

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL OF POLITICAL PERMANENT CAMPAIGN ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE ACTIVITY OF POLISH POLITICIANS

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the processes of professionalization and modernization of political communication and mediatization of politics, the aim of the article is to show how to use social media in strategies for communicating of party leaders on the Polish political scene.

The research questions concerned attempts of the politicians to use social media to implement communication marketing strategies, in particular in the aspect of engaging and mobilizing Internet users not only in the periods of electoral campaigns, but also in the long-term perspective.

The messages disseminated by politicians in social media (mainly on Facebook and Twitter) were analysed primarily from the point of view of their effectiveness (measured by the popularity of entries and their media visibility). It was important to pay attention to the ways of presenting and creating the political reality by politicians through the media.

The empirical research covered the years 2015-2017 and were of the longitudinal nature.

The basic research method is the analysis of the content, both quantitative and qualitative. Examining the way of the presentation of specific issues I am using the concept of framing the media messages.

According to the first hypothesis (H1), the use of social media by Polish politicians proves the growing professionalization of political communication, especially through the prism of its Americanization based on the concept of a hybrid style of communication, thus adapting selected solutions tested on the American political scene to Polish realities.

The second hypothesis (H2) indicates that in the communication strategies of political party leaders, social media are perceived as a communication tool which primary function is not only to inform but also to maintain relations with a potential electorate, in accordance with the assumptions of relationship marketing.

Keywords: social media, political permanent campaign, communication strategies, professionalization of political communication, Polish politicians

INTRODUCTION

As the popularity of social media in Poland clearly grows¹, the proportionately greater interest of politicians in this media channel is clearly noticeable. Social media initially appreciated mainly by leaders and political parties enjoying small support or support insufficient for full electoral success (obtaining a mandate) along with growing interest among potential voters (including journalists) have become an indispensable element of communication strategies of politicians in Poland.

Politicians running accounts on social networks are looking for new channels of reaching particularly the youngest voters and making them interested in their offer (who are the largest group of community media users), what's more, often not yet fully shaped in terms of politics, for whom social networking websites are not only a source of information, but also integration and entertainment.

The basic sources of obtaining research material for empirical research were official channels of Polish politicians (leaders of all political groups present in the parliament and candidates in the presidential election) conducted on Facebook and Twitter in 2015-2017.

The selected research period (2015-2017), due to the arrangement of the electoral calendar in Poland, gave politicians a unique opportunity not only to intensify political activities, but also to demonstrate the ability to build a coherent and effective communication strategy. In 2015,

¹In 2015, social media was the source of obtaining information for 52%, while in 2018 already for 59% of Polish Internet users. Facebook has been the dominant one on the Polish market since the beginning of its operations, which was used by 50% in 2016, while by 73% of all Internet users in 2018, respectively, Twitter is used by 9% and 17% Internet users [1].

presidential and parliamentary elections were held (within a short period of time), the next elections (this time local government) took place in autumn 2018, so the years 2016-2017 were a period in which there were no official election campaigns.

The results of the research - selected aspects

During the presidential election campaign in 2015 in Poland, all candidates had at least two official profiles on social media (**tab. 1**). For all candidates, Facebook was the platform of activity for all candidates, as well as Twitter (apart from Grzegorz Braun), which also proved the importance of these social media in the communication strategies implemented by the candidates and their election personnel. All candidates also had their own, or run as part of a political group supporting them, YouTube channels.

Analysis of the candidates' activity on their profiles in social media during the presidential campaign elections in 2015 was conducted by, among others, Polish research agencies IRCenter and Sotrender [3, 4]. The data obtained by both agencies clearly shows that the key social media in the 2015 presidential campaign was Facebook. The content published here by the candidates reached the largest number of users, and the most Internet users discussed them within the aforementioned social media. From the beginning of March to the end of May 2015, on the subject of three candidates leading in the electoral polls (trying to be re-elected B. Komorowski and the current Member of European Parliament A. Duda and P. Kukiz associated with the music scene) a total of 2408 thousand comments were published on Facebook, for comparison – 407 thousand comments on Twitter.

