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## Polish Presidential Election 2015 in the light of first and second order election conception

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**POLISH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2015  
IN THE LIGHT OF *FIRST AND SECOND ORDER*  
*ELECTION CONCEPTION***

***Abstract:***

Among all the elections organized in Poland, presidential elections are not only the ones with a highest turnout, but also most eagerly investigated by the researchers. However, the studies concerning the importance of this particular voting is not often examined. On the one hand, there are arguments to classify it as first-order election, on the other, for certain reasons they ought to be regarded as second-order.

The aim of this article is to answer the question whether 2015 Polish presidential election were of first or rather second-order importance. In his analysis, the author focused on the following issues: personal strategies, programme strategies, the course of the campaign in the traditional and new media, the level of electoral participation and the influence of the election on the course and outcome of the parliamentary campaign.

***Key words:***

Polish presidential election 2015, first order election, second order election

***Introduction***

Presidential election, regardless of any political and constitutional conditions, remains in the centre of researchers' attention. This can be illustrated with a multitude of articles and monographs concerning the organization, course and results of presidential campaigns. Despite the wide range of issues mentioned in such studies, very few focus on the importance of the election. There are certain difficulties regarding the placement of the presidential election on the first and second order election continuum. This particular idea of Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt (1980) (first and second order election) is based on the

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assumption that the importance of a particular election is determined by political and constitutional conditions of a given country. Therefore, presidential election is the most important in the presidential model, parliamentary in the parliamentary one and in the semi-presidential model both types are equally relevant.

According to this theoretical proposition, there ought to be no doubt that the election to the Sejm is of primary, and to the self-government and the European Parliament of secondary character. The process of choosing the head of state, however, seems to be more problematic. The Constitution of April 2nd, 1997, gave the majority of powers within the executive to the government lead by the Prime Minister. The role of the president, appointed as a result of direct and public election, is “active” and “corrective” (Wojtasik 2012: 201-202). The president designates prime ministerial candidates, holds the legislative initiative, is able to use pocket veto (that can be overridden with the qualified majority of three fifths of the MPs) and nomination rights, and providing the Sejm misses the deadline to introduce the budgetary act, can shorten the tenure of the Parliament.

From the legislative perspective, the role of the president is less important than that of the Sejm and more important than that of the Senat. What is worth mentioning here is that the role of the head of state depends not only on constitutional conditions. The president is usually more involved in the decision-making process if the government is from the same political party. During the cohabitation, the president’s activity level rises. Interestingly, the greater number of political clubs or the more difficult it is to maintain stable majority in the government, the more important the person of the president becomes (Tavits 2009: 38-39). The creation of the cabinet closely supervised by the head of state, which can be exemplified by the government of Marek Belka under the auspices of president Kwaśniewski (2004-2005), can even alleviate the symptoms of political crisis (Zuba 2012: 131-132). What is more, regardless of any situational factors the mass media and the public opinion treat the office of the president as a separate and relatively important actor on the political stage (Wojtasik 2012: 218-219).

Despite this fact Polish model of executive-legislative relation cannot be regarded as presidential or semi-presidential democracy. The thesis that presidential election is of secondary importance, however, can be questioned if one takes into consideration voters’ turnout in particular elections. Since 1997, when the present Constitution was enacted, average turnout level amounted to 48.08% for 6 parliamentary elections. As regards the presidential ones, it was 53.69% and 53.88% for the four first and three second rounds respectively (author’s own calculation).

The factors mentioned above inspired the author to analyse the importance of the Polish presidential election that took place in 2015. There are also other reasons for such a choice. First of all, there are hardly any writings on the subject. Secondly, the result of the election was particularly interesting, as the front-runner of the campaign did not succeed. Last but not least, for the first time, the Internet users observed and participated in the campaign with such a great involvement, especially by means of social networks.

In his analysis, the author is going to focus on the following issues: personal strategies, programme strategies, the course of the campaign in the traditional and new media, the level of electoral participation and the influence of the election on the course and outcome of the parliamentary campaign. The results of this study will be presented in a separate section of the article, in which the following question will be answered – was the presidential election of 2015 of primary or secondary importance?

### ***Personal strategies***

At least until 2005, for the leaders of the most important political parties, presidential campaigns constituted a fighting arena . They even preferred to resign from holding the office of the Prime Minister, which can be exemplified with Marian Krzaklewski (1997-2000). What is more, when presidential and parliamentary election dovetailed in 2005, major political parties focused more on the former campaign.

The background of the early presidential election that took place in 2010 was special. The objective circumstances made political leaders take responsibility for the results of their parties. This was particularly visible in the case of those organizations whose presidential candidates died in the plane crash in Smoleńsk, that is the Law and Justice (president Lech Kaczyński) and the Democratic Left Alliance (Jerzy Szmajdziński). The Civic Platform made an exception here, as its leader and the then Prime Minister Donald Tusk decided not to run for the presidential office. Apart from the real motivations of this decision, the statement he gave on this occasion made certain politicians aware of the fact that the real power is located in the hands of the Prime Minister (Krasowski 2014: 67).

