indisputable. After political changes in Poland which began in 1989, the first colour-printed women's magazines owned by Polish publishers -

‘Twój Styl’ and ‘Poradnik Domowy’ - , debuted on the Polish market. The years 1991-1994 are marked by the expansion of foreign corporations, mainly those with German assets. As a result, Polish readers were presented with, amongst others: ‘Tina’, ‘Pani Domu’, ‘Claudia’ etc. The second date is related to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which has had a considerable effect on media markets around the world. As the pandemic broke out in early 2020, the authors of this article decided to end the analysis following the last full year prior. This paper is a summary of 30 years of women’s press in Poland.

The aim of this article is to present the changes in the segment of multi-thematic women’s magazines that took place between 1989 and 2019. An effort was made to define the semantic boundaries between women’s press and press dedicated to women; with the former being the sole focus of this investigation. Based on the systematic analysis, and taking into account the development of women’s magazines as well as ownership changes, the involvement of foreign media companies in the Polish press market is also characterised.

Establishing definitions – literature review

The labels ‘women’s press’ and ‘women’s magazines’ are used interchangeably in the literature on the subject. ‘Press’ and ‘magazines’ can be clearly defined, and there is little doubt about their parameters. The boundaries of ‘women’s’, on the other hand, are wider and more blurred; its usage is more intuitive. For example, there are magazines dedicated to women, but not necessarily written exclusively by women (Sullerot, 1996). The position of ‘editor-in-chief’ is often held by a man. Menéndez (2013) states that ‘it is generally assumed that women’s magazines are those which have a mainly female readership’. Nevertheless, in her opinion, this assumption does not provide a sufficiently detailed definition. While using the term ‘women’s press’, we should bear in mind that in developed and saturated media markets – like the UK market – it is used to describe various types of periodicals. This wide range from weeklies (incl. fashion – ‘Look’, celebrity ‘Heat’ or real-life ‘Pick Me Up’) to glossies (lifestyle ‘She’, fashion ‘Vogue’, hobby ‘House and Garden’) undergoes a constant evolution towards a hybrid category (Ytre-Arne, 2011).

Cultural and media studies have analysed women’s press on multiple occasions. In the modern world, it is difficult to separate research on culture from that on media. Media culture contributes to the creation of a common culture shared by the majority of individuals around the world. This happens because media culture provides the materials needed to create personal identity – thanks to which individuals become a part of the media community. Kellner (2001) believes that this form of culture can be defined as an industrial

culture organised on the basis of mass production and intended for a wide audience that follows conventional formulas and codes. According to researchers, the media, including the press, mirrors the condition of modern society, indicating its problems, as well as the situation of women (Irimescu, 2015). It is also a form of control, exercised by the ruling class in order to impose an established vision of social order, values and morality upon everyone else (Śpiewak, 1997). Storey (2009) maintains that ‘from the start, women’s magazines were conceived as practical guides enabling women to survive in patriarchal society’. Most continue to serve this function even today, by combining entertainment content with useful advice on everyday aspects of domestic life.

Encyklopedia wiedzy o prasie (1976) defines women’s press as ‘a group of periodicals, mainly weekly magazines, whose profiles are created according to the reading needs and social position of women. Therefore, aside from journalistic articles, reportages, columns, literary work – and also in some magazines, general press releases (political and other), their content consists mainly of sections or columns devoted to fashion, housekeeping, parenting, family matters’. Further we read: ‘an important quality of Polish women’s press is the persistent drive to enhance the knowledge (especially practical knowledge) and cultural level of women, in addition to constant improvement in the engagement and position of women in social and professional life’.

Since the emergence of this definition, the situation of women’s press has changed significantly, and not only in Poland (Ruff, 2012). The increasing popularity of online media, and consequent disruption of publishing industry business models, led publishers of women’s magazines to search for new publishing methods. Their goal is to create the most effective distribution channels for their content.

