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PRESIDENTIALIZATION OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. THE CASE OF POLISH ELECTION OF 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this article is the growing resemblance of parliamentary and presidential election. This is mostly visible in the fact that the main goal of political parties in the parliamentary campaign is not to obtain the desirable number of seats in the Parliament, but to win the office of the Prime Minister for its leader. The fight for the aforesaid position can be observed not only in the choice of the campaign strategies but in the mass media reports and the voters' behavior as well.

The aim of this article is to examine to what extent the Polish parliamentary election of 2015 adopted features typical of the presidential ones. The author takes into consideration 8 committees that registered their lists in all the 41 voting constituencies¹. Due to the fact that only the leading candidates of the Civic Platform (abbreviated to PO) and the Law and Justice (PiS) had a real chance to become the Prime Minister, the study will focus on these two major political parties. The analysis will concentrate on the last four weeks of the campaign and is conducted at six levels: (1) the aim of the election, (2) the nomination of candidates, (3) the main product of the cam-

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¹ *The results of the 2015 parliamentary election of 2015*, http://parlament2015.pkw.gov.pl/349_WynikiP_Sejm [DOA 20.12.2015].

paign, (4) the campaign strategy, (5) the reports of the mass media and (6) the figure of the opponent.

The approach used in this study is the qualitative discourse analysis. The main, analytical part of the article, is preceded by the conceptualization of the basic theoretical and analytical categories. Here, the main sources are monographs and articles deriving from scientific magazines. The analytical part is based on traditional press (mostly opinion-forming journals), as well as Internet and television information services („Wiadomości” TVP i „Fakty” TVN) from the period of the campaign.

2. ELECTORAL PRESIDENTIALIZATION

The conceptualization of the main theoretical category ought to be started with the definition of „presidentialization of politics”. The term obviously comes from the word „president”, deriving from Latin *praesidere*, that is „sitting before others”², which is particularly important as regards the understanding of the process under consideration. This corresponds with the concept of the executive in the classic parliamentary system, especially when juxtaposed to a Polish word *premier*, deriving from Latin *primus inter pares*, that is „the first among the equal” or English *Prime Minister*, „the first of the ministers”.

At first, the term „presidentialization” was used only to explain the process of assimilation between parliamentary and presidential regimes³. However, its sense has become larger and the term has started to be used in relation to electoral campaigns as well. Therefore, electoral presidentialization (electoral face) refers to the growing importance of political leaders, who most frequently make potential Prime Ministers, which takes place during the campaign⁴.

The studies concerning the phenomena and processes under consideration often mention the category of *primeministerialization*. This concept is fre-

² A. LUDWIKOWSKA, R. LUDWIKOWSKI, *System wyborów prezydenckich w Stanach Zjednoczonych na tle porównawczym*, „Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe” 2008, No. 3 (V), p. 19.

³ B. MADDENS, S. FIERS, *The direct PM election and the institutional presidentialisation of parliamentary systems*, „Electoral Studies” 2004, No. 23, p. 770.

⁴ T. POGUNTKE, P. WEBB, *The Presidentialization of Politics in Democratic Societies. A Framework of Analysis*, in: *The Presidentialization of Politics*, eds. T. Poguntke, P. Webb, Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press 2005, pp. 8-11.

quently used by British analysts who question the scientific value of presidentialization⁵. They claim that this specific term introduces „unnecessary systemic connotations”. Marek Mazur prefers to refer to the process in question as „centralized personalization”⁶. Also Marina Costa Lobo and John Curtice⁷ opt to use the word „personalization” in this specific context.

The functioning of the President of the United States makes the perfect example for the majority of theoretical models of presidentialization. Some researchers regard presidentialization and Americanization as synonyms⁸. Following this trend, however, could be pretentious not only for linguistic reasons, especially when referred to Spain, Italy or Germany. In the first two countries the government is lead by „the President of the Ministry” and in German the word *der Ministerpräsident*⁹ is used. Therefore it is worth asking the question whether it is necessary to use the example of the United States in the studies concerning the phenomenon under consideration. Is it not possible to speak of prime minister, president of the ministry or chancellor instead, as proposed by Keith Dowding?¹⁰ Especially the electoral layer (*electoral face*) provides numerous and strong arguments that support the thesis of presidentialization. Importantly, it is not the presidential system, but presidential election, that makes the reference point here. That heads of states are chosen indirectly is not characteristic of only presidential or semipresidential regimes. Such a manner of election exists in a number of countries whose regime can be described as parliamentary, which can be most clearly observed in East-Central Europe¹¹.