On Facebook, P. Kukiz was the most active on his profile during the campaign, who

Table 1. Official profiles of candidates in the presidential campaign in 2015 in social media

Politician	The group supporting	Obtained votes in the elections % [2] II round)	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	Other
Andrzej Duda	Law and Justice (PiS)	34,76 (51,55)	+	+	+	Instagram
Bronisław Komorowski	Civic Platform (PO)	33,77 (48,45)	+	+	+	Instagram Google+
Paweł Kukiz	Kukiz'15	20,80	+	+	+	-
Janusz Korwin-Mikke	KORWiN	3,26	+	+	-*	-
Magdalena Ogórek	Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)	2,38	+	+	+	Instagram
Adam Jarubas	Polish People's Party (PSL)	1,60	+	+	+	-
Janusz Palikot	Palikot's Movement	1,42	+	+	+	-
Grzegorz Braun	Independent Candidate	0,83	+	-	+	-
Marian Kowalski	National Movement	0,52	+	+	-*	-
Jacek Wilk	New Right Wing Congress	0,46	+	+	+	Google+
Paweł Tanajno	Direct Democracy	0,20	+	+	-*	-

* The candidate did not have his own official YouTube channel, but his electoral materials were posted on the channel of the party supporting him.

Source: Own study.

posted a total of 419 posts, followed by A. Duda, who published 351 posts. However, it is worth paying attention to the scale of activity intensity in posting by both candidates in the last month of the campaign, in which A. Duda published 225 entries, while P. Kukiz – 63 entries.

At the same time, the results of research indicate that a more “interactive” style of communication, manifesting itself in, among others, publishing posts addressed to specific recipients (mainly competitors or political parties), as well as answering Internet users’ questions or engaging in

discussion between Internet users, was conducted on Facebook by P. Kukiz. In turn, A. Duda more often combined the official, campaign style of communication with direct approaches to supporters by posting a selfie with fans from electoral meetings or verbal thanks for the declared support addressed to all voters mainly through Twitter, on the Facebook profile of the candidate similar procedures were rare. It should be added that, Facebook for P. Kukiz and Twitter for A. Duda were the primary social services in the campaign run by politicians in person.

On Twitter, the profile of A. Duda was the most popular account among all candidates in the election, who although having published 178 less Tweets from B. Komorowski (in total 1134 Tweets), has triggered 140,000 user reactions (for comparison, B. Komorowski – 92,000 reactions). It is worth adding that under every published Tweet, A. Duda caused almost twice as many reactions as B. Komorowski. The account of A. Duda was also followed by a larger number of Internet users (56,000) than B. Komorowski (37,000). One of the reasons for the greater involvement of Internet users on the profile of A. Duda could be a direct (personal) reaction of the candidate to the comments of Internet users – the candidate replicated to a total of 274 Tweets, B. Komorowski did not react to the comments of users just like other accounts conducted in social media.

In connection with the users' doubts about the authenticity of the author of published entries, especially in situations when a politician joins a discussion with Internet users, Andrzej Duda has repeatedly proved to Internet users, also posting an adequate photo, that he runs a Twitter account himself.

In the context of a high rate of involvement

of Internet users on the profiles of A. Duda in social media, especially on Tweeter, attention should be paid not so much to the amount, but to the content (including the subject matter or the means of expression used) and the way of building entries (with the predominant role of hashtags), thanks to which the profile of the candidate was often mentioned in the accounts of other users.

The basis for most of the candidates' posts was, especially on Facebook, thematic (audio)visual material, although, for example, the entries of B. Komorowski usually contained single visual materials (posters, photographs, occasionally short, pre-recorded audio-visual materials), entries of A. Duda were usually provided with an extensive photo gallery of the event, including in particular the direct meetings of the candidate with the voters.

Building the policy strategies with the use of proven ideas, persuasive tools that are effective in the framework of certain campaigns, after adapting them to a specific political market, the socio-political situation prevailing in it and the current shopping trends within communication ("shopping model") is, in the opinion of the researchers, a rational action, what is more, also proving the professionalization of political communication [5]. However, the adaptation itself and appropriate configuration of the adopted solutions, techniques and tools on a given political market at a given time is crucial here, which in the context of the effectiveness of the actions taken, excludes the possibility of their direct copying². The

²The "shopping model" is based on the concept of hybridization of political communication, assuming coexistence of practices worked out so far on a given electoral market, campaign strategies with the implementation of selected concepts, techniques of American communication style. The opposite of this model is the "adoption model" distinguished by F. Plaster and G. Plasser assuming

previous successes of conducted election campaigns in social media by American politicians cause that the ideas applied here (including market techniques) have also become a role model for Polish politicians (H1). During the analysed period, the manifestations of the use of the purchasing model were particularly clear in the communication strategy of A. Duda and the leader of the party supporting him, Beata Szydło (PiS).