Słownik terminologii medialnej (2006) contains neither the terms ‘women’s press’ nor ‘women’s magazines’. It directs readers back to the comprehensive term ‘czasopiśmiennictwo’ (in free translation ‘print media’) by which general information periodicals, owing to the multitude of publicized information and particular needs of the readers, are divided into subgroups according to various criteria. Publications are sorted by audience: there are universal periodicals, magazines for children, young people, women, men, the elderly, the disabled, those living in the countryside, and others. A reference to women’s press can also be found under the description for ‘magazine’. It reads: ‘[...] magazines focus on entertainment. They are an important element of leisure time. Except for universal magazines which are declining, magazines for children (educational function); young people (predominated by youth culture); women (predominated by advisory content – fashion, beauty, health, household) are flourishing [...]. Hermes (1995) agrees that

women's press is read primarily for pleasure, 'to kill time. Women who took part in one study explain that they reach out for women's magazines when they have nothing to do, or when they are less busy with other activities, mainly related to running a household.

Sokół (1995), referring to the definition of women's press in *Encyklopedia wiedzy o prasie*, states: 'this definition leaves a lot to be desired because it does not define what the women's press is; it does not reflect on its distinctiveness in publishing and writing; it does not adequately reflect the individual periods of historical development of women's press. It is too generic and biased'. After analysing publications for women in the years 1945-1995, she proposed that this press segment be defined as 'a group of periodical publications dedicated to women as indicated in the title or subtitle, programme, content, the way of presenting the topic, structure and linguistic form. Such press is edited in terms of women's interests based on their age, level of education, social origin, living and working environment, role and place in family and society. Based on the content, usually they are multi-thematic publications, close to the form of a magazine' (Sokół, 1995). According to Surugiu (2012), periodicals for women are mainly monthly, bi-weekly or weekly consumer magazines in which high quality materials regarding women's traditional interests (i.e. beauty, fashion, health, psychology, relationships, children's education, cooking) are published. The presentation of the particular content differs depending on the target group to which the magazine is being addressed. Trzop (2005) adds: 'in terms of content, women's magazines have various characters: family-oriented, feminist, entertainment, tabloid ('prasa serca' – in free translation 'romance magazines'), and magazines for successful women'. Hermes (1995) accurately states that 'the repertoire of practical knowledge legitimizes them as a group of professional magazines for housewives [...] recipes, advice on stain removal or opening tightly closed jars are shown as handy and valuable. These activities are presented as if they were the only everyday tasks'. The ideal reader of women's press is a pragmatic, practical woman, well versed in solving the current issues of everyday life.

Hinojosa (2005) suggests that 'women's magazines' should be differentiated from periodicals dedicated to women. The former, according to the researcher, are about women and fall into two areas: sex and femininity. For the latter, women are the target audience; their interests can be varied and not necessarily related to family, love, or taking care of external appearance.

Taking into account the above reflections, it can be agreed that women's press consists of multi-thematic magazines which are divided into categories corresponding to women's interests. Press addressed to women most often comprises high-circulation periodicals dedicated to one leading

subject, created with women in mind and read mainly by them. TV-guides, celebrity-gossip and true story magazines are also included in this group.

Methodology

As mentioned in the introduction, the research used the systems analysis method. This method was chosen both because of its importance in the social sciences and its usefulness for studying the system as a closed whole. The notion of system and its analysis are therefore crucial for understanding social phenomena. It has been assumed that the women's press is, on the one hand, a social phenomenon and, on the other, a part of the Polish media system. In other words, it is one of the segments of the media system.

In order to examine changes on the Polish women's press market in the years 1989-2019, the most important publishers of women's magazines were selected for the analysis. The following premises were taken into account:

- number of women's magazines published by a single publisher;
- period of their existence on the Polish media market;
- number of copies sold;
- capital concentration ratios.

The in-depth research was carried out on advice and gossip magazines, monthly advice magazines and women's luxury magazines.

Women's press publishers in Poland and their multi-thematic magazines - results

Corporations with foreign capital have been the leading publishers of women's press in the years 1990-2019. During the period of press transformation, the presence of foreign capital in Polish media became a significant issue (Oniszczyk, 1997; Adamczyk, 1998; Bajka 1994; Bajka 1995; Flankowska, 2002). The first envoys of foreign press groups had already appeared in Poland by the late eighties. However, at that time the law did not allow them to publish their press in Poland. Thanks to political changes, legal changes became possible. The Round Table Agreement, supported by the subsequent amendment of the Press Law Act in June 1989, resulted in the creation of thousands of new press titles. Under this law, every Polish citizen of age with no criminal record was able to become a publisher. Foreign publishers could also exercise this right with permission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was easily obtainable. Unregulated legal policy regarding foreign capital in the Polish press market brought about an invasion of giant Western publishing groups, and the creation of many new titles in Poland (Bajka, 2004). It is clear that wealthy countries (or their corporations and press businesses to be precise) were investing in foreign markets. Poland found itself on their radar. Media moguls like Silvio Berlusconi, Axel Springer, H. Bauer, David Chase, Rupert Murdoch, Robert Hersant, Jörg Marquard, Nicola Grauso, and Bertelsman appeared, and did not stop at print

