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## **IMAGES OF POLISH POLITICIANS ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER ON THE EXAMPLE IN COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF ANDRZEJ DUDA AND DONALD TUSK**

### Abstract

The main purpose of shaping a specific political image is usually political pragmatism focused on gaining social and electoral support. Social media due to their specificity are an excellent space that allows politicians to self-present. The aim of the research is an attempt to construct a proposition of types of political images created in social media based on the analysis of communication strategies (including the tools used and persuasion techniques) of the two selected leading Polish politicians: Andrzej Duda and Donald Tusk. Particular attention is paid to the means of self-presentation, including the role of visual rhetoric in messages politicians on their official Facebook and Twitter accounts.

**Keywords:** political image, self-presentation, Facebook, Twitter, communication strategies

### **Introduction**

In last years, social media, such as Facebook or Twitter have changed the manner in which political communication is understood<sup>1</sup>. The politicians use it to have much more direct and close contact with the citizenry<sup>2</sup>. Social media has begun to break the existing barriers of

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<sup>1</sup> R. Gibson, A. Römmele, *Changing Campaign Communications: A Party-Centered Theory of Professionalized Campaigning*, „The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics”, 2001, No 6, pp. 31-43; *Visual Political Communication*, eds. A. Veneti, D. Jackson, D. Lilleker, Cham 2019.

<sup>2</sup> D. Lilleker, *Interactivity and Branding: Public Political Communication as a Marketing Tool*, „Journal of Political Marketing”, 2015, No 14, pp. 111-128; A.O. Larsson, *Online, All the Time? A Quantitative Assessment of the Permanent Campaign on Facebook*, „New Media & Society”, 2016, No 18, pp. 274-292,

traditional political communication, especially dominated by mass media. Owing to the bidirectional model of communication in social media citizens and politicians have more possibility to dialogue and interact without the need to pass through the media filter<sup>3</sup>. The political actors, media, and citizens can communicate under equal conditions<sup>4</sup>.

Social media enable politicians to reach recipients of various political orientations with their message much more precisely than traditional media<sup>5</sup>. The marketing potential of social media is seen primarily in micro-targeting – the possibility of collecting reliable databases, information about users, including political preferences, but also other non-political characteristics of voters, which are further used to promote the brand, including political. What is most often emphasized here is the importance of behavioural targeting, the basis of which is the ability to analyse changes in the behaviour or interests of users, and thus flexible, quick response<sup>6</sup>. Kobayashi and Ichifuji indicated that messages disseminated by politicians in social media fulfil three basic functions: they serve to articulate the most important problems/topics, highlight the favourable personality traits of a politician and improve the recognition of the politician's name<sup>7</sup>.

Social media are used by political actors to inform the electorate about their political activities, share links to specific or their own websites and mobilize supporters or publish personal content. Political leaders using social media to show the more human side of politics - publications, emotional or humorous messages, or photos from their daily work. Social media are perceived as a platform for disseminating information, but also for political discussion, including expressing opinions on the activities of politicians or current events and political issues, but also as an opportunity to interact with politicians. Politics on social media is "increasingly performative in that it encompasses the professional and

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, B. McNair, *An Introduction to Political Communication*, London 2011; A. Chadwick, *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*, New York 2013.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*; K. Koc-Michalska [et al.], *The Normalization of Online Campaigning in the Web 2.0 Era*, „European Journal of Communication”, 2016, pp. 1-20.

<sup>5</sup> D. Tambini, *Social Media Power and Election Legitimacy*, [in:] *Digital dominance: the power of Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple*, eds. D. Tambini, M. Moore, New York 2018; E. Fowler [et al.], *Political Advertising Online and Offline*, „American Political Science Review”, 2021, No 115, pp. 130-149.

<sup>6</sup> O. Papakyriakopoulos [et al.], *Social Media and Microtargeting: Political Data Processing and the Consequences for Germany*, „Big Data & Society”, 2018, July, pp. 1-15.

<sup>7</sup> T. Kobayashi, Y. Ichifuji, *Tweets That Matter: Evidence From a Randomized Field Experiment in Japan*, „Political Communication”, 2015, No 32, pp. 574-593.

private sides of politicians' daily lives, which are packaged (...) to attract and hold audiences' attention and establish a meaningful connection with them"<sup>8</sup>.

Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have become the main of the social media platforms of reference in political communications<sup>9</sup>. Facebook and Twitter differ in terms of audience, digital architecture or genre of communication<sup>10</sup>. The platform's reach and low communication barriers make Facebook the main tool for reaching the „ordinary” citizen<sup>11</sup>, including especially the local community<sup>12</sup>. Among the most active Twitter users are political elites, influentials and journalists, often regard Twitter as a valuable source of information, news<sup>13</sup>.

### Political image

I understand self-presentation as a conscious and purposeful creation of my own image<sup>14</sup>. In the process of political communication, it is the development of a specific image of a politician, including, among others,

<sup>8</sup> M. Lalancette, V. Raynauld, *The Power of Political Image: Justin Trudeau, Instagram, and Celebrity Politics*, „American Behavioral Scientist”, 2019, No 63, p. 894; M. Ekman, A. Widholm, *Twitter and the Celebritisation of Politics*, „Celebrity Studies”, 2014, No 5, p. 518.

<sup>9</sup> A.O. Larsson, *op.cit.*; A. Jungherr, *Twitter Use in Election Campaigns: A Systematic Literature Review*, „Journal of Information Technology & Politics”, 2016, No 13, pp. 72-91; S. Kruike-meier, *How Political Candidates Use Twitter and the Impact on Votes*, „Computers in Human Behavior”, 2014, No 34, pp. 131-139; R. Karlsen, B. Enjolras, *Styles of Social Media Campaigning and Influence in a Hybrid Political Communication System: Linking Candidate Survey Data with Twitter Data*, „The International Journal of Press/Politics”, 2016, No 21, pp. 338-357; D. Steffan, *Visual Self-Presentation Strategies of Political Candidates on Social Media Platforms: A Comparative Study*, „International Journal of Communication”, 2020, No 14, pp. 3096-3118.

<sup>10</sup> D. Kreiss, R.G. Lawrence, S.C. McGregor, *In Their Own Words: Political Practitioner Accounts of Candidates, Audiences, Affordances, Genres, and Timing in Strategic Social Media Use*, „Political Communication”, 2018, No 35, pp. 8-31.

<sup>11</sup> S. Caton, M. Hall, C. Weinhardt, *How do Politicians Use Facebook? An Applied Social Observatory*, „Big Data & Society”, 2015, December, pp. 1-18 and R. Gerodimos, J. Justinussen, *Obama's 2012 Facebook Campaign: Political Communication in the Age of the Like Button*, „Journal of Information Technology & Politics”, 2015, No 12, pp. 113-132.

<sup>12</sup> A.O. Larsson, E. Skogerbø, *Out with the Old, in with the New? Perceptions of Social (and Other) Media by Local and Regional Norwegian Politicians*, „New Media & Society”, 2016, No 20, pp. 219-236.

<sup>13</sup> J.H. Parmelee, *The Agenda-Building Function of Political Tweets*, „New Media & Society”, 2014, No 16, pp. 434-450; A. Jungherr, *Twitter Use in Election Campaigns: A Systematic Literature Review*, „Journal of Information Technology & Politics”, 2016, No 13, pp. 72-91.

<sup>14</sup> M.R. Leary, *Self-Presentation. Impression Management and Interpersonal Behavior*, New York 1996.

through “the over-communication of some facts and under-communication of others”<sup>15</sup>.

Research shows that images in social media are often used to personalize political communication<sup>16</sup>. According to Philippe J. Maarek<sup>17</sup>, the paradoxically increasing degree of professionalization of political communication due to personalization leads to its “depoliticization”. The researcher uses this concept to describe a situation in which politicians, parties, wishing to reach and interest potential voters with their political offer, concentrate their activities *de facto* on building an image, often “fictionalizing” their lives (especially private). Such a procedure results from the belief that for citizens who are undecided, uninterested or discouraged by politics (showing a high level of election absenteeism), such messages may be more intriguing than the substantive political content, election programs, and, consequently, may also act as motivating.