⁵ K. DOWDING, *The Prime Ministerialisation of the British Prime Minister*, „Parliamentary Affairs” 2013, No. 66, p. 617-635; R. HEFFERNAN, *There’s No Need for the ‘-isation’! The Prime Minister is Merely Prime Ministerial*, „Parliamentary Affairs” 2013, No. 66, pp. 636-645.

⁶ M. MAZUR, *Polityka z twarzą. Personalizacja parlamentarnych kampanii wyborczych w Polsce w latach 1993-2011*, Katowice 2014: Wyd. UŚ, p. 13.

⁷ *Personality Politics? The Role of Leader Evaluations in Democratic Elections*, eds. M. Costa Lobo, J. Curtice, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015, pp. 2-3.

⁸ B. DOBEK-OSTROWSKA, *Profesjonalizacja kampanii wyborczych we współczesnym świecie i jej konsekwencje*, in: *Kampania wyborcza: marketingowe aspekty komunikowania politycznego*, ed. B. Dobek-Ostrowska, Wrocław 2005: Wyd. UW, p. 29.

⁹ A. ANTOSZEWSKI, R. HERBUT, *Systemy polityczne współczesnego świata*, Gdańsk 2001: Wyd. Arche, p. 284.

¹⁰ K. DOWDING, *The Prime Ministerialisation*, pp. 617-635.

¹¹ P. ŻUKIEWICZ, *Przywódtwo prezydenckie w państwach Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej po 1989 roku. Analiza porównawcza*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek 2013, pp. 212-260.

What is more, the argument proposed by Costa Lobo and Curtice, that the party leaders have limited impact on the voting result¹², cannot disprove the whole concept of presidentialization. This theory concerns most of all the competition between party leaders to win the position of the head of government (chancellor or prime minister) during parliamentary election, and its range goes beyond leaders' impact on the result of the election, which can be illustrated with the strategies used by the parties and the manner in which the mass media speak about the campaign.

3. PRESIDENTIAL STYLE OF THE CAMPAIGN

Presidentialization, that is adopting certain features of presidential campaigns by parliamentary ones occurs on the following levels: (1) the aim of the election, (2) the nomination of candidates, (3) the main product of the campaign, (4) the campaign strategy, (5) the reports of the mass media and (6) the figure of the opponent¹³.

The aim of every presidential election is to choose the head of state (occasionally the head of government as well). As regards parliamentary elections, what is chosen by the voters are the members of a multiseat body. As regards the former type of election, it is not particularly difficult to appoint the winner. However, it may be more problematic in the latter case. The situation may become more complicated when no competitor wins the majority. In such a case the success of a given party depends not only on its strength, but on its relevance as well.

It is the candidate who constitutes the core of the political product during the campaign (candidate centered politics). What complements their image is the party etiquette, their direct background (party or committee of honor), a spouse, and in certain cases, including the United States, the candidate for the vice-president. As far as parliamentary campaigns are concerned, the main product is the party, within which there are other important factors, such as program, doctrine and ideology (program layer), as well as the leader and other candidates (personal layer).

¹² *Personality Politics?*, pp. 2-3.

¹³ M. JEZIŃSKI, *Wybory parlamentarne pomiędzy uniwersalizmem a partykularyzmem*, in: *Wybory parlamentarne 2005. Analiza marketingowa*, ed. M. Jeziński, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek 2006, pp. 7-32.

In parliamentary election candidates cannot boast a great level of autonomy, as their position depends on the situation of the party as a whole. In spite of this fact, they need to pay attention to the regional aspect, which despite certain limits makes an important element of the narration. As regards presidential candidates, their strategies must focus on national issues and the regional level is usually neglected. This obviously is visible in the choice of the campaign strategies.

The activities taken during presidential campaign depend on whether the candidate is the incumbent (the present president). In this case, their need to make effort to draw public attention to what they achieved for the country (defensive strategy). Their competitors, on the other hand, can feel more freely in their choice of strategies. The incumbent, however, usually determines the decisions for the majority of candidates in this respect.

As regards parliamentary election, the starting position of the parties is not so crucial. The rivalry is multi-level rather than polarized, as in presidential type. The number of variables is significantly bigger at the stage of positioning political offers.

In presidential campaign, the attention of the media focuses on the candidates. The reports resemble that of the race (*horse race bias*). Due to their important function, it is the incumbent who is put into the spotlight (*incumbent bonus*)¹⁴. As regards the parliamentary campaigns, such a special consideration for the governing party should not be expected.