publishing. With time, the emergence of private commercial televisions, radio stations and new information and communication technologies became their new objects of interest.

In the years 1990-2019, the key publishers of women's press were the development trend-setting businesses with German and Swiss assets. The three decades of their existence in the Polish market were not homogeneous. In the early nineties, Burda International, Bauer Media, Axel Springer (from 2009 renamed to Ringier Axel Springer Polska) and Gruner + Jahr Polska began a period of intense activity. In the mid-nineties, they were joined by Edipresse Polska and Marquard Media Polska. The Polish women's press market became saturated following dynamic investments from 1990 to 1997. Magazine circulation – as well as sales – was on a decline, which forced publishers to lower prices, add numerous freebies and create promotions for periodicals in other magazines which belonged to the large media companies.

At the end of the 20th century (specifically, the years 1997-2000) there was a fall in the circulation numbers and a decline in the women's press readership rates. The hierarchy in each magazine segment crystallized, and clear leaders emerged. At this time, leading publishers i.e. Bauer Media, Edipresse, and Burda International strengthened their positions, whilst Axel Springer Polska gradually withdrew from the market. Investment in new titles resulted in an extended range of licenced lifestyle magazines i.e. 'Cosmopolitan', 'Marie Claire', 'She', 'Votre Beaute' (Filas 1999). However, only one of the abovementioned titles was published in 2019 ('Cosmopolitan') and its final issue was planned for December of the same year.

The years 2001-2014 were a time of market concentration through mergers and acquisitions amongst publishers; and growing segmentation (Dąbrowska-Cendrowska, 2015). The primary purpose of existence and main function of media companies are to generate profits and multiply the owners' fortunes; their business activities aim to maximise growth and bring in satisfactory revenue (Pierścioneck, 1996; Sudarsanam, 1998). Accordingly, media businesses can survive for long periods and achieve their goals providing they grow consistently, and continually adjust to the changing environment. One method to adjust to the changing media market in Poland (also influenced by new technology) was to merge companies. During this time, Bauer Media acquired Wydawnictwo Prasowe 'Twój Styl' and Phoenix Media; Burda Media absorbed Hachette Filipacchi Polska and G+J Polska; and Axel Springer Polska bought out Infor Biznes. Bauer Media and Burda Media International's transactions will be thoroughly discussed later in this chapter. Along with Edipresse Polska, they became the main publishers of women's press in the second decade of the 21st century.

It is worth taking a closer look at Axel Springer Polska, whose investment in weekly opinion magazine 'Newsweek' in 2001, and in the daily

newspaper 'Fakt' two years later, precipitated a distinct course of development. Researchers of women's press consider 2007 an important year; Axel Springer Polska and Marquard Media Polska carried out an exchange transaction – the former aimed to strengthen their position amongst Polish publishers, the latter to unify its publication range. Industry rumours about the withdrawal of Axel Springer Polska from the women's press market became fact. Springer exchanged four profitable titles: 'Olivia', 'Pani Domu', 'Sekrety Serca' and 'Cienie i Blaski' for the sports journal 'Przegląd Sportowy'. Starting with 'Przegląd Sportowy' and the other sport's title 'Tempo', Marquard Media Polska successively released from their portfolio periodicals which did not match luxury magazines aimed at either women or men, such as 'Playboy', 'Shape', 'Cosmopolitan', 'CKM, etc.