The image of a politician is the result of a compromise, more or less successful, between the real personality of a politician and what the potential voters expect from him<sup>18</sup>. The political image it creates with simple, credibility images, emotionally and intellectually accessible to the target audience<sup>19</sup>. Creating images is about constructing and disseminating narratives (visual rhetoric) designed to persuade and mobilize a citizens<sup>20</sup>. “The broader goal of political image-making is to generate, maintain, sharpen, and strengthen favourable perceptions among members of the public in order to affect their personal political attitudes and, by extension, decision-making in strategic ways”<sup>21</sup>. The image of a politician in social media is built using the content and form of messages (posts/tweets), and thus the visual and verbal layers. The image of a politician in social media also includes the degree and scope of the interaction (both by the politician and Internet users).

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<sup>15</sup> E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York 1959, p. 141.

<sup>16</sup> X. Farkas, M. Bene, *Images, Politicians, and Social Media: Patterns and Effects of Politicians' Image-Based Political Communication Strategies on Social Media*, „The International Journal of Press/Politics”, 2021, No 26, pp. 119-142.

<sup>17</sup> P.J. Maarek, *Politics 2.0: New Forms of Digital Political Marketing and Political Communication*, „Tripodos”, 2014, No 34, pp. 17-28.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> W.L. Bennett, *News: The Politics of Illusions*. New York 2016, p. 109.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*; M. Lalancette, V. Raynauld, *The Power of Political Image: Justin Trudeau, Instagram, and Celebrity Politics*, „American Behavioral Scientist”, 2019, No 63, pp. 888-924.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 891; J.C. Strachan, K. E. Kendall, *Political Candidates' Convention Films: Finding the Perfect Image - An Overview of Political Image Making*, [in:] *Defining visual rhetorics*, eds. C..A. Hill, M. Helmers, Mahwah, NJ 2004.

The aim of the research is an attempt to answer the question about the ways of self-creation of images used in strategies of communication of politicians on Facebook and Twitter. I paid particular attention to the role of visual materials spread by politicians. In the study I made a few assumptions. A visual message can be an independent message or an element of the message, which function is to strengthen the verbal message. The visual message as a part of the post/tweet first of all catches the attention of the Internet user. The visual rhetoric functioning in political discourse is most often based on commonly understood values, references, symbols. The visual message (appropriately constructed and consistently used) can act as an interpretative framework, through which we begin to perceive a politician, a particular matter. This framework according to Erving Goffman (1959) I understood as interpretation schemes allowing the units to localize, perceive, identify and give meaning to events, issue. Thus, the images included in the entries may be perceived through the prism of the framework prompting or imposing a certain manner of perception of a given politician or a specific matter on the recipients.

## Materials and methods

The subject of research is two social media websites that enjoy the greatest popularity among Polish politicians – Facebook and Twitter. Facebook has been the most popular social medium in Poland for several years (although, the recent focus of especially young voters can be observed also on Instagram). In turn, Twitter enjoys a much lower popularity among voters, but this micro-blog (often partly or entirely run by the politicians themselves) has become the source of information primarily for journalists<sup>22</sup>. The bases and, at the same time, the background of research were the results of empirical research, especially regarding the communication strategies pursued by Polish politicians and parties in social media<sup>23</sup>. In the study, I formulated a two research questions:

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<sup>22</sup> *Digital 2019: Poland*, Datareportal, <https://datareportal.com> (15.09.2020); *Social Media Users in Poland 2019*, NapoleonCat, <https://napoleoncat.com> (15.09.2020); *Reuters Digital News Report 2019*, Reuters, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk> (15.09.2020).

<sup>23</sup> M. Adamik-Szyśiak, *Twitter in Communication Strategies of the Leaders of the Polish Political Parties*, „e-Politikon”, 2014, No 9, pp. 109-131; *eadem*, *Strategie komunikowania podmiotów politycznych w Polsce w mediach społecznościowych*, Lublin 2018; T. Olczyk, *Facebook w kampanii prezydenckiej w 2015 roku – analiza zawartości profili Andrzeja Dudy i Bronisława Komorowskiego*, „e-Politikon”, 2015,

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Which tools and techniques are used most often by politicians to create their image on Facebook and Twitter? Can the same tools, ways of self-creation of images be observed?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): Can inference be made based on the analysis of the content of posts in relation to the created types of political images?