Due to a higher level of personification and personalization, presidential election attracts more social attention, regardless of the political system. Here, personal features of the candidate's image have greater impact on the voters' decision. The specificity of the election makes them think more tactically, which is particularly visible in the second round of voting. In parliamentary election, socio-economic factors, that is affinity for a given social group, are important. Due to the multi-level character of the election, the voters are more prone to base their decisions on „the forts preference”, which is more frequently observed in proportional elections.

¹⁴ G. GULATI, M.R. JUST, A.N. CRIGLER, *News Coverage of Political Campaigns*, in: *Handbook of Political Communication Research*, ed. L.L.Kaid, Mahwah, New Jersey–London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates 2004, pp. 240-241.

4. LAW AND JUSTICE (PiS)

The 2015 presidential election in Poland was regarded rather irrelevant and its impact on the parliamentary one was expected to be limited. The reelection of Bronisław Komorowski seemed unquestionable. Due to these facts, numerous political leaders decided not to take part in the election and focus on the parliamentary campaign. Therefore, the major parties, as they could not allow to discredit their leaders, preferred to use „substitute candidates¹⁵”.

Surprisingly, it was not Bronisław Komorowski who was chosen president in the aforesaid election. This rivalry strongly influenced the behavior of political parties in the forthcoming parliamentary campaign. The victory of Andrzej Duda was caused by the context of the campaign, which most of all focused on the assessment of the eight years of the Civic Platform’s rule.

The unexpected success of Andrzej Duda as well as the difficult situation of the Civic Platform after Komorowski’s defeat made the Law and Justice an unquestionable favorite of the competition. The president, who usually can boast a greater level of popularity than the members of government, constituted a valuable asset for his party. Winning the majority of seats in Polish Parliament, which constituted the main goal of the Law and Justice, became possible to achieve. However, what seemed rather paradoxical, the leader of the party, Jarosław Kaczyński, was regarded as „promotion ballast”, since the level of social distrust towards his person was substantial¹⁶. Due to this fact, Kaczyński made neither presidential nor „prime ministerial” candidate. It was Beata Szydło, the party’s vice-president and the chief of staff in Andrzej Duda’s campaign, who was designated for the latter role¹⁷. Such a nomination proves that the notion of „a substitute candidate” functions not only in presidential election¹⁸. This in turn can be regarded as a perfect example

¹⁵ M. KOLCZYŃSKI, „Substitute Candidate” in *Polish Campaign Practice*, „Political Preferences” 2015, No. 11, pp. 19-34.

¹⁶ Raport CBOS, *Zaufanie do polityków w ostatnich dniach kampanii wyborczej*, http://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2015/K_146_15.PDF [DOA 22.12.2015].

¹⁷ It is justified to state that providing his defeat in presidential election, Andrzej Duda would have made his party’s candidate for the Prime Minister. The reasons for that are mostly financial and organizational, as substantial resources were invested in his promotion during the presidential campaign.

¹⁸ M. KOLCZYŃSKI, „Substitute Candidate”, p. 29.

of „substitute presidentialization”, which allows to use this category in political studies and analyses.

„Prime ministerial” campaign of Beata Szydło constituted an important component of the Law and Justice promotion. Its core was a mirror image of Andrzej Duda’s campaign, which turned out particularly successful. The relationship with the voters was to be build mostly on an intense journey around Poland and meeting the electorate in numerous locations. The means of transport was a bus, known as „Szydłobus”, and it was the same vehicle that was used by Andrzej Duda during his campaign¹⁹. The character of the opening ceremony of the Law and Justice campaign, when the nomination of Beata Szydło was announced, was also highly symbolic²⁰. An important factor of the promotion was Szydło’s presence in the social media, which also made a strong point of Andrzej Duda’s campaign.

Szydło took part in both television debates. Her participation in the discussion with Prime Minister Kopacz was dubious for the political advisors of the party. On the one hand the debate was advantageous of the Law and Order, since it contributed to the polarization of the election discourse and distracted public attention from minor parties fighting to overcome the election threshold. On the other, the fact that Szydło appeared in the debate could be risky due to the Law and Justice’s predominance over the Civic Platform. Contrary to the incumbent, she had no experience in performing public functions. Making any mistake could result in the loss of central and emotional electorate. However, Szydło presented herself well and proved her leader skills. At the end of the debate, her advantage over Kopacz was obvious.