Acting consistently, Axel Springer Polska and the holding company Infor signed an agreement at the beginning of June 2009, creating a joint business venture. Springer acquired 49% of shares in Infor Biznes, bringing in its own title 'Dziennik. Polska Europa Świat' and the online news service Dziennik.pl. The aim of this merger was to jointly publish (from Autumn 2009) the new daily newspaper 'Dziennik Gazeta Prawna' (Mielczarek 2012). As intended, the new periodical combined the high-quality content of both 'Dziennik. Polska Europa Świat' and 'Gazeta Prawna'. The first focused on politics, culture and sport whereas the second – topics related to economy, taxes and law. The wider subject range was intended to increase the attractiveness of the newspaper to readers and advertisers alike. This merger seems to have been influenced by the unsatisfactory positions of the separate papers in the daily press market.

In March 2010, Axel Springer Polska changed its name to Ringer Axel Springer. This was due to a merger which happened in Germany between Swiss company Ringer AG from Zurich and Axel Springer AG from Berlin. Anna Gancarz-Luboń from Springer's head office admitted that whilst the agreement was signed, the general direction of the company's development was also laid out, with its aim of further expansion in Eastern Europe and investment in digital media.

During 2015-2019, the three leading publishers Bauer Media, Edipresse Polska and Burda International appeared to reinforce their market positions. However, transactions from 2018 and 2019 i.e. the closure of 'InStyle', 'Cosmopolitan', 'Joy'; takeover by Bauer Media of Marquard Media's advice magazines and the Swiss publisher's withdrawal from the women's press segment, clearly show that the leader in terms of sales, number of titles and profits was Bauer Media.

Analysis of changes in the women's press market in Poland 1990-2019, clearly shows that it was a period of upheaval and transformation. It should be emphasised that in 1996, both foreign and Polish publishers were

involved in this press segment. In 1990, Polish company Wydawnictwo Prasowe ‘Twój Styl’ launched the first luxury magazine on the Polish market – ‘Twój Styl’. This title became the unquestionable leader amongst women’s luxury magazines. In addition, the publishing house released ‘Filipinka’ – a magazine addressed to teenage girls. Prószyński i S-ka, who published the very popular magazine ‘Poradnik Domowy’, was also successful. As a result of progressive market concentration, both of these women’s titles became the property of Bauer Media.

In 2006, there were 11 publishers on the women’s press market who shared 100 titles between them (Bauer Media Polska - 27, Phoenix Press – 18, Edipresse Polska – 16, Axel Springer – 10, Gruner + Jahr Polska – 8, Agora S.A. – 6, Burda Media Polska – 6, Marquard Media Polska – 2, Hachette Filipacchi Polska - 2, Prószyński Sp. Z o.o – 2, ZPR – 2, Zwierciadło Sp. Z o.o – 1). Ten years later, there were 7 players left publishing the same number of magazines (Bauer Media Polska - 51, Edipresse Polska – 23, Burda International – 10, Agora S.A. – 9, Marquard Media Polska – 5, Zwierciadło Sp. Z o.o – 1, ZPR – 1). After analysing the data available, it can be concluded that in early 2020 there were 6 publishers left on the market. Marquard Media has closed its titles. Burda International, Edipresse Polska and Agora S.A have slimmed down their range of publications. Only Bauer Media Polska, taking over Edipresse’s titles, has extended its portfolio.

In her analysis of the economy of media companies, Dzierżyńska-Mielczarek (2018) observes that it is very difficult to assess the level of concentration in the individual media segments due to ‘multiplicity of stratification factors and various classification systems of magazines’. The media research expert emphasizes: ‘when considering the entire magazine market and analysing shares of the biggest publishers in global circulation, it can be concluded that none of them have achieved a dominant position, and the market of this type of magazine has not been showing the typical characteristics of concentration. In the years 2005-2015, the concentration ratio (CR4) did not exceed 50%, but almost every third magazine was published by Bauer’ (Dzierżyńska-Mielczarek, 2018). Analysis of data from the table below indicates that the market shares of this media giant were more than twice as high as those of its competitors combined. Table 1. presents the concentration ratio in the magazine market.

Table 1. Concentration ratio in the magazine market (CR4 and HHI) and global market shares by circulation

Rok	Shares in the global market by circulation						CR4	HHI
	Bauer	Edipresse	G+J	Burda	RASP	Phoenix		
2005	28,9	4,6	7,8	X*	6,5	X*	47,8	959,5
2010	30,6	5,2	2,8	3,3	X*	X*	41,9	982,1
2015	31,0	3,5	X*	2,7	X*	2,2	39,4	984,7

* The publisher was not in a group of four leading firms in a given year.

