Summary. The article presents the profession of press journalist in Poland after the political transformation in 1989 and nowadays. In the first part the author discusses changes in the profession of press journalism after the political transformation in Poland in 1989. The author also presents the working conditions in Polish editorial offices and the consequences of foreign publishing houses appearing on the Polish press market. The article shows the positive and negatives changes of the transformation on the shape of Polish newspapers and magazines, and on the work of journalists. The last part will attempt to answer the questions of what kind of role press journalism plays in Poland nowadays, what kind of dailies and magazines are the most popular, and in which direction its development will go.

Keywords: Political transformation, press journalist’s profession

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The political transformation in Poland in 1989

Journalism is the activity of gathering, assessing, creating and presenting news and information. It is also the product of these activities. Journalistic activity can be distinguished from other activities and products by certain identifiable characteris-
tics and practices. These elements not only separate journalism from other forms of communication – they are what make it indispensable to democratic societies. History reveals that the more democratic society, the more news and information it tends to have. Marek Chyliński and Stephan Russ-Mohl state: “Full freedom of journalism is only in seven countries in the world. On the top of the each year list of “World Freedom Index” published by the organisation “Reporters Without Borders” are: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland.

In the following article, the author analyzes the political and social consequences in the press market that followed in Poland after the transformation in 1989. The focus of interest is changes in the contents and graphics formulae of dailies and magazines. The author attempts to show the positive and negative consequences of changes in the profession of press journalist and how the situation of the profession today. The text also presents the results of research connected with journalists’ attitude to their work and results of surveys on the popularity of the Polish press.

Changes that took place in 1989 had great significance for Poland, especially for the subsequent political and economical transformations. The introduction of the democratic system, the transition from the state-controlled economy to the free market one, and sweeping reforms were the driving force behind the new Polish economy. The political transformation had an influence on the face of Polish journalism too. Poland was the first country from the former communist block to enter the path of transformation. After 1989, the Polish media was subject to laws regulating public and private media, investigative journalism, media ethics, journalists’ organizations, advertising and the media, the problem of competition in the media, political lobbying and the independence of the media. The binding documents concerning journalist ethics are “The Journalist’s Social Code of the Association of Journalists of the Republic of Poland,” passed in 1992, and “The Journalist’s Social

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3 Reporters Without Borders (RWB), or Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF), is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization that promotes and defends freedom of information and freedom of the press. The organization, with a head office in Paris, France, has consultant status at the United Nations. Reporters Without Borders has two primary spheres of activity: one is focused on Internet censorship and the new media, and the other on providing material, financial and psychological assistance to journalists assigned to dangerous areas. Its missions are to: continuously monitor attacks on freedom of information worldwide; denounce any such attacks in the media; act in cooperation with governments to fight censorship and laws aimed at restricting the freedom of information; morally and financially assist persecuted journalists, as well as their families; and offer material assistance to war correspondents in order to enhance their safety: http://www.rog.at/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2016-Ausschreibung-Polnisch.pdf [6.02.2017].
Press Journalist's Profession in Poland after Political Transformation in 1989 and Nowadays

Code as of 1948, applying to the members of the Association of Polish Journalists. Additionally, in 1995 all journalism associations as well as some organizations of broadcasters accepted the charter of media ethics, where the following rules were formulated:

- the rule of truthfulness – all information must be true,
- the rule of objectivity – the author must depict reality, regardless of personal opinions,
- unequivocal separation between news and comments – so that the reader can distinguish between facts and comments,
- the rule of honesty – a journalist is obliged to work according to the dictates of his or her conscience,
- impartiality,
- respect, tolerance – respect for dignity, rights, personal goods, the right to privacy as well as good name of other people,
- the rule of freedom and accountability for message content,
- priority of the readers’ rights.5

The objective of the journalist’s work is, as it was mentioned above, to serve the whole society as well as, small societies at the regional and local level and ethnic minorities. Obtaining the status of the professional journalist is “also to give to journalist the privileged position in getting information, transparencing in public life, controlling and social criticism.”6 Journalists can frequently have dilemmas which party they should support and who is right. However, the answer is simple. The duty of journalists is, first of all, to present arguments in an objective way. They can, however, reveal which opinion seems to be more convincing. The key point is that it is necessary to retain objectivity regardless of changing political powers, successive governments or the prevailing ideology.

