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## The most popular teen magazines of the first decade of 21st century – decline or stagnation ?

Reflections concerning the situation of the printed press have been running for a long time. Both media researchers and journalists have been debating the future of newspapers, magazines and information. Trying to predict the dynamics of change, some of them took voice predicting the twilight era of Gutenberg's invention while others aimed at proving the purposefulness of existence of the traditional press<sup>1</sup>.

Undoubtedly, the situation of newspapers and magazines gets transformed in almost every market segment. On the one hand there is the fragmentation of the audience and the formation of narrowly profiled target groups, which are the addressees for the magazines from the custom publishing group<sup>2</sup>, for example. On the other hand we can observe actions taken by the media companies that explore the profitable sectors of the market, which could help rise a new, high-volume, popular, colorful magazine.

Despite the ongoing crisis, 2011 brought the debut of more than 50 titles. Some of them quickly gained their readers. This group included the influential weekly magazine, "Uważam Rze. Inaczej Pisane" published by Presspublica, representing the type of *people* periodicals biweekly "Flesh" published by Edipresse Poland and a popular science magazine "Świat Wiedzy" in the offer of Bauer Media<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See: B. Poulet, *Śmierć gazet i przyszłość informacji*, Wołowiec 2011, A. Keen, *Kult amatora. Jak Internet niszczy kulturę*, Warszawa 2007, p. 124-135, R. Filas, *Polskie czasopisma w XXI wieku – rozwój czy kryzys*, „Zeszyty Prasoznawcze” 2007, issue 1/2, p. 11-50, T. Mielczarek, *Pożegnanie z prasą. Czy w Polsce kończy się era Gutenberga?*, ibidem. p.51-68; W. Smoczyński, *Koniec wiadomości*, „Polityka” 2009, issue 6, p. 38-43.

<sup>2</sup> Custom publishing – is a marketing channel that allows to get through with the marketing, advertising, or PR messages to precisely defined target - groups as well as to build up some forms of relationship with them. The most common examples of custom publishing include: magazines printed for customers or employees, catalogs, brochures, newsletters, and today blogs and online magazines.

<sup>3</sup> In 2011, press debuts appeared in virtually every segment. On the market of dailies "Gazeta Polska Codziennie" debuted in September, published by Forum SA. Its outcome is difficult to be considered a success. In October 2011, according to ZKDP, sales amounted to 33.7 thousand copies with an average circulation of about 150 thousand. Short was the life of the weekly "Wręcz przeciwnie". It disappeared from the market in October after the release of only three issues. Publishers also experimented with the titles that were meant to refresh some forgotten segments. In this way, in June 2011 two book-concerning magazines were published: a quarterly "Książki. Magazyn do Czytania" published by Agora Group and a monthly "PaperMint" offered by MWK Publisher. "Sekrety Nauki" appeared in mid-September, authored this time by the group G + J Poland. At the same time new lifestyle magazines fared quite poorly. The new music magazine "Laif", published by Media Advertising, appeared from March to May, with its

Against this background, a very interesting situation can be observed in the segment of the popular magazines aimed at young people. It is clear that many recent debuts have consistently ignored this sector of Polish press market. Since 2005, there has not appeared even one new, illustrated magazine able to compete for readers and advertisers with a bi-weekly "Bravo" or a monthly "Twist". The publishers explained: "This market is very difficult, it requires continuous strive for readers who, grow up too quickly - in just two, three years"<sup>4</sup>.

This is why I would like to devote this paper on the analysis of the dynamics of change that took place in this group of most popular youth magazines in the Polish press market in the years 2001-2010.

## The segment of teen magazines – as at the end of the 20th century

The segment of teen magazines has been dominated in both the number of titles, as well as the size of newspaper circulation by foreign publishers and they mass magazines mostly focusing on the issues of entertainment<sup>5</sup> and only the initiatives of the Polish publishing house Aga press which debuted in 1994 with the bi-weekly "Cogito" can be recognized as an exception from the norm. The magazine was addressed to ambitious young people, interested in the contents of the words placed in the superscription - "School, Graduation, College, Life"<sup>6</sup>. The average store of sales amounted to 41 thousand copies in 2005, but in 2010 was significantly lower forming 19 thousand copies<sup>7</sup>. In 1998 there appeared "Victor Gimnazjalista", its average sales hovering around 55 thousand copies in 2005 dropping to 25 thousand copies in 2010<sup>8</sup>. In 2002 the Aga Press company introduced the magazine "Victor Junior" with sales at similar level. Considering youth press one should mention music-devoted periodicals, which struck a universal content, such as "Music Magazine", the titles devoted to specific genres, like rock and blues, "Only Rock", "Rock Power", "Bluesman" and the heavier sound of "Metal Hammer". The magazines' circulation size reached 30 to 100 thousand copies, and their editors were both Polish

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return in September only to experience another publication gap after its re-appearance. The publication of "Prime" magazine went as long as two numbers.

<sup>4</sup> A. Olbrot, *W sieci*, „Press” 2008, issue 7, p. 54.