Source: Dzierżyńska-Mielczarek (2018)

We must agree with Dzierżyńska-Mielczarek, who maintains that the magazine market should undergo a careful segmentation, and that concentration levels should be analysed individually in each segment and subsegment. This approach is necessitated, to a large extent, by the variety of content of individual periodicals and diversity of readership groups (Dzierżyńska-Mielczarek, 2018). Analysis of the press in individual subsegments shows that after changes which happened in 2016-2019, Bauer gained a monopoly not only in the group of entertainment, gossip and TV magazines, but also in the advice magazine segment.

The multi-thematic magazines (the academic literature also refers to this term as ‘general magazines’) on the Polish press market can also be defined as classic periodicals for women that cover a wide range of topics from a circle of women’s interests (Sokół, 1995). Due to formal and content-related features, as well as differently defined target groups, these magazines can be divided into three press subsegments.

The first subsegment comprises magazines from the ‘bottom of the range’ i.e. advice and gossip magazines (Dąbrowska-Cendrowska, 2016). This group includes ‘Przyjaciółka’, ‘Tina’, ‘Naj’, ‘Pani Domu’, ‘Cała Ty’, ‘100 Rad’ and ‘Poradnik 50+’. The second subsegment contains ‘mid-range’ lifestyle advice magazines ‘Świat Kobiety’, ‘Kobieta i Życie’, ‘Olivia’, ‘Claudia’, ‘Dobre Rady’, ‘Poradnik Domowy’. These two subsegments of women’s press are connected by the clearly demarcated theme of advice. The third subsegment – the ‘top of the line’ – consists of luxury magazines: ‘Twój Styl’, ‘Pani’, ‘Zwierciadło’, ‘Elle’, ‘Wysokie Obcasy. Extra’, ‘Uroda Życia’, ‘Joy’, ‘Cosmopolitan’, ‘Glamour’, ‘In Style’, ‘Well’. The last one was closed in November 2018. In December 2019 there were a total of 24 multi-thematic magazines published by six media companies. These magazines addressed the same topics, with content including (but not limited to) health, relationships, children, fashion, beauty, food, culture and lifestyle. The presentation of their content was tailored to the needs and expectations of the potential – carefully profiled – reader.

Throughout 1989-2019 advice magazines for women were also composed of two press subsegments. The first is the aforementioned advice

and gossip subsegment – which in 2019 consisted of the seven titles: ‘Przyjaciółka’, ‘Tina’, ‘Pani Domu’, ‘Naj’, ‘Cała Ty’, ‘100 Rad’ and ‘Poradnik 50+’. The first four periodicals were published by foreign companies in the years 1992-1995, and up until 2013 had competed for readers and advertising revenue (Dąbrowska-Cendrowska, 2009). In 2013 these magazines were joined by ‘Cała Ty’, and in 2017 by ‘100 Rad’ and ‘Poradnik 50+’ addressed to older female readers. (Table 2).

Table 2. Advice and gossip magazines

No.	Title	Starting year	Publishers	Editor-in-Chief in 2019
1.	‘Tina’	1992	Bauer Media	Joanna Rajpert-Kuźnicka
2.	‘Pani Domu’	1994 2007 2009 2019	Axel Springer Marquard Media Edipresse Polska Bauer Media	Joanna Rajpert-Kuźnicka
3.	‘Naj’	1994 2012	G+J Polska Bauer Media	Urszula Zubczyńska
4.	‘Przyjaciółka’	1995 2019	Edipresse Polska Bauer Media	Urszula Zubczyńska
5.	‘Cała Ty’	2013 2013	Phoenix Press Bauer Media	Edyta Brodka
6.	‘100 Rad’	2017	Bauer Media	Joanna Kadej-Krzyczkowska
7.	‘Poradnik 50+’	2017	Bauer Media	Joanna Kadej-Krzyczkowska

Source: Own research

The second subsegment comprised monthly advice magazines: ‘Świat Kobiety’, ‘Kobieta i Życie’, ‘Olivia’, ‘Claudia’, ‘Dobre Rady’ and ‘Poradnik Domowy’. In 1998 ‘Women’ and ‘Gracja’ made an attempt to join, but disappeared from the press market in under a year. Most advice magazine titles offered various freebies, extras or special editions, generally related to food, fashion and beauty.