While pursuing professional assignments, journalists must be convinced that first of all that they serve society and their country and thus should behave according to professional ethics. Journalists are also accountable for the reception of their messages, so when pursuing media success, they must not drive people into the trap of their inner emotions.

The press, as well as other media, should use the truth in the service of humanity, for the purpose of development, shaping and improvement of the condition of

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every person. Thus the accountability for the truth rests with individual journalists providing the news.

It is important to mention the Polish Journalists Association (SDP). It is the oldest organization of journalists in Poland (was established in 1951), which enjoys the greatest authority. The Association actively participates in initiatives aimed at developing a state of law and civic society. Pursuant to the provisions of its statutes, the Association is a non-profit, voluntary, professional and creative association of journalists. Currently, it has 2,700 members. It has 16 local branches in the biggest towns and cities of Poland. SDP groups operate in press, radio, television and Internet editorial offices, as well as information agencies. The aims of SDP are:

- ensuring reliable media information to society,
- supporting creative journalism,
- ensuring ethical behaviour among journalists,
- protecting the rights of journalists.

The activities of the Association take various forms, including: conferences and seminars, discussions, contests for journalists, contacts with foreign organizations (SDP is a member of the International Federation of Journalists in Brussels).

The Polish Journalists Association takes particular care to ensure that journalists comply with the ethical rules and standards. It is also engaged in publishing activity – on its own, or in cooperation with other organizations.

The new face of the press journalist’s profession in Poland after the political transformation

The changes in Poland after the political transformation involved the collapse of communism and opening the borders with Western European countries. New legal regulations concerning the publishing of the press were passed in 1990 and they included: the abolishment of censorship and liquidation of the Central Office for the Control of Press, Publications and Cultural Events. The previous licence-based press system was transformed into a registration-based one and thus the only condition for publishing a newspaper became the court registration of the title, which accelerated the establishment of new papers whose existence depended on the market only. Additionally, under a parliamentary resolution, the communist concern RSW “Prasa-Książka-Ruch” was dissolved, which meant the end of state monopoly in the field of distribution and, consequently, all the papers published by RSW were sold

to companies owned by Polish and foreign publishing houses. In 1992, the Law of Broadcasting was stated\(^8\). Subsequently, other laws adjusting Polish law to European Union law were enacted. In 1997 the new Polish Constitution was introduced. According to this, the freedom of the press and other media in Poland is guaranteed. Censorship and the licensing of the press was prohibited, yet licensing of broadcasting is accepted. Press titles only have to be registered in court.

The political transformation brought many new rules into the press market. We can highlight the following changes:

- Polish press, from the first time since 1945, was able to fully develop and express different points of views and opinions, as well as provide the information that had previously been left unsaid (such as social protests);
- previous “underground” papers (such as for example: the Roman Catholic Church press) as well as the papers published abroad began to be published officially (for example: “Kultura”\(^9\);
- Poland also started to be an attractive investment destination for foreign companies from many countries, such as: France, Germany, Italy or Scandinavia. We can mention, for example, such companies as: Orkla Media, Passauer Neue Press or Jurg Marquard;
- in Poland, Polish press companies also appeared, such as Agora, which was established in 1989 by Andrzej Wajda, Aleksander Paszyński and Zbigniew Bujak;
- the number of newspapers and magazines increased by almost half, from 3,007 in 1990 to 4,340 in 1995. By 2001, there were already 5,837 press titles – nationwide and local ones (and, as previously stated, today there are more than 7000 titles)\(^10\);
- new newspapers appeared in the press market – one of the most important was “Gazeta Wyborcza”\(^11\) – the first totally independent newspaper in post-communist Poland\(^12\);

\(^8\) Broadcasting Act made possible to launch private, commercial radio and television stations.