Andrzej Duda and his electoral staff, as the first on the Polish political scene, was able to take advantage of communication opportunities offered by social media, including often using the online (live broadcasts) reporting formula, thanks to which the Internet user could follow the campaign event up-to-date, for example, via Twitter. Such behaviour was noteworthy, especially against the background of the use of Twitter by Polish politicians mainly in the form of an “announcement board” (the accounts of politicians were previously dominated, most of all, by announcements of events and statements of politicians in the media, including radio and television) [6]. In March and May 2015, the staff of A. Duda organized Tweetup – a pioneer method of communication in the Polish politics during the election campaign, also for this reason arousing great interest, especially among journalists. What’s more, consistently during the entire campaign, implementing the strategy of privatizing the image, the daughter of the candidate was the heroine of the Tweetup taking place a few days before the voting, who, apart from supporting her father, mentioned his sensitivity, care and responsibility for the fate of

copying the American solutions into a given political market without taking into account its specificity, as a result of which the national style of political communication gets replaced.

the family, as a metaphor for the society and the nation [7].

At this point, it is also worth emphasizing the similarity (similar to the campaign of Barack Obama) of using the family attribute in communication strategy by Andrzej Duda (not only during the election campaign, but consistently also after taking office of the President of the Republic of Poland). The trust and close relations between the politician and his wife and daughter were clearly emphasized in the messages spread in social media. An important role in creating the image of A. Duda was played by the content explicitly referring to humanization and emotionality serving not only interest, but also the creation of an intimate relationship of the politician with potential voters. However, when comparing the tactics of A. Duda and B. Obama, one should notice a much greater degree of officiality in the messages of A. Duda (especially on the level of the video-rhetoric, including the meaning of the images used or the sequence of their depiction), which could result in a feeling small degree of spontaneity among the recipients of the presented contents.

The motive in the recalled presidential campaign was also a tweet of A. Duda (a selfie with a ferret) thematically referring to the candidate’s sympathy for pets. This motive (effectively used in 2012 by B. Obama – *fan page* on Facebook “Pet Lovers For Obama”) served not only to improve the image of the politician, but also to try to engage Internet users to spread the message.

An example showing the understanding of the social media logic by the staff of A. Duda aimed at warming the image of the candidate, but also due to the adopt-

ed formula (modelled on the fragment of the American satirical program with the participation of B. Obama, broadcast a few weeks earlier, March 2015 [8]), the auto-ironic material originally posted on YouTube entitled "Andrzej Duda on April Fool's Day" [9] arouse interest in journalists, in which the candidate read critical and malicious Tweets about himself, mainly by political competitors, journalists and potential voters. The message, although designed solely for the needs of social media, was also largely heard in journalistic materials, in particular by comparing with the way of communication of the American president.

The method of building and maintaining narrative in social media in the strategy of A. Duda was characterized by the consistency of the proposed rhetoric of closeness – "opening" of the politicians to citizens, listening to their voices, readiness to interact. The key role was played by entries relating to the course of direct meetings of the candidate with potential voters (most strongly exposed on Facebook in the form of a photo report). What was meaningful was the motive of joint drinking of coffee of the politician with the citizens used twice (after the 1st and 2nd round of elections) - it was the morning action of handing out coffee by the politician to the citizens on their way to work provided with the hashtag "#KAWAZDuda" ("#COFFEE-withDuda"). The symbolic coffee (given regardless of the political sympathy) was not only a thank you, but also an attempt to motivate citizens to cooperate. These actions were clearly displayed on the social profiles of the candidate (both in the form of short mentions, as well as a full gallery of photos and film material), and also drew the attention of journalists, as a result of "live" reporting on this pseudo-event.

When analysing electoral communication strategies implemented in social media by Polish politicians, one can see examples of using the described "shopping model" also in the area of media relations, including sometimes the creation of initiatives in the almost identical form and content. One of the examples may be the initiative taken by B. Szydło in the parliamentary campaign in 2015, in which the leader of PiS proved her altruistic traits, readiness to bring unlimited help to citizens – a leitmotif (and at the same time modelled on one of the activities carried out by B. Obama) was the symbolic wall painting in a care and educational institution for the youth³.