The basic sources of research material for empirical research were official accounts of Polish politicians in Facebook and Twitter. I have analysed posts disseminated on the accounts of Andrzej Duda (the President of the Republic of Poland from 2015 - still) and Donald Tusk (the President of the European Council in the years 2014-2019) in a random period. Both politicians represent opposition parties, Duda - Law and Justice (PiS) and Tusk - Civic Platform (PO). The research sample came from randomly selected one year (from the beginning of February 2018 to the end of February 2019). From the point of view of the functions exercised by both politicians, it was an inter-election period, thus assuming a basis for inference as to the possible conduct of a permanent campaign by politicians.

A single post/tweet was the research unit on Facebook and Twitter. The basic research method was the content analysis (quantitative and qualitative). Regarding the possibilities of interpretation of visual messages (images) included in the posts/tweets in the study, I based it on the framing the media messages concept from Robert Entman: "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation"<sup>24</sup>.

All posts that appeared on Duda and Tusk accounts Facebook and Twitter between February 1, 2018 to February 28, 2019 were obtained with an extraction application Netvizz and Twitonomy. A total of 537 unique posts on Facebook and 330 tweet on Twitter were archived for the time period considered for this study. In the analysis, I took into account the authorship of published posts/tweet, their construction (constituents, e.g. text, graphics, photo, film, link, hashtag, emoticons) and the subject matter and the way of its presentation. At this point, it should

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No 16, pp. 57-85; O. Annusewicz, *Twitter jako przestrzeń autoprezentacji politycznej. Zarządzanie wizerunkiem polityka w mediach społecznościowych*, „Studia Politologiczne”, 2017, No 45, pp. 91-112.

<sup>24</sup> R.M. Entman, *Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm*, „Journal of Communication”, 1993, No 43, p. 52.

be noted that accounts of both politicians (Duda and Tusk) were dominated by original posts/tweets (occasional messages from other users' accounts were made available on the accounts of both politicians, mainly institutions represented by both politicians, journalists and political bloggers; there were also traces of messages from accounts of other politicians – mainly retweeted on the Twitter account of Duda).

In the context of the analysis of the ways of self-creation of politicians' images, it should be added that both politicians (Duda and Tusk) independently run their own Twitter accounts, their Facebook accounts are run by people from the political base. Both in 2018 and 2019<sup>25</sup> the profile of Andrzej Duda and Donald Tusk were included in the top ten profiles with the highest number of followers of Polish Twitter users (apart from information media profiles – TVN24, footballer - Robert Lewandowski or Pope Francis).

Analysis draws upon a dataset on Facebook (n = 537) and Twitter (n = 330). In the analysed period (see Table 1 and Table 2), on Facebook much more posts was on the account of Donald Tusk (328 posts), while Andrzej Duda was much more active on Twitter (222 tweets). From the beginning of the accounts creations by both politicians in Twitter Duda is more active from Tusk, publishes much more often and more posts.

**Table 1. The research material - Facebook**

<b>Politician</b>	<b>Donald Tusk</b>	<b>Andrzej Duda</b>
Account creation date:	November 2014	September 2010
Likes:	261 737	649 176
Followers: [until 01.03.2019]	274 217	630 956
Number of posts in research period: February 2018 – February 2019	328	209
Posts with a photo/gallery [%]	46	38
Posts with video [%]	45	62
Total posts with photos and videos [%]	91	100

Source: Author

<sup>25</sup> *Twitter w Polsce – podsumowanie 2018 roku*, Sotrender, <https://www.sotrender.com> (15.09.2020); *Twitter w Polsce – podsumowanie 2019 roku*, Sotrender, <https://www.sotrender.com> (15.09.2020).