The „prime ministerial” campaign of the Law and Justice started to resemble the presidential one to such an extend that it became predictable. For that reason, since mid-September Jarosław Kaczyński got involved in the promotion activity of the party. The aim of his participation was most of all to reassure loyal electorate in their political beliefs, as there was a threat that addressing the party’s message to central voters may discourage the right-wing and radical right-wing ones. This can be illustrated with Kaczyński’s speech given in the Sejm on September, 16th, in which he opposed the idea that Poland should welcome Muslim immigrants²¹. It is worth remembering that the Law and Justice would profit from a small number of committees in

¹⁹ „Fakty” TVN, 22.06.2015 (author’s own recording).

²⁰ „Wiadomości” TVP, 20.06.2016 (author’s own recording).

²¹ „Fakty” TVN, 16.09.2015 (author’s own recording).

the Sejm, and such statements were intended to neutralize the message of smaller right-wing parties, particularly KORWiN.

Who in fact was the leader of the Law and Justice and aspired to become the policy-maker became clear after the interview that Kaczyński gave in TVP Szczecin in September. He declared that Szydło would be allowed to lead the government for the whole tenure, as long as she makes a good Prime Minister. It is also worth reminding that the leader of the Law and Justice had a direct influence on the personal strategy of his committee. Szydło's inability to make any decision in this respect can be proved by the fact that one of her close co-workers, Marcin Mastalerek, was removed from the slate²². There were certain attempts to neutralize the lack of independence of the „prime ministerial” candidate, which can be illustrated with a press conference during which she declared that providing her party won the election, the office of the Defense Secretary would not be held by highly controversial Antoni Macierewicz, but by more predictable and self-controlled Jarosław Gowin²³.

The attention of the nationwide television stations concentrated on Beata Szydło as the most important person in the Law and Justice campaign. This can be confirmed by the analysis of the content of seven news bulletins, in which Szydło took the second place, right after Prime Minister Kopacz, taking into consideration the amount of time (2 944 seconds) and information (81) devoted to given candidates. However, her domination over her colleagues was not so obvious as in case of other parties. In the aforesaid analysis the seventh location took Jarosław Kaczyński, who was mentioned only 1.68 times less often than Szydło.

In the party's narration, the figure of enemy was of personal rather than collective character. According to the tendencies typical of parliamentary campaigns, the subject of the attack for the major oppositional party was the present head of the government. This is reflected by the organization of certain events, whose aim was to attract the mass media attention. In early October, a raft with the image of Ewa Kopacz was placed on a reservoir called Zalew Sulejowski, which was to symbolize „the green island”, and important component of the Civic Platform's narration of the past years²⁴.

²² B. KOSOWSKA-GASTOŁ, *Paradoksy kampanii, interview for „Rzeczpospolita”*, „Rzeczpospolita” 28.09.2015, p. A7.

²³ „Fakty” TVN, 8.10.2015 (author's own recording).

²⁴ In Donald Tusk's narration „the green island” symbolized Poland's economical stability during the first stage of the economical crisis in 2009.

The raft held all the unfulfilled promises of the government, including not raising taxes or the retiring age²⁵. Two weeks before the day of the election, in Warsaw, Szydło participated in the opening of the restaurant „Ewa and Friends”, which constituted a reference to the „bug gate”, whose actors were Civic Platform’s politicians, recorded in the restaurant „Sowa and Friends”²⁶.

On the day preceding the Kopacz – Szydło television debate, there appeared a spot, resembling a news material, in which the head of the government was presented in the background of scandals and unfulfilled promises of her party. Another spot, addressed to young audience and aiming to ridicule the Prime Minister, was presented in nationwide media after the debate.

5. THE CIVIC PLATFORM (PO)

It was not surprising that Ewa Kopacz, the then Prime Minister, was chosen her party’s „prime ministerial” candidate. However, due to the domination of the Law and Justice over the Civic Platform as well as Komorowski’s defeat, the party’s desires to achieve the best result in the parliamentary election could hardly be satisfied. On the other hand, the Civic Platform’s relevance level was high enough to initiate „anti-Law-and-Justice” coalition in the incoming term of office. In such a situation, the leader of the strongest party could be considered as a potential Prime Minister.

What is worth mentioning, at that time Ewa Kopacz, both Prime Minister and prime ministerial candidate, was not the leader of her party, but only an acting leader. Despite this fact, her strong position within the party was unquestionable. First of all, it would have been unimaginable for the members of the party to question the legitimization of its own Prime Minister. Secondly, there was no alternative. Thirdly, on the threshold of the campaign competition, Kopacz strengthen her position twice. In June 2015, during the „bug gate” she dismissed five ministers and contributed to Sikorski’s resignation from the office of the Marshall of the Sejm²⁷. What is more, during the

²⁵ P. MAJEWSKI, *Zielona wyspa vs. wyższe płace*, „Rzeczpospolita”, 2.10.2015, p. A4.