\(^9\) “Kultura” – was a leading Polish-émigré literary-political magazine, published from 1947 to 2000 by Instytut Literacki (the Literary Institute), initially in Rome, then Paris. It was edited and produced by Jerzy Giedroyc and ceased publication upon his death.


\(^11\) Today, “Gazeta Wyborcza” is main press title of Agora and one of the biggest Polish newspapers, which achieved big marketing success after 1989.

the cultural changes led to the rise of the commercial mass press (for example: “Super Express”) based on tabloids, and sensational and erotic magazines targeted at readers expecting rather unrefined entertainment;

the transformation also led to the vulgarization of the media, and the brutalization of language (the weekly “Nie” published by Jerzy Urban);

the political changes after 1989 also brought changes to the situation of social-culture magazines in Poland. The titles connected with previous system were shut down and many new titles appeared (most of them surrendered to the process of commercialization). In this group we can distinguish film, theater, art, photography and music magazines such as: “Machina,” “Film,” “Wiadomości Kulturalne” or “Notatnik Teatralny”;

on the other hand, elegantly illustrated magazines were published (for example: “Twój Styl” – a magazine for women), targeting wealthier people;

began to lose popularity magazines for young people which were edited before 1989 (“Plomyk”) began to lose their popularity. Their place was taken by colorful magazines edited abroad, like “Popcorn” or “Dziewczyna”, which did not have any educational or didactic value;

additionally, a number of magazines appeared which were connected with new parties and political groups, for example: “Gazeta Polska” (centre-right circles). The Catholic press, such as “Niedziela” (Częstochowa), “Gość Niedzielny” (Katowice), also gained substantial readership;

specialized titles like: “Komputer Świat,” “Dom i Wnętrze,” “Magazyn Budowlany” also began to be printed at this time;

the abolishment of the state monopoly, along with privatization after 1989, led to the creation of a politically diversified press market. The law of supply and demand began to work, which resulted in competitiveness. This, in turn, made the publishers adapt to the tastes and expectations of readers, as well as make the content and graphic formula of papers more attractive. The computerization of editorial offices after 1990 introduced new technologies and made it possible to edit newspapers and magazines in accordance with the highest European standards;

diversity in terms of subjects, typography and political allegiances led to publisher competitiveness in areas such as: modern layouts, advertising becoming the main source of income, special interest supplements like for example “Budownictwo” or “Motoryzacja” added to “Dziennik Łódzki.”

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14 Ibidem, p. 66.
The new dimension of journalism

The political transformation caused numerous changes in the profession of press journalist. Journalists loyal to the communist authorities left their jobs or stopped being important. Another reason for the injection of new blood into the circle of journalists was the inability of the older generation to adapt to new editorial techniques. In contrast to the situation in the past, technical skills and not political sympathies became essential.\(^\text{15}\)

The media offered rather decent pay, so young people were eager to work in editorial offices. Moreover, newly founded colleges, where students were able to major in journalism, did not want for the lack of candidates. Their graduates joined the ranks of the new editorial offices of the local branches of newspapers such as “Gazeta Wyborcza” and “Super Express,” or went into commercial radio and television stations.\(^\text{16}\) The journalist market was just being created, so it was easy to find a job. Inexperienced persons were the most valued; as experience in journalism meant that it had been acquired in the former political system, which was usually rejected in the “new” Poland.

In the beginning of the 1990s, he number of journalists in Poland was 11.000. 10 years later was 18.000-20.000, sometimes the number of journalists was even 25.000. Discrepancy in the calculation is connected with disparity in qualifications. We can distinguish the following groups of journalists\(^\text{17}\):

- full time career journalists;
- freelance journalists (single service journalism);
- those creating their own sub-local press (their main income is from work for another company, school or office);
- those working in public relations or media relations in other companies;
- politicians who also work journalists;
- retirees (journalists, or former journalists connected with the association of journalists);
- journalists creating online magazines, which do not have a paper edition.