**Table 2. The research material - Twitter**

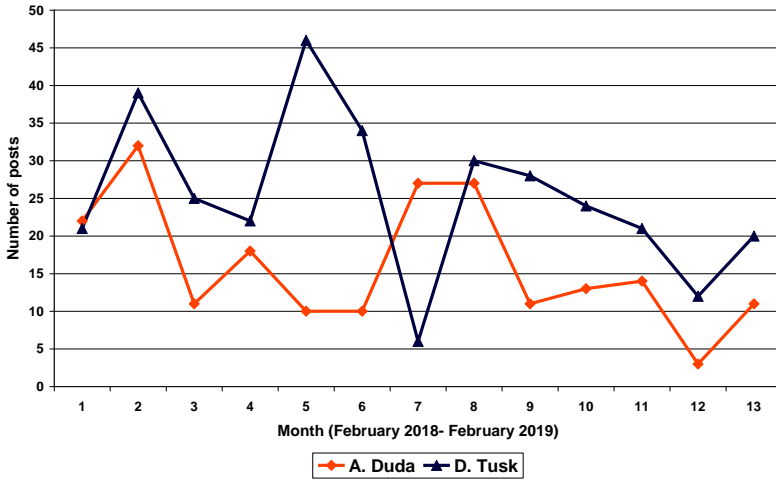
<b>Politician</b>	<b>Donald Tusk</b>	<b>Andrzej Duda</b>
Account creation date:	September 2011	October 2010
Followers:	1,05 Milion	1,01 Milion
Total tweets: [until 01.03.2019]	531	7 555
Number of tweets in research period: February 2018 – February 2019	108	222
Tweets with a photo [%]	30	55
Tweets with video [%]	10	12
Total tweets with photos and videos [%]	40	67

Source: Author

In the messages of both politicians, visual communication was an important part of constructing posts, both on Facebook and Twitter (see Table 1 and Table 2). On Facebook, almost all posts of both politicians had photos (or photo galleries) or video materials. Attention is drawn to the fact that both politicians use live broadcasts of a given political event on Facebook (for example a press conference, a speech or meetings with voters), while posts of this type were created on the account of Andrzej Duda to a greater extent. On the account of Donald Tusk in Twitter text posts dominated, tweets with photos or video material it was 40 percent. On the account of Andrzej Duda in Twitter most posts (67 percent) had a photo or video.

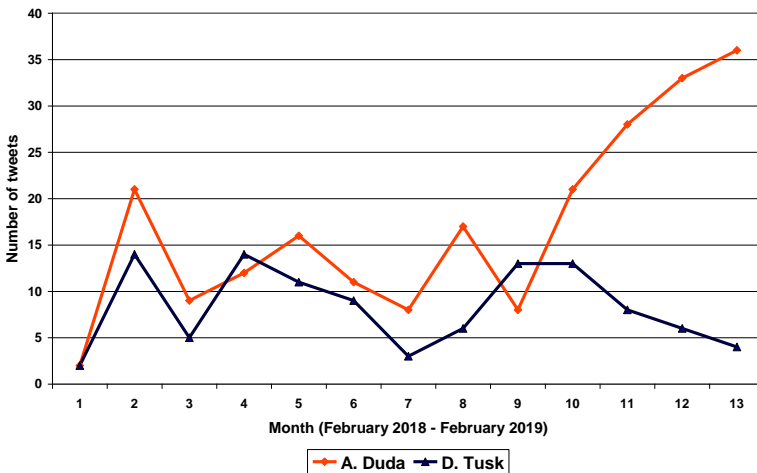
The degree of activity of both politicians (number of posts) in individual months of the study on Facebook and Twitter was similar, although periods of increased activity of each politician (see Figure 1 and Figure 2) were noticeable (which was related not so much to the number of topics discussed in a given month, but often emphasizing the importance of a given event by bringing it closer (referring to it) not in one but in several entries (mainly on Facebook). The activity of both politicians in Facebook was high in September (see Figure 1), before the local government elections in October. On Twitter, Andrzej Duda activity is growing at the end of the research period (see Figure 2) - it is already the beginning of the election campaign for the European Parliament/ European election (elections in May 2019).





**Figure 1. Monthly volume of posts on Duda and Tusk Facebook accounts (February 1, 2018 to February 28, 2019).**

Source: Author



**Figure 2. Monthly volume of posts on Duda and Tusk Twitter accounts (February 1, 2018 to February 28, 2019).**

Source: Author

Although the research unit involves a single entry on Facebook and Twitter, it should be kept in mind that the visual layer creating the image of a politician (self-presentation) in the above-mentioned media may also include the „components” of the account (their content, composition),

such as: the timeline, profile photo (avatar), background photo, username of the account or number of likes or followers<sup>26</sup>.