<sup>5</sup> See: M. Rodak, *Polskie i niemieckie Bravo - porównanie*, „Zeszyty Prasoznawcze” 2007, issue 3/4, p. 159-175; Kajtoch W., *Odlotowe bez dwóch zdań. Kultura języka, styl perswazji w czasopiśmie dla młodzieży*, „Zeszyty Prasoznawcze” 1999, issue 3/4, p. 79-103; Ibidem, *Ciało medialne*, „Zeszyty Prasoznawcze”, 2004, ibidem 3/4, p. 59-87; Kołodziej J., *Dobro, zło i inne wartości w czasopiśmie młodzieżowych*, „Zeszyty Prasoznawcze” 2000, issue 1/2, p. 59-81; O. Dąbrowska-Cendrowska, *Niemieckie koncerty prasowe w Polsce w latach 1989-2008*, Warszawa 2009, p. 140-152, 216-236.

<sup>6</sup> More about it: A. Paciorek, *Pięciolatek „Cogito” i jego młodszy brat*, „Rzeczpospolita”, 1999 issue 30.

<sup>7</sup> Source: ZKDP.

<sup>8</sup> Source: ZKDP.

publishers: Agora, Respublica Press, Zbigniew Hołdys and foreign companies: Metal Mind Productions, Maxwell<sup>9</sup>. It is clear that neither the educational magazines nor the music ones, could seriously threaten the position of entertainment magazines, which average paid circulation was formed at a level several times higher. Both high sale rates and the readership testified to the popularity of titles such as "Bravo", "Popcorn" and/or "Twist".

At the beginning of the 21st century the segment of most popular teen magazines consisted of eight titles. Seven of them were in the hands of German publishers. Bauer Media Group had five: "Bravo", "Bravo Girl", "Bravo Sport", "Bravo Quiz" and "Twist". One can see that the publisher successfully made use of a high position of its flagship biweekly, adding to the well evoked brand. Axel Springer Poland appeared in this segment of the press in 2000. The company *de facto* bought two monthlies "Girl" and "Popcorn" from Marquard Media, a company with international capital. The Polish accent in this segment was "Filipinka", belonging to the Press Publishing company, 'Twój Styl' since 1998. While analyzing this sector through the prism of the target group three sub-segments can be found. The teenager sector was shaped by "Bravo Girl", "Filipinka" Girl "and" Twist "; widely understood youth group was formed by "Bravo", "Popcorn" and "Bravo Quiz"; whereas "Bravo Sport" was a periodical addressed to teenage boys. Table 1 shows the most popular youth magazines existing in the Polish press market in 2000.

**Table 1. The most popular youth magazines in Poland in 2000**

|    | Title. Frequency           | Year    |           | Target Group         | Publisher            |
|----|----------------------------|---------|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|
|    |                            | started | suspended |                      |                      |
| 1. | „Bravo”; b-weekly          | 1991    | continues | girls and boys 15-19 | Bauer Media          |
| 2. | „Bravo Girl”; b-weekly     | 1994    | continues | girls 15-19          | Bauer Media          |
| 3. | „Bravo Sport”; b-weekly    | 1997    | continues | boys 15-19           | Bauer Media          |
| 4. | „Filipinka”; monthly       | 1998    | 2006      | girls 16-20          | WPTS                 |
| 5. | „Popcorn”; monthly         | 2000*   | continues | girls and boys 15-19 | Axel Springer Polska |
| 6. | „Dziewczyna-Girl”; monthly | 2000*   | continues | girls 15-19          | Axel Springer Polska |
| 7. | „Twist”; monthly           | 2000    | continues | girls 14-18          | Bauer Media          |
| 8. | „Bravo Quiz”; monthly      | 2000    | 2001      | girls and boys 15-19 | Bauer Media          |

Source: own research. (\* - Not the year of formation, but the appearance in the publishers' offer')

The analysis of the results achieved from copy sales in 2000 showed the undisputed leader in this segment. One can safely say that the most popular youth magazine of the year and throughout the whole past decade, is the biweekly "Bravo", whose sales amounted to 382.1 thousand. Other teens titles were

<sup>9</sup> T. Mielczarek, *Monopol, pluralizm, koncentracja. Środki komunikowania masowego w Polsce w latach 1989-2006*, Warszawa 2007, p. 199-200.

purchased far less often. The second place belonged to the biweekly "Bravo Girl" with the sale of a significantly lower rate of 225.7 thousand. The two periodicals were followed by the magazines targeted at teenage girls. "Twist" of Bauer Media Group achieved the sales of 180.3 thousand copies, and "Girl" of Axel Springer, a little less - 179.1 thousand copies. The lowest sales (ca. 107.7 thousand copies) was developed by the Polish magazine "Filipinka". Table 2 shows the average expenditure and average sales in 2000 reached by the popular youth magazines.