Some important changes within the group of advice magazines happened in July 2019. Edipresse Polska sold the three advice magazines in its portfolio (‘Przyjaciółka’, ‘Pani Domu’ and ‘Poradnik Domowy’) to Bauer Media. As stated by the CEO of Edipresse Polska, Alicja Modzelewska-Warec, the company planned to focus on the development of internet services and build new sources of income within the e-commerce marketplace based on its strongest digitalized brands, including: Wizaz.pl, Polki.pl, Viva.pl, Party.pl, Flesz.pl, UrodaŻycia.pl, Mamotoja.pl and Niania.pl.

Meanwhile, Bauer Media extended its advice magazine range to 11 titles. At that time, only ‘Claudia’ and ‘Dobre Rady’ were owned by Burda International. Buying out the three abovementioned magazines from Edipresse Polska was part of the global publishing strategy of the Bauer Group. This

media giant with German assets systematically and consistently developed this press sector, becoming the main publisher of advice magazines for women in Poland. The Chairman of Wydawnictwo Bauer, Tomasz Namysł, adds ‘we are pleased to enrich our advice magazine portfolio with new profitable and well-positioned titles. Thanks to consistent and thoughtful investment in our press titles, including advice magazines, we manage to maintain our position as the biggest magazine publisher, thus proving that printed press in Poland is still doing very well’ (wirtualne media, 2019). (Table 3).

Table 3. Monthly advice magazines

No.	Title	Starting year	Publishers	Editor-in-chief in 2019
1.	‘Poradnik Domowy’	1990 2002 2013 2019	Prószyński i sp. Agora SA Edipresse Polska Bauer Media	Urszula Zubczyńska
2.	‘Claudia’	1993 2013	G+J Polska Burda International	Agnieszka Wierzbicka
3.	‘Olivia’	1994 2007 2012	Axel Springer Marquard Media Polska Bauer Media	Ewa Kustroń-Zaniewska
4.	‘Dobre Rady’	1995	Burda International	Agnieszka Wierzbicka
5.	‘Świat Kobiety’	1993 2005	Bauer Media	Ewa Kustroń-Zaniewska
6.	‘Kobieta i Życie’	2008	Bauer Media	Ewa Kustroń-Zaniewska

Source: Own research

During 1989-2019, the Polish media market saw five publishers invest in the luxury magazine segment, with varying degrees of success. They included both foreign (with German and Swiss capital) and Polish companies. It should be highlighted that the history of luxury magazines in Poland began with the debut of ‘Twój Styl’, which set the standard for this press subsegment. The target audience of these magazines were mainly wealthy or middle-class, well-educated women with a variety of interests; those who value their own development, and strive to succeed in both private and professional spheres. Usually, they live in big or mid-sized cities and have the financial resources to fulfil their dreams and satisfy a wide range of needs. Press research experts claim that luxury magazines shape specific social attitudes, norms and habits, as well as personal and professional lifestyles (Mielczarek, 2007; Zierkiewicz 2008).

From 1990 to 2019, the women’s luxury magazine segment consisted of 11 periodicals – which changed publishers. In 2019, Burda International and Bauer Media had three titles each. ‘In Style’, ‘Glamour’ and ‘Elle’ belonged to the former, and ‘Twój Styl’, ‘Pani’ and ‘Well’ to the latter.

Marquard Media Polska published two titles: ‘Cosmopolitan’ and ‘Joy’. Whereas, Agora Sp. z o.o. (‘Wysokie Obcasy Extra’), Wydawnictwo Zwierciadło (‘Zwierciadło’) and Edipresse Polska (‘Urodę Życia’) had one title each. (Table 4).