In 2016, among the entries of the politicians (with the highest number of likes and shares) most involving the Polish Internet users, there were the New Year's wishes of A. Duda and Donald Tusk posted on Twitter [10]. However, a much greater resonance among Internet users was caused by the Tweet of A. Duda, which *in fact* was a reaction to the fictional event organized by Internet users on Facebook "#SylwesterZAndrzejemDuda" ("#NewYear'sEve-withAndrzejDuda"), as a basis for stimulating users to create and disseminate original thematic ideas (e.g. in the form of memes) dedicated to the event. Finally, over 340,000 Internet users declared to join in this pseudo-event, including personalities, for whom Internet users created Facebook accounts for this occasion.

The specificity of social media allows politicians to quickly and flexibly display de-

³ The idea behind B. Obama was a symbolic homage to Martin Luther King on the anniversary of his birth – on the eve of swearing in, B. Obama, in the light of cameras, went to a homeless teenagers centre, among others, to help in the renovation works. In turn, B. Szydło helped with the renovation works in one of the schools destroyed by storms, in the interest of timely provision of the facility before the beginning of the school year.

sired content at a given stage of political activities. The monitoring of behaviours, including the “receiving habits” and the expectations of users of particular social networking sites, and the inclusion of such information when designing and implementing the communication strategy undoubtedly increases the effectiveness of the activities carried out. An effective communication strategy implemented in social media by politicians is associated with the conduct of synchronized activities in the popular space among potential voters complementing the quality of social media. For example, current comments from politicians or announcements of events published on Twitter should also send Internet users interested in details to relevant, including more extensive materials, relations posted on YouTube, Facebook or Instagram. The effectiveness of the communication strategy in social media is also served by the assumption of its long-term nature – this is of particular significance even at the level of building a community, relations with Internet users.

Marketing communication realized in social media perfectly fits into the assumptions of the political permanent campaign, which role is to systematically remind, emphasize the presence and readiness for activity of the politician. What is more, social media enable not only permanent and multi-faceted, but also fast, close to direct contact of the user with other users.

The basic background of the research for the second hypothesis (H2) was the assumption that communication activities undertaken by politicians in inter-election marketing are assumed to be close to the idea of the subject's activity in the relationship of marketing mentioned above – are to lead to the establishment and consolidation of relationships with the voter

who as a result of these relations, as well as activities undertaken, will feel satisfaction and will vote again.

In the calendar year, the longest observed period of weaker exposure in the media of information, especially traditional, related to the world of politics are the annual (and therefore cyclical) “parliamentary holidays” – in the parliamentary agenda, the longest break between deliberations during the summer (holiday) period. In the context of reflection on a permanent campaign, the question about the activity of politicians in social media during this period is justified. This is a question whether in the period of stagnation of legislation, politicians take actions in the social media that in effect capture the attention of journalists and potential voters.

In the analysed period (2015-2017), the longest breaks in the parliamentary deliberations were observed in August. During this period, in subsequent years (2016 and 2017), the content of accounts of leaders of political groups was analysed, among others, on Facebook (**tab. 2**).

The dominant way of constructing entries on Facebook by all leaders (in both research periods) was a short text of the informing or commenting nature most often with hashtags or a single photo or a gallery of photos documenting the event. In addition, the accounts of B. Szydło and G. Schemtyna – entries based on “amateur” video materials were of particular importance, created for the purposes of Facebook (including lives), designed to make the articulated issues more credible. The convention of constructing entries based on text (usually a longer political commentary of the politician) and a thematic poster, sometimes containing elements of infographics, was typical particularly for R. Petru.

Table 2. Activity of leaders of political group on Facebook during the "parliamentary holidays"

Name of a political group	Obtained votes in the elections to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland 2015 [%] [11]	Leader	Number of posts on Facebook	
			August 2016	August 2017
Law and Justice (PiS)	37,58	Beata Szydło	8	16
Civic Platform (PO)	24,09	Grzegorz Schetyna	16	33
Kukiz' 15 (Kukiz' 15)	8,81	Paweł Kukiz	50	19
Modern Ryszard Petru (.N)	7,60	Ryszard Petru	24	21
Polish People's Party (PSL)	5,13	Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz	58	21

Source: Own study.

The analysis of the collected material allowed to distinguish 11 thematic categories: political program, political rivals, meetings with voters, presence in the media, information on the internal party activities, celebrations/state anniversaries, current national policy, current foreign policy, sport, vacation, other (tab. 3).

In the entries (posts) of the leaders of the largest parties (B. Szydło and G. Schetyna), the most emphasized thread during the holidays were celebrations of historical state anniversaries in Poland at the beginning, half and end of August. The entries of B. Szydło (then Prime Minister) also referred to current events on the international arena presented from the perspective of their significance for Poland (foreign policy).