Table 2. Popular youth magazines 2000 - expenditures and sales  
(The hierarchy formed on the grounds of average one-off sale)

|    | Title               | 2000                                                |                                         |
|----|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|    |                     | The average disposable effort (thousands of copies) | Average one-sales (thousands of copies) |
| 1. | „Bravo”             | 507.2                                               | 382.1                                   |
| 2. | „Bravo Girl”        | 324.5                                               | 225.7                                   |
| 3. | „Twist”             | 230.5                                               | 180.3                                   |
| 4. | „Dziewczyna - Girl” | 241.5                                               | 179.1                                   |
| 5. | „Popcorn”           | 224.4                                               | 154.4                                   |
| 6. | „Bravo Sport”       | 190.3                                               | 134.8                                   |
| 7. | „Filipinka”         | 138.1                                               | 107.7                                   |
| 8. | „Bravo Quiz”        | unknow                                              | unknow                                  |

Source: Own calculations based on ZKDP data

## The most popular teen magazines in the first decade of the 21st century

The first decade of the twenty-first century is a period of further change in the Polish media. Ryszard Filas, while studying the transformation of the media market listed the stages of this development<sup>10</sup>. According to him, the years 2001-2003 was a phase of the increasing dominance of electronic media in the conditions of economic crisis<sup>11</sup>. This two-year long period of economic downturn showed the increase of the total number of periodicals on the Polish press market. In 2001 there were 5792, with as many as 6261 in 2003. It is worth noting that the increase in the number of titles took place together with the decline of the amount of effort. This

<sup>10</sup> More about periodization of the media in 1989-2000: R Filas, *Dziesięć lat przemian mediów masowych w Polsce (1989-1999). Propozycja periodyzacji*, „Zeszyty Prasoznawcze” 1999, issue 1/2, p. 31-58, ibidem, *Rośnie dominacja mediów elektronicznych – nowa faza przemian polskiego rynku*, „Zeszyty Prasoznawcze” 2003, nr 3/4, p. 7-34.

<sup>11</sup> More about it see: R. Filas, *Dwadzieścia lat przemian polskich mediów (1989-2009) w ujęciu periodycznym*, „Zeszyty Prasoznawcze” 2010, issue 3/4, p. 27-55.

trend particularly affected bi-weekly and monthly magazines. In 2001, the total circulation of magazines amounted to 74.6 million copies, only to decrease to 70.1 million copies in 2003<sup>12</sup>.

At that time, large media companies present on the Polish press market developed their offer. Axel Springer launched "Newsweek Poland". Thus, the segment of influential weeklies had to note the appearance of a German company there. Bauer Media continued to exploit the women market with their press titles. They offered cheap magazines for women that cost a penny, "Bella". G + J Poland put the issue of lifestyle and issued pocket-size "Glamour". At the same time Agora SA bought the titles belonging to the company Prószyński i S-ka, thereby managing to enlarge its offer. The market also lost two publishers the Publishing Company 'Twój Styl' and the Publishing House Silver Shark. The first of them sold its two popular magazines, an exclusive women's magazine 'Twój Styl' and a teen magazine "Filipinka" to Bauer Media.

The years 2001-2003 was also a period of liquidation of colored magazines. There disappeared the magazines which did not meet the expectations of publishers, i.e. were not able to bring enough profit, such as "Madame Figaro", "Twój Styl Look", "Blask" and "Maxim".

Let us now look how this situation influenced the position of popular teen magazines. The study clearly shows that the changes were made in two ways. First, the existing journals tried to keep both the readers and the advertisers in various ways, which was an attempt almost unavailable in the era of decline in readership and the growth of television-like, pictorial view of reality. Witold Woźniak, a former CEO of Bauer Media commented on this phenomenon: "The reading rate of youth magazines is observed to decline everywhere. This is due to several factors: the demographic decline, lack of idols in music and film world, and the competition of electronic media and the Internet"<sup>13</sup>. Despite the difficult market situation on the magazine market in 2001 in the summer months, the company assessed the applied steps successful. A gift of an arm bracelet for the readers of "Bravo" allowed the sale 600 thousand copies, the return rate being only 6%. A similar success was the inclusion of bracelets with wooden beads to the copies. Thanks to this commercial trick and a 10-second long television ad 560 thousand copies were sold<sup>14</sup>. In this way, various gadgets have become an element of strategy designed to raise sales in the segment of the youth press.

"Popcorn", a monthly designed to general youth, and a competitor in the struggle for the reader underwent internal changes. Starting from the May number of 2002 the magazine appeared in a more attractive graphical and smaller size (205 x 270)<sup>15</sup>. It

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<sup>12</sup> Ibidem., p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> J. Krajewski, *Strategia skuteczna*, „Press” 1999, issue 10, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> G. Kopacz, *Gra o pismo*, „Press” 2001, issue 7, p. 62.

<sup>15</sup> This decision was taken after the approval of both the readers and advertisers of the changed format of one of the company periodicals – *Dziewczyna*, w: *Press* 2002, issue 5, p. 9.

was the magazine layout which underwent the process of modernization first of all. Also the breaking of the magazine was different: new sections such, as sport- *Czas na Sport (Time for sport)*, social affairs – *Uwaga, problem! (Note the problem!)* and presenting the trendy products – *Na topie (The top of all)* appeared in the magazine<sup>16</sup>.