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\(^{15}\) Z. Bajka, Dziennikarze lat dziewięćdziesiątych, „Zeszyty Prasoznawcze” no. 3-4, 2000, p. 45.

\(^{16}\) Z. Bajka, Reklama w mediach, in Dziennikarstwo i świat mediów, eds Z. Bauer, E. Chudziński, Kraków 2000, p. 45.

\(^{17}\) Z. Bajka, Dziennikarze lat..., p. 42.
Wiesław Sonczyk suggests that this generational change after 1990 can be called the "personnel revolution."\(^{18}\) According to him, "the big problem of today's media is that anyone who has such will can find employment. Journalists are also employees of advertising agencies, volunteers, amateur and enthusiasts of this profession. It is an unfavorable condition for the public and also for journalists, but convenient situation for publishers and broadcasters"\(^{19}\). Wiesław Sonczyk notes that: "young people, who have the minimum requirements and are fully available can often be easily manipulated."\(^{20}\)

Nowadays, it is more difficult to become a press journalist than it was in the 1990s. In spite of the stability of the standards of journalism, the most valued characteristics of a good journalist have been subject to substantial redefinition. In the past, social and political involvement were highly appreciated. A talented, creative and brave person was able to cope with journalism. Now these features have been replaced by the powers of observation, creativeness, aptitude for making social contacts and a passion to seek the truth, as well as the awareness that this profession provides a ticket to the attractive media world. Today, press journalists must meet substantially higher demands. A journalist is not supposed to just provide information but also to do everything to retain readers.

It should be noted that these high standards are required from candidates in professional press editorial offices in Poland. The situation is somewhat different with online journalism. The internet and new technologies opened a wide spectrum of opportunities for participation in the process of creating information, not only for professional journalists but also for regular users. They can publish their texts either in online magazines or on social network websites.

The time when, regardless of qualifications, almost everybody had the chance to become a press journalist has gone. Now, journalists increasingly appreciate their place of work, as: “competitors are following closely. [...] Older journalists think that they are treated in an unfair way as they are substituted by the young and they become inconvenient and their work is not appreciated.”\(^{21}\)

Working one's way up the journalism ladder requires a lot of patience and involvement. There are different types of papers and thus work in the editorial office of a daily newspaper is entirely different from work in the editorial office of


\(^{19}\) Ibidem.

\(^{20}\) Ibidem.

a yearbook. Each of these places provides the opportunity to develop one’s talent for writing and gain professional experience. However, the best way to obtain solid journalist skills is to begin on-the-job training in the editorial office of a daily newspaper. Work there is more dynamic than in the editorial offices of periodicals. The dailies’ editors-in-chief “suffer from a chronic shortage of staff.”\textsuperscript{22} As work there is always in full swing, it is possible to learn the ropes. First of all, beginner journalists are given substantially more tasks in the dailies than in periodicals. Initially they are assigned low-level tasks such as note taking, preparing short news, listings or even writing horoscopes, although they are gradually assigned more ambitious tasks. Secondly, during the on-the-job training young journalists are able to learn a lot from experienced staff members. It is necessary to be aware of the fact that the journalist profession should not be treated as

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\ldots\text{a means to make a fortune. There are other occupations that allow earning considerably more and in a shorter time. At the beginning of the professional carrier, journalism does not bring many profits. Actually almost all beginners are poor people and their financial situation remains quite bad for many years. We talk about a profession where a strictly feudal system prevails: you are promoted with age and this requires a lot of time.}\textsuperscript{23}
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However, it should be remembered that before journalism training is begun it is necessary to know the rudiments of journalist techniques, which includes the knowledge of press genres and the ability to make use of different sources of information. Secretaries in editorial offices stress that there is no time to train the “young” for a job. That is why candidates are required to have proper preparation and thorough factual knowledge that they will be able to use in practice. These requirements are of crucial importance, as numerous young journalists are criticised for frequently being unprepared for interviews, lacking basic information about their interviewees, mixing up facts and persons, asking banal, stereotype questions.\textsuperscript{24}