In turn, an important role on the profiles of opposition group leaders, despite the period of parliamentary holidays, was provided by messages criticizing or attacking mainly the government of Law and Justice (a party with a parliamentary majority), in the case of entries of P. Kukiz also stigmatizing ideas and manner of action of politicians from the Civic Platform and

Modern. At the same time, it should be noted that the entries criticizing the political rivals of a given party engaged the Internet users gathered around particular profiles of leaders the most.

Self-promotion, including the consolidation of a positive image of a leader personifying the Polish People's Party (a party that performs the function of a pivot party on the Polish political scene) were the dominant aspects in the communications of W. Kosiniak-Kamysz. The consistently emphasized thread of sport in the communication strategy of the PSL leader, unlike political competitors, is presented (and at the same time promoted) from the perspective of regional and local athletes or sports teams.

The results of the research showed that during the parliamentary holidays, the leaders of the smallest Sejm groups (.N, PSL and Kukiz'15) were most active in the social media. Both R. Petru, W. Kosiniak-Kamysz and P. Kukiz, apart from the articulated messages referring to political reality (*hard posts*⁴), also addressed top-

⁴ The qualitative analysis of the collected research

Table 3. The subject of posts on Facebook during the “parliamentary holidays”

The subject of posts/ Study period: August 2016 and 2017 [%]	Beata Szydło (PiS)		Grzegorz Schetyna (PO)		Paweł Kukiz (Kukiz'15)		Ryszard Petru (.N)		Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz (PSL)	
	'16	'17	'16	'17	'16	'17	'16	'17	'16	'17
Political program	26	0	9	2	12	9	17	3	15	0
Political rivals	0	0	13	16	31	43	50	52	9	11
Meetings with voters	0	12	9	38	0	0	0	0	47	25
Presence in the media	0	0	9	0	15	0	0	3	3	18
Party activities	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	8	9	3
Celebrations/state anniversaries	37	31	45	14	11	13	8	10	2	18
National policy	0	12	3	18	0	13	0	14	0	7
Foreign policy	25	19	0	2	2	0	3	10	1	0
Sport	0	19	0	2	8	0	0	0	6	7
Vacation	0	0	0	0	12	9	0	0	0	0
Other	12	7	9	8	9	13	19	0	8	11

Source: Own study.

ics that not only interest the audience, but also shape an intimate relationship between the politician and the potential voter (*soft posts*). Relations from private holidays, including in the case of W. Kosiniak-Kamysz spent in the group of the potential electorate⁵, due to the way the

material proves that the division applied by the researchers to the messages spread in the traditional media into information, or more broadly, materials, of the hard and soft nature, is also applied here. *Hard* posts related to events, issues of significant social, political or economic importance, are contents considered necessary in the conscious formulation of opinions and decision-making (including electoral ones) by citizens. *Soft* posts focused on the emotional and entertainment sphere in the context of *infotainment* (combining information with entertainment), concerned both important socio-political issues portrayed through the prism of entertainment, as well as matters that dealt with subjects of the *de facto* low significance for recipients, but a form exposed to the *hard* level, on the level of political communication, as part of the concept of *politainment* (combining politics with entertainment), the basis of which can be found in the growing professionalization and mediatization of politics.

⁵ In Poland, August is the period of the beginning of the farmers' holiday – harvest festival. W. Kosiniak-Kamysz in both studied periods, both on Facebook and Twitter, there was a strategy of privatizing the

narrative is conducted, can be considered as an attempt to build a sense of bond, community with individuals willing to identify with the ideas that are close to the leader. In this context, it is worth recalling that the researchers emphasize that the goal of intimating the political message is not only to create an emotional bond with the potential electorate, but also to attract the attention of the media – this effect was undoubtedly gained by P. Kukiz in the analysed period thanks to multiple connections, especially on Facebook, of photos from private leisure with comments, and even political columns. Characteristic for the musician, and much

image. The messages disseminated by the leader of the PSL *in fact* fulfilled four fundamental functions aimed at creating an intimate relationship between a politician with potential voters: humanization (a leader emphasizing his closeness to voters, e.g. through origin), simplification and distraction (talks about difficult political and economic issues in the atmosphere of fun, fair), emotionality (attempts to arouse popular liking) and shaping the status of a celebrity, even in the form of posing for photos with citizens [12].

less typical for the politician (especially in the current communication strategies of Polish politicians) were links posted on the account of P. Kukiz, as well as audio-visual materials of music videos of rock music⁶ - close to the leader, which is important in the content often referring to politics (these types of entries outside the holiday period, appeared occasionally). The private face of the leader of Kukiz'15 was also marked by entries dedicated to his fondness of cats. In the above-mentioned messages, political issues were interwoven with *soft* messages, of the entertainment nature, at the same time being part of the concept of *politainment*.