The figures regarding the account (number of likes or followers) or a text description of the account publicly presented are also of significance for the profile perception of a politician by Internet users. Among other elements affecting the perception of the image of a politician in social media there are the level of a politician's activity on the account (whose and/or what posts are shared, what posts are liked, whether and with whom the politician starts a conversation). A small number of followed accounts, likes or interactions may indicate that social media is treated as a one-way communication tool. Number of followers may indicate the popularity of the politician among users of a given social media.

Both politicians used official photos (the so-called „heads”) as their avatars. The background photo of Duda on Facebook was the Polish flag, while on Twitter, a photo from an election evening, during which the hopeful politician was accompanied by his wife. The account of Tusk on Twitter was based on a calm blue background evoking positive emotions, while the Facebook background photo (updated much more frequently) was a graphic or photo highlighting the essence of the current (recent) event. However, the qualitative analysis of the messages published on the account can provide the greatest amount of self-presentation contents.

## Results

The analysis of the collected research material from the accounts of both politicians allowed to specify the dominant functions of disseminated messages: information, persuasive, commentary, integrating and engaging<sup>27</sup>. However, for both politicians, a greater variety of functions of the entries can be observed on Twitter. On Twitter, the tweets published by the politician also performed several functions in parallel (so in this case none of the functions was dominant).

The subject matter of entries on the accounts of both politicians on Facebook and Twitter indicates that these media serve politicians, above all, for self-promotion (sporadically to discredit political competitors). Social media can therefore be a self-presentation space for politicians. The subject matter undertaken by politicians, as well as its form (applied means of expression), especially in the tweets on Twitter, meant that

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<sup>26</sup> O. Annusewicz, *op.cit.*, pp. 99-109.

<sup>27</sup> M. Adamik-Szysiak, *Strategie...*, p. 392.

profiles of both politicians were often mentioned by other users (and thus aroused the reaction of Internet users). The situation was different in the case of Facebook, where information and persuasion were the dominant function of messages. Posts on the accounts of both politicians were usually only a kind of a relation (video or photo gallery), they served the documentation of a given event (of course, promoting and showing the politician in the centre of events).

The results of the qualitative analysis of entries/tweets on politicians' individual accounts showed that both politicians, when creating their image, refer to similar, sometimes the same tools and techniques, with the main difference being the emphasis. For example, Duda's messages (especially on Twitter) were dominated by visual materials presenting the politician among potential voters, used for integration and building political support (strategy of toughening and widening the electorate, see Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Screenshot of a tweet by Andrzej Duda illustrating strategy of toughening and widening the electorate**

Source: Andrzej Duda@AndrzejDuda, Twitter, <https://twitter.com> (15.09.2020).

In turn, Tusk is a politician who is primarily in the centre of political attention – he is a leader, an active politician, recognizable and respected in the international arena, determined and consistent in action, a statesman, a diplomat characterized by experience and political wisdom (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Screenshot of a tweet by Donald Tusk- politician leader and statesman

Source: Donald Tusk@donaltdusk, Twitter, <https://twitter.com> (15.09.2020).

Communication strategies aimed at building and maintaining political loyalty in the long run are focused on a permanent campaign. These are all politicians' actions aimed at maintaining long-term relationships with voters. Politicians remind the electorate (or make them aware) of the important role of their current (or future) involvement and strengthen voters' decisions as to the correctness of political decisions made (in the past or in the future). The quintessence of this type of strategy is the initiation of consultations and social dialogue by politicians or their political staffs, signalling that politicians are constantly interested in the issues of voters and citizens (and therefore also taking into account inter-election periods). In the case of social media, Internet users' attention tries to focus on issues such as methods, skills and intensity of communicating with Internet users. The use of the strategy of privatizing the image was an element of building the image of both politicians (published materials showed family relations or the way the politician spends his free/private time, see Figure 5-6).



**Figure 5. Screenshot of a tweet by Donald Tusk- politician close to the people (“ordinary man”)**

Source: Donald Tusk@donaldtusk, Twitter, <https://twitter.com> (15.09.2020).