Thus, it is necessary to acquire the essential know-how for this profession. It is also good to be acquainted with some issues, such as law, economy or culture:

Everything is needed in this profession, each skill can be of some use but nothing specific is necessary. You must be able to make calculations in order to be a physician, you must have a driving licence to be a driver – and you do not even have to be able

to write to be a journalist. That is why it is so difficult to say which skill or character trait is the decisive factor in journalism. A press journalist should certainly have passion and something else. But how to explain what this “something” is? You can be prettier, more brilliant, and more intelligent than others. On the other hand, you can be uglier and more stupid but work like a titan, insolent and a real pest. This is also a talent in journalism. That is why, journalism is an open profession where actually everybody can be admitted.25

However, it should be emphasised that not everybody is able to perform this social function. In addition to numerous professional skills, a journalist must also possess some special character traits. From the very beginning, it is important to be aware of the fact that you are a journalist for 24 hours. As Ryszard Kapuściński used to say:

We cannot just close the office at four in the afternoon and start doing something else.
This is a job that fills all our lives and there is no other way to be a journalist. Or at least to be a perfect one.26

A staff member is expected to be permanently available, flexible, work in a rush and do day and night duties. Furthermore, a journalist must always be at the disposal of the assistant editor, who can call up in the night in order to give a news assignment.

Expectations for candidates to work in editorial office

Presently, editorial offices look have high demands when it comes to candidates to work in the editorial press office. We have many educational institutions training future journalists. Future representatives of the “fourth power” are able to study this profession on an academic (for example: Warsaw, Lodz or Cracow University), post-secondary or even vocational basis (organized by universities or editorial offices such as “Dziennik Łódzki”). It is necessary to thoroughly prepare yourself in order to perform this responsible service. This preparation should be conducted in two directions. First, a candidate should acquire a wide range of general knowledge (historical, linguistic, philosophical and economic), as well as social and political knowledge. Another requirement is certainly knowledge concerning the press and

25 Ibidem, p. 3.
journalistic media and genres. The modern journalist encounters both a variety of genres (articles, coverage/reports, interviews) and media (press, radio, television, press agencies, the Internet). Thus, a journalist is a person who deals with gathering information, editing and writing press texts. Press journalists can be employed by a newspaper on a full-time basis, under a contract to perform a specific task, or any under other contract that obliges them to produce journalistic material.

A journalist is either a reporter collecting material or the member of an editorial office who processes, edits and elaborates information received. A permanent collaborator of the editorial office or a field correspondent also possesses the status of a journalist, regardless of whether they receive a fixed salary or only remuneration for work produced. Importantly, a journalist can also have another job (for example, working for another newspaper). However, in practice this may cause many problems, as working for a single media organisation helps journalists to maintain the necessary objectivity. This is a serious problem that particularly concerns local and sub-local papers such as, for example “Dziennik Łódzki” and “Express Ilustrowany” that are similar in terms of the editing formula but which are addressed to different groups of readers.

A student undergoing a training or traineeship can also be considered to be a journalist. A newspaper library worker is also entitled to this status provided his job, apart from collecting and preparing materials, involves some creative elements.

It should be emphasised that a journalist working for a newspaper under a contract to perform a specified task, as well as trainees, should be provided with appropriate certificates informing that they are press journalists. In this way they become reliable and their future interviewees will have no doubts about their status.

Knowledge gained at university is not enough. In this occupation others skills are also important, which a candidate for work in an editorial office can only get during work experience. Among the requirements for candidates we can distinguish: reporter’s day-to-day efficiency, knowledge of the readers’ interests and tastes, and the ability to interview and select press materials. Candidates should also have ability to write in an attractive way, to make up headlines and have ability to take shorthand. They should also have knowledge of foreign languages, the press law and journalistic ethics. Press offices also expect skills associated with the ability to plan a newspaper/magazine, printing technology and computer editing and typing.