²⁶ MK, *Szydło otworzyła „Restaurację Ewa & Przyjaciele”*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 12.10.2015, p. 4.

²⁷ „Wiadomości” TVP, 10.06.2015 (author’s own recording).

formation of the slates, she questioned the order of candidates suggested by regional structures and degraded several leaders of voivodeship structures²⁸.

Kopacz was aware that Komorowski's defeat resulted from a certain need for a leader that is not rooted in the „post-communism division²⁹”. To prove the change of its image the Civic Platform had to do more than just to place several young activists on the leading positions on the slates. The campaign at the regional level is not particularly relevant for shaping electorate's opinion. What was necessary was a change at the top of the party organization. It was desirable to enrich the party profile with certain features that Ewa Kopacz lacked, including youth or dynamism. Therefore, it seemed necessary to engage Rafał Trzaskowski, who could play the role of the „vice-president candidate” into the campaign at the national level.

Ewa Kopacz held responsibility for the party's promotion during the campaign. At the end of June she started an action called „Ewa's turn”, that is travel around Poland by Pendolino train. The motivation for choosing such a means of transport was threefold. Firstly, it attracted attention to the modernization of railroad which was considered as the government success. Secondly, as she traveled with the citizens, she tried to present herself as involved in the issues concerning ordinary people. Last but not least, it was an answer to the candidate of the Law and Justice, who also traveled around the country, but did it by bus, a typical vehicle of a candidate.

The aforesaid project ought to be considered as creative. However, it seemed to have started too early and without any idea of how it should be continued. The party tried to neutralize such an impression by using „Evans”, that is eight buses that served both locomotion and promotion, including giving the media faster reports from the campaign activities. This proved that no conclusions had been drawn from Bronisław Komorowski's campaign (expensive yet inefficient use of 16 „Bronkobuses”) and the same mistakes were made.

Campaign activity of the Civic Platform included the organization of the Ministry sittings outside Warsaw, which took place in the majority of voivodeship cities. This, however, did not bring the expected result. It was not understood that the Prime Minister and her cabinet tried to get close to the citizens. The party's opponents as well as the media and the public opinion

²⁸ „Wiadomości” TVP, 9.08.2015 (author's own recording).

²⁹ M. GRABOWSKA, *Podział postkomunistyczny, społeczne podstawy polityki w Polsce po 1989 roku*, Warszawa: Scholar 2004.

frequently concentrated on the expenses generated by such events, and using public money for the party promotion³⁰.

The advertising campaign of the Civic Platform was also based in its leader's image. At first Kopacz was to be presented as a sensitive and helpful person. The spot used the *man in the street format*, and Kopacz was being described by her ex co-workers, who had known her from the period when she had worked as a doctor. Later the message of the party focused on exposing the economic successes of its government. It was, however, clear that it would not bring the expected result, as the change is not so visible at the microeconomic level. For that reason, the spots tried to persuade the electorate that the condition of Polish households would soon improve. This message was to be strengthened by the slogan „Strong economy. Higher pay”, which was present in both billboards and television spots. In both cases Ewa Kopacz was the main character.

The television debate was the one and only chance for the Civic Platform to level with the Law and Justice. However, this effect could be achieved only by convincing victory, as it happened in the years 1995 and 2007. The Civic Platform wanted the debate to present not „prime ministerial” candidates but the leaders of the main parties. To provoke Jarosław Kaczyński, Kopacz used towards Szydło similar rhetorics as Kaczyński in 2007 towards Donald Tusk³¹. It could hardly be expected that the leader of the Law and Justice would surrender himself to the provocation, and the strategy was mainly aimed at showing Szydło's lack of independence. However, Ewa Kopacz did not manage to win the debate, and in that manner she lost the last chance for her party to catch up with its main opponent. Moreover, Grzegorz Schetyna, the Chief of Diplomacy, who publicly criticized the staff of his party for not providing Kopacz with proper setting as she had been leaving the studio, even deteriorate the situation, as he revealed certain conflicts within the party and the lack of faith in its victory.

A quantitative analysis of the content of news bulletins presented in seven television stations proved that the politician who most frequently shown was the then Prime Minister. In the last week of the campaign Kopacz appeared there 90 times, which together took one hour and twenty one minutes³². The

³⁰ A. STANKIEWICZ, *Dziesiątki tysięcy za wyjazd rządu*, „Rzeczpospolita”, 12.10.2015, p. A4.

³¹ P. MAJEWSKI, *Pojedynek nie jest przesądzony. Kto więcej skorzysta na starciu liderów*, „Rzeczpospolita”, 30.09.2015, p. A7.