**Figure 6. Screenshot of a tweet by Andrzej Duda - politician close to the people (“ordinary man”)**

Source: Andrzej Duda@AndrzejDuda, Twitter, <https://twitter.com> (15.09.2020).

Sport has been the leading topic among the Polish users of Twitter for years, especially football – in the analysed period, both Duda and Tusk also referred to this topic emphasizing their passion for sport (politician as a fan, see Figure 7-8).



**Figure 7. Screenshot of a Facebook post by Donald Tusk- politician as a fan**  
Source: Donald Tusk, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com> (15.09.2020).



**Figure 8. Screenshot of a tweet by Andrzej Duda - politician as a fan**  
Source: Andrzej Duda@AndrzejDuda, Twitter, <https://twitter.com> (15.09.2020).

Both politicians enjoyed using selfies. Researchers indicate that candidates use selfies as a strategic self-promotion tool - selfies are the latest way of crafting the self in social media (Farci & Orefice, 2015; Steffan, 2020). It is noticeable that both politicians in self-creation avoid party labelling (which is probably related to their current public functions, which in the social sense should be exercised over political divisions).

The amount of messages conveyed by the sender and their content diversification (including those covering different spheres of life) may indicate the level of readiness of the politician to establish and maintain interpersonal relations online. Therefore, assuming the level of interpersonal openness as a criterion in the context of the activity of politicians in social media, one can distinguish the strategies of „opening” and „closing” (Table 3).

**Table 3. The main determinants  
of communication strategies based on the interpersonal openness  
of politicians in social media**

<b>Opening strategy</b>	<b>Closing strategy</b>
Dissemination of a large number of content, including self-presentation information	Dissemination of a small amount (number) of content, including self-presentation information
Issuing content with a high level of personal importance for the politician – privatization and intimization of politics (mixing or penetration of content from the private and public spheres)	Absence or issuing contents of low level of personal significance for the politician (superficial information)
Public establishment of informal friendly relations with the Internet users – communications partners (e.g. potential voters, other politicians)	Lack of tendencies to publicly establish informal relations of a friendly nature with Internet users – communication partners
Dissemination of content from various areas of the politician’s functioning	Dissemination of content focusing on one or selected areas of the politician’s functioning
Active attitude in establishing, maintaining and managing the course of interpersonal contacts	Passive attitude (lack of initiative) in establishing, maintaining and managing the course of interpersonal relations

Source: M. Adamik-Szysiak, *Strategie...*, p. 47.

The results of the analysis of previous research<sup>28</sup> and own research allowed to specify and characterize various types of political images created by these politicians in social media:

- *leader* (is an active, recognizable and internationally respected politician, determined and consistent in action, a politician whose opinion is respected by other politicians – he is often shown (in the foreground, as the „main quarterback”) in the company of valued/well-known politicians);
- *statesman* (is a politician – diplomat, he is characterized by experience and political wisdom, the messages are dominated by issues concerning state and international politics);
- *communicative, but also pragmatic, politician* (a politician oriented to dialogue, contact with people, pragmatic cooperation);
- *expert* (the politician’s competences are emphasized, as well as his negotiating skills, his effectiveness of action – also above political divisions);
- *patriot* (is a politician caring for the fate of his homeland, defender or national (Polish) affairs in the international arena);
- *fan* (a sports enthusiast);
- *politician close to the people*, so-called an “ordinary man” (the messages emphasize the community of origin of the politician with voters, his family, openness to people, understanding of everyday worries and problems, communication; the politician is shown in private situations – with his family, friends, while resting);
- *freewheeler* (the messages emphasize the politician’s sense of humour, distance to himself and to the environment, including the ironic attitude to the political reality);
- *moral and empathic politician* (the messages emphasize his personal attributes, family relationships, the evidence of his involvement and social activity are highlighted).

The image of a politician in the social media is a conglomeration of several types of images (Table 4). However, it is possible to indicate dominant types, including the use of the same techniques of persuasion. Andrzej Duda on Facebook is shown mainly as patriot, and on Twitter is pragmatic, but also communicative politician, oriented to dialogue, politician close to the people (“ordinary man”). In turn, Donald Tusk on Facebook and Twitter was mainly: Leader, Statesman and Expert.