Table 4. Women’s luxury magazines

No.	Title	Starting year	Publisher	Editor-in-chief in 2019
1	‘Twój Styl’	1990 2002	Wydawnictwo Prasowe ‘Twój Styl’ Bauer Media	Jacek Schmidt
2	‘Pani’	1991 1999 2002 2003 2005	Dziennikarska Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza ‘KiŻ’ Polski Dom Wydawniczy Edipresse Polska, Agencja Wydawniczo-Reklamowa ‘Wprost’2 Bauer Media	Monika Stukonis
3	‘Zwierciadło’	1991 1998 2001	Uniprojekt, Imper Poland Wydawnictwo Zwierciadło Sp. z o.o.	Paulina Stolarek-Marat
4	‘Elle’	1994 1996 2006	Wydawnictwo Prasowe ‘Twój Styl’ Hachette Filipacchi Burda International	Marta Drożdż
5.	‘Cosmopolitan’	1997 2019	Marquard Media Polska Closure of the magazine	Joanna Mroczkowska
6.	‘Glamour’	2003 2013	G+J Polska Burda International	Katarzyna Dąbrowska
7.	‘Joy’	2006	Marquard Media Polska	Martyna Zagórska
8.	‘In Style’	2008 2018	Burda International Closure of the magazine	Anna Zejdlar-Ibisz
9.	‘Wysokie Obcasy Extra’	2010	Agora SA	Aleksandra Klich,
10.	‘Uroda Życia’	2014	Edipresse Polska	Sylwia Niemczyk-Opońska
11.	‘Well’	2017 2018	Bauer Media Closure of the magazine	Magdalena Jaros-Szmidt

Source: Own research

Conclusion

At present, women’s press in Poland, and worldwide, finds itself in an interesting situation. On one hand, we observe media giants continuing to sell traditional magazines, although copy sales results are on the decline. On the other, they attempt to invest in online publications, as well as various types of internet services aimed at women. Such engagement is also seen amongst publishers investing in the Polish press market. Bauer Media extended its range of publications; buying titles out from other publishers, and consistently

concentrating on advice magazines and bringing advice columns into themed magazines. Edipresse Polska somewhat changed direction, targeting younger female readers and offering them internet services whose titles do not always refer to well-known magazines.

The multi-thematic magazine group on the Polish press market consisted of 23 periodicals, which represented three levels (top, mid and bottom range). Considering this group as a whole without dividing it into subsegments, it is obvious that Bauer Media was the ultimate leader – owning 13 titles i.e. 56.5% of the available magazine range. The remaining 10 magazines (43.5%) were owned by Burda International (5), Marquard Media (2), Edipresse Polska (1), Agora S.A (1) and Wydawnictwo Zwierciadło (1). In the years 2018-2019, the media giant Bauer Media extended its magazine range and gained monopoly in the advice and gossip magazine subsegment (7 titles and 100% of that bottom range). It also strengthened its position with mid-range advice magazines, owning 4 titles and 66.6% of the magazines from this subsegment. Burda International owned the remaining 2 titles (33.4%). The situation in the luxury magazine subsegment (the top range) was more diverse as more publishers were involved in this group. In total there were 10 periodicals published by Burda International (3), Bauer Media (2) Marquard Media (2), Edipresse Polska (1), Agora S.A. (1) and Wydawnictwo Zwierciadło (1).

This research shows that Bauer Media became the leading publisher of bottom and mid-range magazines – i.e. magazines which provide advice. Such magazines informed readers on how to master everyday life, how to deal with the household duties arising from the social roles ascribed to women, and at the same time have a perfect body, neat and tidy house, well-behaved children and ideal marriage. In 2019, after the purchase of three titles ('Przyjaciółka', 'Poradnik Domowy', 'Pani Domu') from Edipresse Polska, Bauer Media became the owner of 11 periodicals. Seven of them belonged to the advice and gossip subsegment. Four of them were monthly advice magazines. The media giant strengthened its position in this group, recognizing the potential of older female readers. Undoubtedly, whilst copy sale results decrease and online versions of magazines lack popularity, focusing attention on readers who, for various reasons, are accustomed to conventional periodicals, may, in the short run, bring benefits. It is important to note that in recent years Bauer Media has not cancelled any of its titles – quite the opposite – it extended its magazine range by acquiring titles which already existed on the market. Therefore, the company did not incur the substantial costs of launching a new and completely unknown brand.

The rich world of women's press presented in this article, including various themed magazines and their range of content; changes in publishing house ownership; and the dynamic development of digital media, reveal the

need for systematic research on this segment of media. Comparative analyses conducted between entire segments as parts of the media market, comparison of the discourse within individual titles, and magazine monographs would improve our knowledge of women's press, and thus of society and its changes.

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