The style of communication realized in social media by P. Kukiz, R. Petru and W. Kosinik-Kamysz (which was proved not only by joining, but also by the manner of conducting discussion) was close to a symmetrical, bilateral and personalized relationship. As a result, the activities of the leaders of these smallest groups, which is important not only in the inter-election period, but also during the holiday period, were part of the relationship marketing assumption.

Different communication strategies during the holiday period were conducted by the leaders of the largest groups. Both, B. Szydło and G. Schetyna focused on informing and emphasizing the public functions in the messages, in addition, the PO leader on the criticizing the policy of the main competitor – PiS. What is more, it was possible to notice not so much less than usual activity, but a more formal and even communicative style of communication, especially in the case of B. Szydło slightly contrasting with the previously used direct style (both during the campaign and outside it).

⁶ Paweł Kukiz – until 2015 dealing mainly with music, a lead singer of, among others, the Piersi band.

In conclusion, it was also noticed that the situation of the smaller exposure of the largest groups usually dominating in media coverage becomes an opportunity (though used to a varying degree) for smaller entities for their “deeper” existence in the minds of citizens.

CONCLUSION

Social media can be perceived as a channel of distribution desired from the point of view of a political subject – different types of materials serving both self-presentation (including image creation, propagation of political offer), and conducting broadly defined persuasive actions (aimed at inducing specific behaviours) targeted not only at potential voters (shaping/consolidating political preferences), but also for political competitors (as a platform for conducting political disputes) or, finally, the media, for which official profiles of political entities in social media became another potential source of obtaining information.

The primary function of political groups running accounts on social networks in the light of the conducted research is the self-creation, focusing both on building a new (or consolidating or redefining the existing) image of the political groups (objective/personal plane), and on the attempt to impose a specific vision of social and political reality around potential voters (the subject/topic plane).

Public profiles of politicians in social media are treated by politicians as an important tool for current communication (also outside the official election campaign). The analysis of the activity of recipients of messages disseminated in social media by politicians gives grounds for concluding that these media are platforms linking activists and journalists providing materi-

als. Social media give political entities the opportunity not only to introduce further information to the media circulation, but also to gradually develop political narration around these contents that have met with the greatest media and social response.

Taking as a criterion the degree of popularity of entries of political entities among Internet users measured by the total number of passive (likes, shares) and active (comments) activity, it can be noticed that the largest interest of recipients was raised by posts about specific election promises and criticizing political rivals.

At the same time, the results of the analysis show that the *engagement* rate of Internet users (calculated based on the total number of passive and active reactions of users of the medium – e.g. comments, shares, likes) to a small extent depends on the number of published entries on the politician's profile.

The examples of entries cited confirm the findings of researchers regarding the important, if not the key role [13] of communication strategies in contemporary political campaigns, adapted to the expectations of media logic (including social media logic), built on the basis of personalization [14, 15]. An effective communication strategy implemented in social media by politicians is associated with the conduct of synchronized activities in the space of websites popular among potential voters complementing themselves in terms of quality.

Co-creation in the virtual space of the community network in order to maintain the impression of permanent dialogue with potential voters seems to be a key el-

ement in the communication strategy of politicians in the era of new media. Experiences both on the American and Polish political market prove that effective use of the potential of social media is inseparably connected with active activity of politicians in their area, especially in the form of publishing and sharing (and thus tracking of current topics), as well as balanced, substantive commenting on and engaging in a discussion. It seems that such behaviour gives rise to the belief of Internet users about the credibility of the sender and the content of the message from a political actor as a direct participant of communication. Undoubtedly, the activity of politicians in social media, perceived by users through the prism of the source of information, contributes to strengthening their brand in the awareness of potential voters.

The way of using social media in the implemented communication strategies by Polish political entities indicates that on this level one can speak about the dynamically progressing professionalization of political communication, including through the prism of its Americanization based on the concept of hybrid communication style (H1). In the communication strategies of Polish leaders (especially of smaller parties) in social media, one can notice elements indicating attempts to implement assumptions of the relationship marketing (H2).

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