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<sup>28</sup> D. Steffan, *op.cit.*; M. Jeziński, *Marketing polityczny a procesy akulturacyjne. Przypadek III Rzeczypospolitej*, Toruń 2004, pp. 131-142; O. Annusewicz, *op.cit.* p. 110.



**Table 4. Types of political images Duda and Tusk on Facebook and Twitter (according to the degree of their display, where number 1 is the most exposed type\*)**

Dominant types of political images	Donald Tusk		Andrzej Duda	
	Facebook	Twitter	Facebook	Twitter
Leader	1	1	2	4
Statesman	2	2	3	3
Pragmatist	-	-	4	1
Expert	3	3	-	-
Patriot	6	4	1	6
Fan	7	5	7	5
Ordinary man	8	6	5	2
Freewheeler	5	7	8	8
Moral and empathic politician	4	8	6	7

\* more than one type of image may have appeared in the post

Source: Author

## Discussion and conclusion

The willingness to inform citizens, to report current events and to comment on them (presenting the politician's own position on a given issue) should be emphasized among the main goals of publishing posts on the politicians' profiles. The one-direction communication is dominant, especially on Facebook (profiles of both politicians resemble information or „documentation” boards). On Twitter, both politicians sporadically engage in discussion with Internet users or take actions to try to engage Internet users (for example, when a politician asks Internet users „Do you know where this picture was taken?” – Duda tweet from February 28, 2019, see Figure 9).



**Figure 9. Screenshot of a tweet by Andrzej Duda - politician trying to engage Internet users**

Source: Andrzej Duda@AndrzejDuda, Twitter, <https://twitter.com> (15.09.2020).

The conscious creation of a political image (which also includes elements related to the informal sphere, e.g. family) has a task to convince a potential voter that a given politician is worthy to represent him, as well as to represent the state in which he lives. The final goal of self-

creation of a politician is to convince the voter that the given politician is worth supporting (including also, e.g., in social media by disseminating materials about him) and, as a result, in the future support/vote for him.

In social media, due to the specifics of the messages disseminated here (including on Twitter – the synthetic nature of the message), the context is of importance (also the symbolism of the image), in which the given information about the politician is passed to voters. Previous research political communication on social media platforms has shown that visual materials can play a critical role in how citizens perceive and evaluate politicians and their actions.

The subject of research was the image created by a politician in social media, but one should remember about the specificity of these media, their interactivity – the final perception of the politician's image can be affected also by the activities of other Internet users (activity or lack of „passive” activity: likes, shares and/or „active” activity: comments).

If we assume that the main assumption of shaping a specific political image in social media is the political pragmatism, the consistency and consequence of the messages (posts/tweets) disseminated by the politician are crucial in creating this image. Therefore, effective creation of a political image is its long-term construction, also taking into account the expectations (needs) of potential voters.

This study aims to show the possible directions of research complementing the knowledge of politicians' use of Facebook and Twitter. Of course, more research is needed to be conducted to better understand the power of narratives using social media platforms and political visual rhetoric.

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### **Wizerunki polskich polityków na Facebooku i Twitterze na przykładzie strategii komunikowania Andrzeja Dudy i Donalda Tuska**

#### **Streszczenie**

Głównym celem kształtowania określonego wizerunku politycznego jest najczęściej pragmatyzm polityczny koncentrujący się na uzyskaniu poparcia społecznego i wyborczego. Media społecznościowe ze względu na swą specyfikę są doskonałą przestrzenią umożliwiającą politykom autoprezentację. Celem badań jest próba skonstruowania propozycji typów wizerunków politycznych kreowanych w mediach społecznościowych w oparciu o analizę strategii komunikowania (w tym wykorzystanych narzędzi i technik perswazji) dwóch wybranych czołowych polskich polityków: Andrzeja Dudy i Donalda Tuska. Szczególna uwaga zwrócona jest na sposoby autoprezentacji, w tym rolę retoryki wizualnej w przekazach rozpowszechnianych przez wymienionych polityków na ich oficjalnych kontach na Facebooku i Twitterze.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wizerunek polityczny, autoprezentacja, Facebook, Twitter, strategie komunikowania