The expectations for candidates for the profession of press journalist reveal that they are complicated and difficult to meet. The above list should be extended with: “the knowledge of the native language”, as unfortunately some journalists seem

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27 W. Pisarek, Słownik terminologii medialnej, Kraków 2006, p. 45.
to lack this. Some of them do not consider it necessary to extend their knowledge and improve their professional qualifications. According to journalists, it is almost exclusively technical skills that constitute professionalism and learning them guarantees success in the profession. Expectations towards editorial staff members are constantly growing, and that is why they are required to represent increasingly better preparation. Last year it was easy to notice that many editorial offices expect their workers to also gain new skills. Press journalists occupation stopped being connected only with searching, selecting information and writing articles. Now journalists also take photos to their articles, prepare articles for the online editions of a daily print magazine. Some companies also expect that their journalists will also work in other media, such as the radio or TV stations of the same owner. An example of this are some regional publishers. They also opened radio or TV stations and they require that press journalists will work for them too.

The press and other media are becoming increasingly influential, so professionalism and competences in journalism have become essential. However, it should also be mentioned that the profession of journalist is not as safe and secure as it used to be. Employment conditions are far from being perfect. Contracts of employment are designed in such a way that a journalist may actually be made redundant without notice. There are no editorial statutes or collective agreements. In many offices young journalists are treated as potential substitutes and trainee journalists are used as bogey-men for full-time journalists.

The way polish journalism is developing

Nowadays, the significance of journalism has changed. In other epochs media had creating culture, propaganda and mobilization function. Nowadays – as Wiesław Sonczyk noted: “Everything that the media do should build their market position and bring income to the company.” Recently a real revolution affected the journalistic profession. We discovered that information is a commodity to be produced, attractively packaged and simply sold at an enormous profit. Now many titles are dominated by the publishers, who are guided only by profit. Transmission of information has a secondary importance for them. Even journalists have changed their attitude to their work. The research carried out in 2010 by the Polish Journalists As-

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sociation (Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy Polskich) shows that 75% of journalists carry out the commands of their superiors in editorial offices. Only 11% declare directs to their conscience. 14% comply with the provisions of the rules and editorial statutes. Only 4% are aware of the importance of the codes of journalists’ associations as signposts unions.30

The political transformation after 1989 also had a big influence on the reading interests of Polish people. In recent times, the colorful press (mainly gossip magazines for women) has become increasingly popular. Tabloid journalism tends to emphasize topics such as sensational crime stories, astrology, gossip columns about the personal lives of celebrities and sports stars. The gossip weekly “Życie na gorąco” is in the second place (15,22%31), after the television magazine (“Tele Tydzień” – 20,88%32), among the most widely read magazines in Poland. There is a similar situation with newspapers. The most popular is tabloid “Fakt” – 11,07%, whereas the opinion forming daily – “Gazeta Wyborcza” – 7,48% is only in the second place.33

There are many factors which led to this situation. Not only gossip is attractive for readers. The tabloid press also identifies and plays on the worries and problems of their readers, brands what is bad, building its self-image as the only defender against the “evil world”. Such fear of the “evil world” strengthens relations with the dramatic and horrific events, rooted in the disgusting yet primal “voyeuristic” instinct. The tabloids tell us that their mission is to disclose, expose, and trace everything hidden from the eyes of citizens – hence the strong focus on acts of crime, crimes or offenses against morality and decency. The use of facts convinces the recipient that they only tell the truth. And the truth is that we have a monopoly on tabloid magazines, it is the best mechanism for promotion.

Another way of soothing readers is to create the illusion that the editors are very concerned with, for example, the health problems of its readers. We can say that the narrative of tabloid magazines plays a fundamental role in society and helps in guiding a path through life for many Poles.

Polish editors use also other ways to sell their magazines. The most popular is adding supplements. Supplements generate great interest, and are often are the

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30 Ibidem, p. 92.
33 Ibidem.
only reason why a given paper is bought. They can be classified into two categories. By supplement we can understand a text supplementing or complementing the main issue of the newspaper or magazine. Supplements are attached regularly or occasionally, and are addressed to a specific audience. Supplements are focused on particular subjects such as sports, culture, building, economy, etc. Supplements fulfil a range of functions, e.g. information, guidance, advisory, entertainment, and aesthetic. By supplement we can also understand a gadget (CD, book, cosmetic or food samples etc.). Such supplements have a great influence on circulation and very often are decisive for the commercial success of a paper.34

It can be concluded that current readers do not just buy the magazines for their content. They also expect additional attractions from their publisher, such as the above-mentioned permanent or occasional text supplements and a variety of attractive gifts.