³² *Raport Monitoring*.

reasons for this situation are twofold. First of all, it was closely connected with her function. In numerous countries television stations are particularly interested in the persons of presidents and prime ministers, which is referred to as „incumbent bonus” (German. *kanzlerbonus*)³³. Secondly, it resulted from the strategy implemented by the Civic Platform, in which Kopacz was given the superior role in major events. This can be illustrated with the fact that the second party’s most eagerly exposed candidate, Joanna Mucha, was shown 20 times less frequently than the Prime Minister³⁴.

The positioning of the Civic Platform’s offer was multilevel, and the main opponent, or even enemy, was the Law and Justice. Although it was obvious that Andrzej Duda’s victory (with a relatively high level of voters turnout – 55.34%) makes it pointless to appeal to the common fear of the Law and Justice, this particular strategy was still commonly used. What is more, the enemy seemed to be double-headed (Kaczyński-Szydło) in its image. What was highlighted was the low level of independence of the „prime ministerial” candidate and the threat that certain highly controversial politicians, including Antoni Macierewicz, would enter the government. This could be observed in the aspect of the preparation for the television debate, when Kopacz declared that she „would speak only to the leader of the opponent party, as it is he who makes her counterpart”³⁵. What ought to be mentioned here is also the negative campaign in which Kaczyński’s controversial statements were replied to by Kopacz with the words „the leader is always right”.

6. THE REMAINING COMMITTEES

There were six other committees that, together with the Civic Platform and the Law and Justice, managed to register their slates in all the voting constituencies. However, unlike the two major parties that had real chances to win the election, the minor ones aimed at exceeded the election threshold. The probability that the leader of one of such parties became the prime minister was low.

However, two of such persons, Barbara Nowacka (the United Left) and Janusz Piechociński (the Polish People’s Party), were by their parties presen-

³³ W. SCHULZ, *Komunikacja polityczna*, Kraków: Wyd. UJ, p. 143.

³⁴ *Raport Monitoring*.

³⁵ P. MAJEWSKI, *Pojedynek nie jest przesądzony. Kto więcej skorzysta na starciu liderów*, „Rzeczpospolita”, 30.09.2015, p. A7.

ted as „prime ministerial” candidates. Nowacka was a typical „election leader”, as before the campaign she had not been included into the party’s chiefdom. The decision that in case of victory she would make the Prime Minister was announced three weeks before the election³⁶. This can be considered a perfect example of „substitute presidentialization”. However, from the perspective of the party, such a decision was the best possible one.

Due to high relevance level of Polish People’s Party, the likelihood that Janusz Piechociński would become Prime Minister was bigger. Although at the beginning of the campaign he was not introduced as the „prime ministerial” candidate, during the competition he presented the idea to create a coalition of three parties, that is the Law and Justice, the Civic Platform and the Polish People’s Party, lead by his person as the Prime Minister³⁷.

It ought to be highlighted that three out of eight „nationwide” committees used the leader’s surname in its official name. These were Kukiz '15, the Modern Ryszarda Petru and KORWiN. Such a clear indication of personalization could suggest that it is not possible for the parties to function without their leaders. The unquestionable domination of the latter made the parties’ actions more typical of presidential rather than parliamentary campaign.

Apart from the Razem Party, the leaders of the remaining committees constituted the core of campaign strategies and became responsible for the promotion of their parties. They mainly focused on meetings with voters, played the key role during the conventions organized by their parties and dominated paid spots and unpaid campaign broadcast³⁸.

The bus, a means of transport typically associated with election candidates, was used by Nowacka. Petru could be most frequently spotted on billboards. Kukiz tried to take advantage of his artistic abilities and organized numerous concerts which, however, did not attract such a large audience as during the presidential campaign. Janusz Korwin-Mikke, traditionally, focused on meetings with the electorate and remained particularly active in the social media.

Not taking into consideration the Razem Party, it was Piechociński that made the most passive leader. His party’s promotion was based on the self-government activists, popular in the local structures, which was designed to maintain the loyalty of the village and small town areas. This strategy did not

³⁶ M. PIENKOWSKI, *Odmłodzona lewica wraca*, „Rzeczpospolita”, 5.10.2015, p. A5.

³⁷ M. PIENKOWSKI, *U ludowców marazm i zastój*, „Rzeczpospolita”, 6.10.2015, p. A4.

³⁸ W. CZUCHNOWSKI, *Straszą i obiecują*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 12.10.2015, p. 6.

attracted the attention of the nationwide media, and this made Piechociński involve more in the campaign. The leader started to travel around Poland by truck and on October, 17th, was the „face” of his party program meeting³⁹.