The monthly, despite taking up the new topics managed to maintain the same volume at the same time. The number of posters with stars added to each release also remained the same. Apart from that, all the existing lines, such as tips from sex therapist and psychologist were also retained. As pointed out by the then, editor Iwona Ignatowska "thanks to these efforts we succeeded in increasing the amount of information most important for our readers, that is about the stars from the worlds of music and film"<sup>17</sup>.

The publisher, Axel Springer Poland was reluctant to the idea of the inclusion of gadgets to their copies of magazines, explaining that they break down and mess the sales on the market during the first year and a half. At that time, the President of the company, Mr Wiesław Podkański, used to talk about the visible effects of "gadgetmania" in the expert press: "first of all, many distributors visibly increase their magazines' mark-up with added value. Second, the focus of competition between the titles has shifted from the interior to the cover of the magazine. Third, the gadget mania develops in readers the behavior of seeking for additives, not specific content"<sup>18</sup>. However, in mid-2001, the concern began to attach all kinds of gifts, such as: stickers, samples of cosmetics, CDs to all their periodicals.

In early 2002, the second monthly of this concern - *"Dziewczyna"* also changed the layout, the substantive content and the logo. New sections: fitness, nutrition, taboos about the problems of teenage girls were introduced. Also sections with letters and tips and culinary information page were transformed and expanded<sup>19</sup>. The then editor of the magazine - Monika Piasecka said: "The changes in the magazine stock are connected with the increasing competition in the segment of teen magazines. So we must be vigilant and keep making it more attractive so as to retain the regular and attract the new readers"<sup>20</sup>.

For the 2002 October and November issues of *"Dziewczyna"* colorful beauty books, developed jointly with advertisers were included. The editorial board came up with the general concept and prepared the proposed tests, and manufacturers of the Nivea and Rimmel cosmetics lines released the pictures and accepted the final formula of the allowance. The editor, Monika Piasecka, said: "This form of advertising is a novelty on the Polish market, and brings mutual benefits to both the monthly and the manufacturers of the cosmetics. Lately, we have been able to observe the increase of sales"<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Popcorn" 2002, issue 8, 9, 10.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.axelspringer.com.pl/mlodziezowe/popcorn>. - access date: 16.09. 2006.

<sup>18</sup> K. Prewecka, *Bonus do lektury*, „Media i Marketing Polska” 2001, issue 5, p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> Press” 2002, issue 2, s. 9.

<sup>20</sup> *Dziewczyna chce zmian*, „Media i Marketing Polska” 2002, issue 3, p. 22.

<sup>21</sup> *Dziewczyna” i nowe formy reklamy*, „Brief” 2002, issue 11, p. 34.

The second track of the changes was meant to expand the magazines aimed at teenagers. In this way, in March 2001, Egmont Poland introduced a "13 Magazyn Szczęśliwej Nastolatki" and in June of the same year a new title for girls, "Nicole" belonging to the Bauer Media portfolio, experienced its debut.

"13" was addressed to the girls who grow out of childhood and enter adolescence. On the one hand, the magazine had to help solve the problems of this period of girls' development, on the other, to take care of providing entertainment and knowledge about their idols. "Nicole" was addressed to the girls aged 17 - 21, residents of large cities, who take the most important decisions in their life, look for their first job, or flat, or choose the field of study<sup>22</sup>. Like most magazines belonging to the Bauer Media group, "Nicole" had to undergo a transformation. In the summer of 2002, after a year of its existence on the Polish press market, the editors reduced the magazine's size, increased its volume, applied more the attractive colors and a layout<sup>23</sup>. The periodical invited a sexologist to co-operate with the monthly and extended the correspondence corner thus expecting its female readers to help creating the magazine contents. Young women could participate in photo shoots to promote the latest fashion trends or become a "face" of "Nicole". In November 2002 the company suspended the magazine<sup>24</sup>. The reason for this decision was the presence of two monthlies targeted to the same audience. Witold Wozniak, a former president of the Bauer Media Group, noted: "[...] the decision to suspend Nicole was internal. We were afraid that the magazine will start to compete with "Filipinka", and no publisher can allow for a form of cannibalism of their products"<sup>25</sup>.

Another way of the development of the offer was the overtaking of the products already existing on the Polish market. And so in 2002 the teen periodicals of the Bauer Media Group were enlarged by "Filipinka" and the company became the leader in this press segment. Table 3 illustrates the changes in the teen segment of the press in 2001-2003.

Table 3. The debuts on the market of Polish teen magazines 2001-2003

|    | Title. Frequency                             | Year    |           | Target Group | Publisher     |
|----|----------------------------------------------|---------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
|    |                                              | started | suspended |              |               |
| 1. | „13 Magazyn Szczęśliwej Nastolatki”; monthly | 2001    | continues | girls 13-18  | Egmont Polska |
| 2. | „Nicole”; monthly                            | 2001    | 2002      | girls 17-21  | Bauer Media   |
| 3. | „Filipinka”; monthly                         | 2002*   | 2006      | girls 16-20  | Bauer Media   |

Source: Own research (\* „Filipinka” appeared in publisher's offer)

<sup>22</sup> *Odważna „Nicole”. Młode kobiety: niedochodowa nisza?*, „Brief” 2001, issue 6, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> *Press*, 2002, issue 7, . 10; *Odmieniona „Nicole”*, „Media i Marketing Polska” 2002, issue 14, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> *Press* 2002, issue 11, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> B. Goczał, *Porażki 2002*, „Press” 2003, issue 1, p. 72.