Publishers are in a difficult situation. They must – with each new edition of their magazine – surprise the audience and stand out from the competition to encourage their readers to chose their title not another one. Polish readers can also buy opinion-forming dailies and magazines. This is a specific section of press. In this case, we can say that these titles create their brand. Popularity provides carefully developed information, with rich content, most of which is proven and reliable. It is possible thanks to specialists who prepare the articles. The description of events is highly informative, lacking exaggeration and sensationalism. The large format of such newspapers means that information can be provided in depth, and in a serious way, using language of a high level. The center of gravity is located in national and international news, from such domains as politics, economics or law. Journalists are authorities and they are the representatives of public interest. The opinion-forming “Gazeta Wyborcza” is the most widely read daily in Poland. Not only the high level of knowledge and the wealth of informative articles have an influence on its popularity – but also the names of the journalists who contributed the success of this title. Opinion-forming magazines also contain content of interest in Poland. They are not as popular as entertainment and gossip magazines, but they have regular readers too. The press market of opinion-forming magazines is primarily divided by political criteria. Journalists are like personal advisers who help us to understand events in the country and abroad. These magazines try to build a strong position in the press market. Each discussed segment must have its own identity, be original and look unique. The most popular opinion-forming magazine

34 W. Pisarek, Słownik terminologii medialnej, p. 205.
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in Poland is “Newsweek Polska” (6,29%) and its in fifth position, after from “Tele Tydzień,” in the most popular magazines in Poland.

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The answer to the question of what the media are today and what kind of role press journalists play there is still open. The media instilled a passive and egoistic attitude to the world, which prevents us from reflection on not only personal life but also on the country whose citizens we are. This mass character and excessive amount of information reinforce our conviction that we do not have any influence and everything goes on without our participation. On the current situation in editorial offices journalists express similar views. Nowadays, for them the most important problems of being a journalist is that non-professionals joined the profession, and that editorial offices have their own political sympathies (44%). Also, we can observe the decline of social trust (25%) and media manipulation (35%). Pressures from their own medium, or from outside, to manipulate the content is – in the opinion of journalists – the worst practice 1/5 of respondents also report personnel abuse at work.36

One of the media experts compared journalists to “priests in ancient religions. It is true, media have an enormous power today: they can elevate or destroy people, they can ‘expel’ from the society. This burdens journalists with a special responsibility. And many of them are able to face this challenge. It should be said loudly in order to oppose the vision of media as a huge mortal.”37

For many editors, the meaning of journalism has changed. It stopped being just a method of inquiry and literary style used in social and cultural representation. It stopped playing the role of public service machinery in the dissemination and analysis of news and information. Journalistic integrity has also stopped being based on the principles of truth, accuracy and factual knowledge. So it needs to be highlighted that “the biggest danger of journalism of the 21st century is the low level of ethics in journalism. The best example of this hypothesis is journalists’ annual award “Hiena Roku” granted by the Polish Journalists Association (SDP). The basis for giving such a “title” is the violation of professional ethics, dishonesty, lack of impartiality, conduct incompatible with journalism workshop and violation of the freedom of speech.”38

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36 J. Taczkowska, Zawód dziennikarza..., p. 93.
It is easy to observe that the ideals which inspired the Polish publishers after the political transformation changed in recent years. Some editors forgot that, in a democratic society, access to information plays a central and the most important role in creating a system of checks and balance, and in distributing power equally between governments, businesses, individuals, and other social entities. For many of them, the social mission has lost its meaning. Nowadays, publishing magazines has started to be just a big business. Editors are ready to do everything (even to break all ethical rules) to sell their titles.

**Literature**