The important role of party leaders was clearly visible in the information services of the largest audience. They were presented far more frequently than their colleges, and all the leaders of the eight committees taken into consideration in this analysis were present among the first nine most often shown candidates⁴⁰.

The opinion polls that were realized during the campaign focused mostly on political parties. Only three times important television stations (twice TVN and once TVP) ordered the analysis of social popularity of „prime ministerial” candidates. All the eight leaders were taken into consideration only by „Wiadomości”⁴¹, while „Fakty” narrowed down to the candidates of two major parties.

The Kopacz – Szydło television debate, among other debates in the history of Polish politics, was not particularly worth remembering. The one organized by TVP and participated by all the eight leaders, however, had unquestionable influence on the result of the election. This was mainly due to Adrian Zandberg’s, a member of the Razem Party, performance. This political subject tried to avoid any personalization of message⁴². Zandberg became the revelation of the campaign and the winner of the debate. Since that particular moment he found himself in the center of the mass media attention and became the guest of numerous programs in major television stations. His party, which previously had been hardly recognized, started to be identified with the person of Adrian Zandberg. As a result, the Razem Party collected 3.62% of votes (over 550 000). Although the party did not achieve the election threshold, its result entitled it to receive subsidy from the government budget, which may strengthen the position of the party until the next election. The unexpected growth in Zandberg’s popularity caused certain dispersion of the left-wing electorate and resulted in the failure of the United Left, which gathered only 7.55% of voter and as a coalition could not place its members in the Sejm.

³⁹ M. PIENKOWSKI, *Ludowcy i lewica pewni swego*, „Rzeczpospolita”, 21.10.2015, p. A7.

⁴⁰ *Raport Monitoring*.

⁴¹ „Wiadomości” TVP, 19.10.2015 (author’s own recording).

⁴² S. KLAUZIŃSKI, R. GROCHAL, *Łowienie wyborcy na lewicy*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 29.09.2015, p. 4.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this article was to examine to what extent Polish parliamentary election of 2015 resembled presidential one. What ought to be mentioned at this point is that course and result of the campaign under consideration were influenced by the presidential election that took place four months earlier. The victory of Andrzej Duda made the foundation of the Law and Justice's success, and Szydło's „prime ministerial” campaign constituted a mirror image of her party's presidential candidate. Komorowski's defeat, on the other hand, complicated the situation of the Civic Platform. This observations prove that interior presidentialization, that is shaping parliamentary campaign by presidential one) may occur regardless of the regime of a given county⁴³.

For six out of eight political subjects analyzed in this study, the party leader and the campaign leader were the same in identity. In the remaining two cases, that is the Law and Justice and the United Left, where the „prime ministerial” candidate did not lead the party, the decision of the nomination was determined by marketing factors (electorate preferences) as well as the decision of the most prominent persons in a given party. Despite their nominations, neither Szydło nor Nowacka posed any threat to the leaders of their committees and their role resembles the one of a presidential „substitute candidate”.

Four committees (the Law and Justice, the Civic Platform, the Polish People's Party and the United Left) presented their campaign leaders as „prime ministerial” candidates. However, merely two of them, deriving from the two major parties, had real chances to accede to this office. The leading candidates of the United Left and the Polish People's Party could have become prime ministers providing a compromise and multi-party cabinet was created. As regards Kukiz '15, the Modern of Ryszard Petru and KORWiN, the name of the party leader present in the name of the committee increased the presidency level. The Razem party tried to avoid any personalization and started to be associated with the person of Adrian Zandberg only after particularly successful television debate.

The election campaign under analysis lacked certain features typical of American presidential campaigns. None of the leaders was appointed by means of primary election. Also the wife or husbands of the candidates did

⁴³ D. SAMUELS, *Presidentialized Parties. The Separation of Powers Party Organization and Behavior*, „Comparative Political Studies” 2002, No. 4/35, pp. 466-472.

not play any role in the competition. The image of the „prime ministerial” candidate of the Law and Justice was complemented with that of the party’s leader, but in a different manner than in a „classic American president - vice-president tandem”.

The reports of the mass media concerning the course of the campaign focused mostly on both party and election leaders. Despite this fact, the information was presented in the context of political parties. The private components of the candidates’ images, including their past, families or interests, were of minor importance. The opinion polls concentrated even more on the parties and only three of them concerned „prime ministerial” candidates, which could influence the voters’ decisions only in a limited manner. The composition of the future government resulted from the number of committees in the Sejm rather than the popularity of given candidates.