The next period of the development of the Polish media are the years 2004-2007, called by Filas the initial phase of reconstruction of the traditional media offer before the expected invasion of new media technologies<sup>26</sup>. Economic prosperity, growth of GDP, falling unemployment and the Polish accession to the European Union had a direct impact on high-volume condition of the Polish wide-circulation periodicals. In 2005, the number of titles exceeded 6.5 thousand. Also the total one-time effort increased from 69.5 million copies in 2004 to 78.8 million copies in 2007. Many transformations took place in the highly-saturated segment of the women's press. Many publishers began "price war". Popular magazines, like "Tina" or "Przyjaciółka", were available for a penny. The period of 2004-2007 was also a time of intense searching for niche publications. Such places on the Polish press market were found to be magazines for parents, which began to be rapidly invested by Edipresse Poland, a company with the Swiss capital.

In connection with the increasing dominance of large media companies and an increasingly visible oligopoly, smaller companies in order to survive and still become competitive in the market, began to merge. In early 2006, a merger with Hachette Filipacchi Burda Poland was announced. Officially, the new company started operations from the beginning of July 2006. The capital control over the new structure, Hachette Filipacchi Burda was taken by Burda Poland, which owned 51% of shares<sup>27</sup>. All this was done to improve the market position of the publishers. The merger was supposed to help improve the economic situation, the new larger company to compete with larger concerns to gain the attention of the readers and advertisers.

The trends in the reconstruction of traditional media can also be seen in the segment of popular teen magazines. In 2005 Bauer Media group enlarged its offer with a monthly "Fun Club". The periodical made its debut in June 2005 as a special supplement to the monthly magazine "Twist", so as to become a stand-alone title in September 2005. The reason for this decision were the promising results of the sales. According to the publisher's data the first three numbers were sold in 123 thousand copies, with the circulation of 180 thousand copies<sup>28</sup>. "Fun Club" was primarily competing for readers with "13". The first numbers of "Fun Club" were different from its rival periodical mostly because of many interesting and attractive information about the stars. One can argue that it was a teen magazine with pro-celebrity attitude, preparing readers to befriend with the magazines of *people* type i.e. "Show". When the posters and articles about youth idols appeared in "13", the Bauer periodical tried to win and get its female readers stay with the magazine with the original form of counseling, offered through the prism of celebrity. The magazine

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<sup>26</sup> R. Filas, *Dwadzieścia lat przemian polskich...*, p. 37.

<sup>27</sup> J. Dziwińska, K. Prewęcka, *Burda kontroluje Hachette Filipacchi*, „Media i Marketing Polska” 2006, issue 3, p. 1; M. Lemańska, *Elle u Anny*, „Press” 2006, issue 2, p. 39–42; *taż*, *Centralizacja*, „Press” 2006, issue 9, p. 15; „Press”

<sup>28</sup> Press 2005, issue 9, p.10

offered articles focusing on youth idols and ideas suggesting how to deal with the readers' own everyday problems<sup>29</sup>.

The Bauer Group could be seen as performing a consequent and well-thought strategy, which aimed to unify and strengthen the position of all the held titles. In this way, in April 2006, despite the almost fifty-year history and many transformations taking place inside the magazine, the Bauer Media decided to give up the publication of "Filipinka", a magazine addressing many young girls<sup>30</sup>. The decision to suspend the magazine publication was explained by strong competition in the segment of teen press, what prevented simultaneous publication of two thematically similar periodicals - "Filipinka" and "Twist".

At this point one can ask why Bauer Media gave up the publication of the journal with the traditions, promoting certain values and present in the minds of the Polish reader. According to the magazine publisher it did not bring the expected income. However, comparing the number of advertising campaigns, or funding for the promotion of "Twist" and "Filipinka" in 2002-2006 strongly tilts the scales in favor of "Twist". The monthly was offered to the readers in the pages of nearly every women's magazine. From the television screens the viewers saw smiling teenagers' faces strongly recommending "Twist". The other magazine, "Filipinka" did not have such rich advertising and did not receive such financial support. Might it be a form of well-planned activity designed aimed at the suspension of this journal?

After the liquidation of "Filipinka" the Bauer company began to work on the modernization of "Twist". The July number of 2007 appeared in a new layout, with better paper and in greater volume. The editors expanded the sections dedicated to fashion, beauty, and the stars' life<sup>31</sup>. Monika Maciag, the former publisher of teen magazines at Bauer's said in the professional press that "[...] the widening of these divisions was the answer to the expectations of readers found in the focus research. We wanted to emphasize that the *Twist* teen magazine is among the most life styled and luxury magazines<sup>32</sup>.

The next phase is the period of confrontation between the traditional media with new technologies in the economic downturn that began in 2008<sup>33</sup>. A major international financial market crisis caused advertising budgets to be cut by around 10% in 2009. During this time, the teen press market saw 15.6% drop in advertising revenue<sup>34</sup>. It is only the advertising in the Internet which managed to generate the profit of up to 7%<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> K. Jasione, *Młodzi wiedzą lepiej*, „Press. Magazyn Ekstra” 2006, issue 7, p.12.

<sup>30</sup> *Nastolatki wolą „Cosmo”*, „Press” 2006, issue 5, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> *Twist* 2007, issue 7-9.

<sup>32</sup> A. Olbrot, *W sieci...*, p. 54.

<sup>33</sup> R. Filas, *Dwadzieścia lat przemian polskich...*, p. 49.

<sup>34</sup> The record also included the log drops 19%, outdoor advertising -15.8% -15.3% radio, television - 12.8%, in "Gazeta Wyborcza" 2010, No. 15, p.14

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem. p. 14.

In 2008, the magazine volume exceeded seven thousand titles and their total one-time expenditures were the highest in history and reached the level of 81.8 million copies<sup>36</sup>. The high-volume storage market observed several important changes, which aim was probably, in many cases, a struggle to survive or to maintain the leadership position in the segment of the press. The Bauer Media Publishing House evidently strengthened its position by buying a Wrocław-residing Phoenix Publishing House<sup>37</sup>. Thanks to this operation the largest corporation on the Polish press market expanded its range of magazines of the *true story* type. Apart from that, many popular women's magazines, so as to survive, became bi-weeklies, i.e. "Tina", and "Przyjaciółka". Similar transformations were initiated by the Bauer Media in the segment of TV-guides.

In addition to these activities there appeared new titles in the market. The debuts of three *people* type magazines: "Party", "Show" and "Flesz" could be observed. In the luxury segment there appeared "In Style" and "Bluszcz". The recent years also brought dynamic development of the periodicals of *custom-publishing* types, representing various branches of press, where the involvement of both large corporations and small publishing houses looking for potential readers, advertisers, or sources of income, in this sector could be seen.

In this stage of development of the Polish media highlighted by R. Filas, there did not appear any title targeted at the teenage audience. Publishers could not fail to note that the adolescents had become possessed by the Internet. According to the research data, every third young man declared that they visit the network every day, staying there up to four hours a day<sup>38</sup>. Therefore, the publishers began looking for the sources of income just in the internet, also by binding both the media - networks and magazines from their portfolio. Bauer Media, Axel Springer Poland and Egmont Poland were seen to invest in social networking sites. Monika Maciag, who worked as chief publisher of teen magazines at Bauer Media until August 2009, stressed: "we promote the three titles *Bravo*, *Bravo Girl* and *Bravo Sports* on our vortal. We have focused on them because of the strategic purposes and advertising revenues we had from these titles. On the vortal there registered already 92 thousand members, 15 thousand blogs were established and more than 1.2 thousand fan clubs are active. The portal is not meant to give any immediate profits, but it indirectly promotes the sales and is rather our foothold on the Internet, where we would like to earn in the future"<sup>39</sup>. Donata Cieślík from the group Axel Springer Poland acknowledged that the changes are planned in fairly static sites of "Dziewczyna" and "Popcorn". She also admitted that "the idea is to join the magazine pages with the websites. In the web, we will show additional photos of the sessions presented on the pages of magazines,

<sup>36</sup> R. Filas, *Dwadzieścia lat przemian polskich...*, p. 49.

<sup>37</sup> M. Wyszynska, *Ekspansja Bauera*, „Press” 2009, no. 6, p.6; <http://www.wirtualnemedial.pl/arttykul/grupa-bauer-kupila-wydawnictwo-phoenix-press>, access: 12.14.2011.

<sup>38</sup> M. Ignatowicz, *Wartościowa przyszłość*, „Media i Marketing Polska. Target Młodzież” 2007, kwiecień/maj, p. 3-13.

<sup>39</sup> A. Olbrot, *Wsieci...*, p. 56.

their back-scenes, we will organize competitions between the two media trying to join them together”<sup>40</sup>.

At this stage of the development of the media, the publisher of the bi-weekly "Bravo," began both editorial and advertising cooperation with the station owned by RMF Maxxx. In March 2008, the addition to the magazine was a disc prepared by DJ's of the station. This edition of the magazine was also advertised on the air<sup>41</sup>.

In November 2008, the changes also occurred in the bi-weekly "Bravo Girl". The editors changed the layout and the information contained therein, stressing that the target of the periodical was to abandon the entertaining formula which had predominated in the magazine so far for guiding type writing<sup>42</sup>. The magazine was dominated by the following sections: fashion, beauty, life, guys&love and entertainment.

Summing up, the study shows that in 2001-2010 in the segment of popular magazines aimed at young people three new titles made their debut: "13" "Fun Club" and "Nicole", the first two survived the "market" test time. "Bravo Quiz", which began its functioning on the teen market in 2001, did not; nor did the fifty-year old "Filipínka".