The television debate of the leaders of the two major parties took place for the second time in the history of Polish parliamentary election. In certain parliamentary democracies, including Germany (since 2002), Canada or Spain, such events constitute a permanent component of the rivalry⁴⁴. The debate was organized by and broadcast in three major television stations (TVP, TVN and Polsat). Unlike in 2007 (Tusk – Kaczyński debate), the Szydło – Kopacz one did not bring any breakthrough and had minor impact on electorate’s behavior. One could even risk the statement that without the debate the result for the election would have remained unchanged.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to specify what was the influence of particular leaders on the number of votes gathered by their committees. While this task is relatively easy as regards the parties whose name included the surname of their leaders, in other cases it can be only guessed. Supposing Kaczyński had been the „prime ministerial” candidate, his party’s result could have decreased, due to the high level of social dislike of this politician. Even if the difference had been minor, it could have meant of the lack supermajority. It seems, however, that these were social promises rather than the image of the party’s candidate that posed a decisive factor for the victory of the Law and Justice. Kopacz, on the other hand, proved her determination, faith in and the readiness to fight for her party’s success on numerous occasions during the campaign. Although the message of the Civic Platform was highly personalized,

⁴⁴ D. FARRELL, *Political Parties as Campaign Organizations*, in: *Parties without Partisans. Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, eds. R.J. Dalton, M.P. Wattenberg, Oxford 2000: Oxford University Press, p. 107.

Kopacz herself could only slightly influence its result. It was due to certain limits in her medial skills, especially when compared to Donald Tusk in the 2011 campaign.

The fact that the United Left based its campaign on the person of Barbara Nowacka was the best thing to be done. However, it happened too late. The failure of this committee was not caused by the person of its „prime ministerial” candidate, but by other factors, including the wasted time during the presidential campaign, the risky decision to try to achieve the 8% election threshold, and the unexpected popularity of Adrian Zandberg which was turned into the result of the Razem Party.

Traditionally, the person of its leader had a minor impact on the result of the Polish Peoples’ Party. This depended mostly on the character of this committee and its roots in political and social structures of village and small-town communities. The fact that the party achieved the proportionally lowest result in the history of Polish parliamentary election resulted from the increasing popularity of the Law and Justice in the aforesaid areas.

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PREZYDENCJALIZACJA WYBORÓW PARLAMENTARNYCH.
KAZUS POLSKIEJ ELEKCJI Z 2015 ROKU

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Problemem podjętym w niniejszym artykule jest upodabnianie się elekcji parlamentarnych do prezydenckich. Celem artykułu jest zbadanie stopnia upodobnienia się polskich wyborów do Sejmu z 2015 r. Do próby zaliczono osiem komitetów, które zarejestrowały listy we wszystkich 41 okręgach wyborczych (PiS, PO, Kukiz '15, Nowoczesna Ryszarda Petru, Zjednoczona Lewica, PSL, KORWiN oraz Partia Razem). Z uwagi na fakt, że realne szanse na zostanie w 2015 r. premierem mieli kandydaci dwóch największych partii, największa uwaga została skoncentrowana na kampanii PiS i PO. Badanie obejmuje okres czterech ostatnich tygodni kampanii wyborczej. Analizę oparto na sześciu płaszczyznach: (1) cele wyborów (2) nominacje kandydatów, (3) główny produkt kampanii, (4) strategia wyborcza, (5) relacjonowanie kampanii przez środki społecznego przekazu oraz (6) figura przeciwnika.

Słowa kluczowe: prezydencjalizacja; prezydencki styl wyborów; kampania wyborcza; kandydaci; premier.

PRESIDENTIALIZATION OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION.
THE CASE OF POLISH ELECTION OF 2015

S u m m a r y

The aim of this article is to examine to what extent the Polish parliamentary election of 2015 adopted features typical of the presidential ones. The author takes into consideration 8 committees that registered their lists in all the 41 voting constituencies (Law and Justice, Civic Platform, Kukiz '15, Modern of Ryszard Petru, United Left, Polish People's Party, KORWiN and Razem Party). Due to the fact that only the leading candidates of the Civic Platform (PO) and the Law and Justice (PiS) had a real chance to become the Prime Minister, the study will focus on these two major political parties. The analysis will concentrate on the last four weeks of the campaign and is conducted at six levels: (1) the aim of the election, (2) the nomination of candidates, (3) the main product of the campaign, (4) the campaign strategy, (5) the reports of the mass media and (6) the figure of the opponent.

Key words: presidentialisation; presidential style of election campaign; election campaign; candidates; prime minister.