Regardless of the publisher, all periodicals experienced numerous transformations, whose goal was to maintain their positions in the market despite the existing crisis in print media. The publishers supported their titles in advertising campaigns and with different types of gadgets. Moreover, all the periodicals indicated a significant slope in the direction of entertainment, especially those related to celebrities. This strategy was undoubtedly tied to the rapid growth in both the press and other media related to the life of stars. Table 4 presents the fourth most popular periodicals of the first decade of the 21st century, the ones still existing in the market in 2010.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibidem., p. 56.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem., p. 56.

<sup>42</sup> „Press” 2008, no 11, p. 7.

Table 4. The most popular youth magazines in Poland 2001-2010

|    | Title. Frequency                                     | Year    |           | Target Group         | Publisher            |
|----|------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|
|    |                                                      | started | suspended |                      |                      |
| 1. | „Bravo”; b-weekly                                    | 1991    | continues | Girls and boys 15-19 | Bauer Media          |
| 2. | „Bravo Girl”; b-weekly,                              | 1994    | continues | girls 15-19          | Bauer Media          |
| 3. | „Bravo Sport”; b-weekly                              | 1997    | continues | boys 15-19           | Bauer Media          |
| 4. | „Popcorn”; monthly.                                  | 2000*   | 2012**    | Girls and boys 15-19 | Axel Springer Polska |
| 5. | „Dziewczyna - Girl”; monthly                         | 2000*   | 2012**    | girls 15-19          | Axel Springer Polska |
| 6. | „Twist”; monthly                                     | 2000    | continues | girls14-18           | Bauer Media          |
| 7. | „13 Magazyn Szczęśliwej<br>Nastolatki”; „13” monthly | 2001    | continues | girls 13-18          | Egmont Polska        |
| 8. | „Fun Club”; monthly                                  | 2005    | continues | girls 11-16 lat      | Bauer Media          |

Source: own research (\*Not the year of formation, but the appearance in the publishers' offer'. \*\* The magazines changed the publisher for a Wrocław company BBV)

The analysis of the results achieved from copy sales shows that despite a number of promotional activities undertaken, the segment of teen magazines noted continual decline of this indicator. Over the period of ten years, the sales of almost all periodicals decreased. The sales of the bi-weekly "Bravo" - the market leader - dropped in about 150 thousand copies. The second leading general teen magazine - "Popcorn"- recorded a fall of around 50 thousand. All the periodicals addressed to female teenagers were forced to reduce their sales. The highest drop (about 95 thousand copies less) was recorded the biweekly "Bravo Girl". The monthlies "Twist" and "Dziewczyna" decreased the sales for about 70 thousand copies. The smallest drop (almost invisible between 2001 and 2010) was found in case of the bi-weekly for the boys "Bravo Sport". Even the youngest 'child' of this segment, "Fun Club" did not note such large sways at the level of copy sales. Despite of all these sale problems the magazine "Bravo" has always been a market leader with an unrivaled position. None of the other magazines did not even approach the results achieved by this title. The sale of this bi-weekly was higher than the sale of any rival periodical in each year by almost 100 thousand copies. Table 5 illustrates the dynamics of sales of the surveyed titles in 2001-2010.

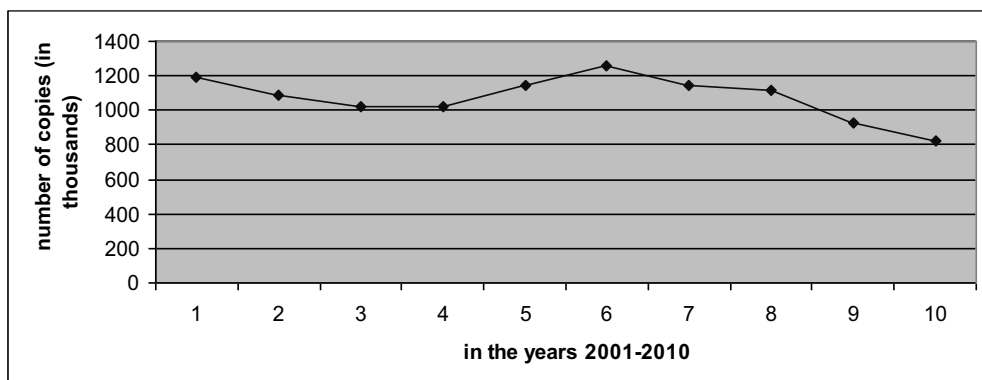
Table 5. The average paid circulation for the period 2001-2010

| l.p.        | Titles        | 2001   | 2002   | 2003   | 2004   | 2005  | 2006   | 2007   | 2008   | 2009  | 2010  |
|-------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| 1           | „Bravo”       | 366.9  | 301.4  | 272.1  | 269.5  | 261.9 | 270.9  | 249.1  | 230.8  | 189.2 | 203.2 |
| 2           | „Bravo Girl”  | 193.6  | 206.2  | 180.9  | 183.9  | 186.3 | 174.7  | 166.4  | 161.7  | 117.3 | 96.7  |
| 3           | „Bravo Sport” | 104.7  | 98.8   | 116.9  | 126.3  | 125.8 | 136.1  | 124.5  | 123.2  | 107.7 | 102.9 |
| 4           | „Popcorn”     | 141.9  | 115.4  | 115.1  | 121.1  | 127.9 | 150.4  | 115.5  | 117.5  | 105.8 | 87.9  |
| 5           | „Dziewczyna”  | 147.3  | 138.9  | 139.8  | 131.1  | 107.6 | 173.4  | 144.0  | 117.1  | 94.2  | 71.9  |
| 6           | „Twist”       | 171.7  | 154.3  | 127.1  | 116.5  | 148.6 | 172.1  | 159.1  | 160.2  | 135.1 | 101.2 |
| 7           | „Fun Club”    | ----   | ---    | ---    | ---    | 110.3 | 109.1  | 115.1  | 126.2  | 110.3 | 99.5  |
| 8           | „13”          | 70.2   | 72.3   | 66,5   | 74.2   | 72.6  | 68.6   | 72.1   | 76.7   | 66.9  | 55.7  |
| Total sales |               | 1196.3 | 1087.3 | 1018.4 | 1022.6 | 1141  | 1255.3 | 1145.8 | 1113.4 | 926.5 | 819   |

Source: based on ZKDP

However, the analysis and the comparison of the total sales of eight leading magazines of this segment, highlights a downward trend. One can see that it was the year 2010 which appeared to be the toughest for the popular magazines aimed at young people. The years 2004-2006 marked a short-term improvement in this segment of press release. Undoubtedly, the improvement of the economic prosperity brought about the appearance of a new journal, which briefly slowed the deepening decline in copy sales. However, the subsequent years, the years of financial crisis, the demographic decline and the appearance of new technologies left a significant imprint on the condition of this segment. Note that in 2001 the total one-time sales stood at nearly 1,200 thousand copies, whereas in 2010 it was almost 820 thousand copies, nearly 400 thousand less. Graph 1 illustrates the dynamics observed in the total average magazine sales.

Graph 1. Dynamics of average sales of the most popular youth magazines in the years 2001-2010



Source: own research based on ZKDP

## A handful of final remarks

Many times, the specialist press while describing the teen segment of the press used such words as "difficult", "demanding", "unstable" or "variable". All of these names appeared while having in mind the recipient, growing from the products intended for him/her far too quickly, press magazines included. Moreover, it appears that the period of demographic decline and, following it, a smaller number of teenagers studying in secondary and upper secondary schools meant that the demand for such periodicals constantly decreased. One can assume that both the magazines' circulation volume and the sales were made realistic and adapted to the ongoing market needs. On the other hand, the Internet, extremely popular among young people, certainly took the palm in satisfying common people in generally understood entertainment. All these factors contributed to the declining sales of teen periodicals in 2001-2010. The comparison of the overall results achieved by the studied periodicals within the period of last ten years let us permit to conclude that this press release segment experienced evident crisis.

When looking at this sector of the press market from the perspective of 2012, a very interesting situation can be found. On the one hand, in January 2012, after twelve years of continuous release, the Ringer Axel Springer group in January 2012, suspended the further release of "Dziewczyna" and "Popcorn" explaining its decision in the following way: "this segment of teen magazines experienced the trend of abandoning printed magazines by the readers in the strongest and most painful way"<sup>43</sup>. At the same time, the other extreme was formed by the words of Beata Mikulska-Kwiek<sup>44</sup> from the Media Bauer Group who ensured that "all our titles are profitable, the sales are at planned levels, and the advertising revenues enable us to face the future with optimism"<sup>45</sup>.

Undoubtedly, the publisher of the bi-weekly "Bravo" strengthened its position in this segment of the press market as well, thus becoming the publisher of the greatest number of titles. Since January 2012 there have been no serious rivals, able to work out a promotional strategy to jeopardize the teen periodicals of their portfolio. The new publisher of "Dziewczyna" and "Popcorn" - the company BPV from Wrocław is just a different league.

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<sup>43</sup> S. Kucharski, *Wiara w młodego*, „Press” 2012, no. 3, p. 6

<sup>44</sup> Since 2009 she has worked as the editorial manager in the segment of teen magazines in the Bauer Media group.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem.

### **The most popular teen magazines of the first decade of 21st century - decline or stagnation ?**

#### Summary

The article raises the issue of the most popular teen magazines and their situation on Polish press market. Despite the lasting economic crisis, 50 new magazines came out in 2011. Some of them became very popular among readers very quickly. This group consisted of:

- An influential weekly “Uważam Rze. Inaczej Pisane”, published by the Presspublica company,
- A bi-weekly “Flesz”, published by Edipresse Poland representing *people magazines*,
- A popular scientific monthly “Świat Wiedzy”, which belonged to the Bauer Media Group.

If these magazines were to form the background, the situation among teen magazines seems to be very intriguing. It is clear that there have not come out any new teen addressing magazine in Polish press market for seven years. Since 2005, there has not been released any new, illustrated magazine able to compete with a bi-weekly “Bravo” or a monthly “Twist” in reference to both the readers and possible advertisers.

This article attempts to outline the dynamic of the changes which occurred in the most popular Polish teen magazines in the period 2001 - 2010.