Tusk's behaviour in 2010 may have influenced the actions of certain political leaders during the campaign that took place five years later. However, their decisions were mainly motivated by the perspective of the parliamentary election which was going to take place not later than six months after presidential one. What is more, in the election under consideration run an incumbent president, whose popularity could have not heralded his later failure. For that reason other candidates feared that their potential defeat against Bronisław

Komorowski may result in the weakening of their position within their parties in the parliamentary campaign. Among eleven candidates, apart from the president in office, there were only two party leaders, MP Janusz Palikot (Your Movement) and EP member Janusz Korwin-Mikke (KORWiN). Paweł Kukiz (a member of Lower-Silesian self-government) and Grzegorz Braun exemplified non-union candidates. The remaining six candidates were “substitute candidates” (Kolczyński 2015).

Table 1. Presidential candidates in Poland in 2015 – position and status

Candidate	Party	Candidate's position		Status			
		Leader	Substitute candidate'	Major public functions	MP/senator	EP member	Voivodeship authorities
G. Braun	independent						
A.Duda	PiS		X			X	
A.Jarubas	PSL		X				X
B. Komorowski	PO	X		X			
J. Korwin-Mikke	KORWiN <sup>1</sup>	X				X	
M. Kowalski	RN		X				
P. Kukiz	Independent						X
M. Ogórek	SLD		X				
J. Palikot	TR	X			X		
P. Tanajno	DB		X				
J. Wilk	KNP		X				

<sup>1</sup>at the moment of notification PKW of the creation of the electoral committee Korwin-Mikke was a member of the Congress of the New Right (KNP).

Source: author's own study

None of the parties organized primary election, as the Civic Platform had done in 2010 (Maguś 2014: 107-204). The nominations of “substitute candidates” took place under surveillance of party leaders, so that nothing could threaten their position before the parliamentary election (Kolczyński 2015: 23-24). In such a situation it was easy for the party and its leader to distance themselves from the candidate in case of his or her failure. This can be observed in Leszek Miller's (the Democratic Left Alliance) behaviour after Magdalena Ogórek's poor result. It can be also said that Andrzej Duda's presidential campaign was planned to become a component of the “prime ministerial” campaign of the Law and Justice. Taking into consideration a series of failures of this party in the years 2006-2014 and its leader's level of negative electorate (CBOS 144/2015), such an assumption seems to be well-grounded.

What is worth highlighting, the campaign was dominated by candidates who were not easily recognisable for the public opinion, including Adam Jarubas (the Polish People's Party), Marian Kowalski (the National Movement) or Jacek Wilk (the Congress of the New Right). Apart from Bronisław Komorowski there were no other candidates who had any experience in holding offices crucial for the country, such as ex-Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers.

The aforesaid observations lead to the conclusion that the presidential election, taking into consideration political calendar of the year 2015, was not particularly comfortable for many parties. The leaders, however, with the case of the Freedom Union of 2000 in mind (Skrzypiński 2011: 48), were aware that resignation from participation in the campaign could weaken the political position of their parties. Therefore, due to the forthcoming parliamentary election, they could not decide not to run for the presidential office.

### ***Programme strategies***

From its first days, the campaign under consideration was regarded by most parties as an important stage of the parliamentary election. It was reflected in the candidates' programmes. Andrzej Duda's "Programme Agreement" exemplifies it perfectly. Its content proved that Duda's programme is based on the effects of the eight-year rule of Civic Platform-Polish People's Party coalition. The main claim was to retract the retirement system reform, which had changed the age of retirement from 65 to 67 years. This particular reform was highly unpopular among Poles and contributed to the loss of public support for the major party. Moreover, Andrzej Duda postulated to increase tax allowance and objected Polish entrance into the Eurozone (Program of Duda 2015).

The Law and Justice realized that the only chance for Andrzej Duda to win the election is to base the rivalry on the assessment of the eight-year rule of the Civic Platform. Bronisław Komorowski was depicted as a passive and party-dependent president who kept signing socially unpopular bills. This was particularly visible during the second Duda versus Komorowski television debate, which took place on the 21st of May, when the former symbolically placed a Civic Platform flag next to his opponent.

The Law and Justice succeeded in the campaign. It was mostly due to the passive attitude of the incumbent, who appeared as unable to present his offer as independent and free from any weaknesses associated with the party that supported him, including "the bug gate". He was not credible enough when he proposed changes in the retirement act (the possibility of retirement after 40 years of working) and family-friendly policy. Although he possessed legislative initiative and the support of the major party, Komorowski let himself to be

set on the defensive. Komorowski became more active after he had lost the first round of the election. Before the National Electoral Commission announced the results of the election Komorowski addressed the Senate to give him permission to pursue a nation-wide referendum concerning three important issues: introduction of single-member districts in the election to the Sejm, prohibition of the financing of political parties from state's budget and deciding in favour of tax payer in any doubts concerning taxes.

This decision of Komorowski was motivated by the fact that he wanted to encourage those voters who in the first round of the election supported Paweł Kukiz. The introduction of the single-member districts constituted the main postulate of this particular candidate, who managed to gain nearly 3.1 million votes (20.8%). It turned out, however, that the incumbent failed to understand the motivation of those people. Marek Kacprzak (2015: 100) understood the gist of this postulate. In fact its main goal was to reveal the dissatisfaction or even frustration with politicians' activity. The explanation of Kukiz and his supporters' behaviour may be found in Peter Mair's (2013) study. This author rightly states that in democratic countries one can observe certain "political void" that emerged as a result of economic crisis, changes in social communication and the passivity of traditional parties. This space becomes adapted by subjects that concentrate on a single issue. The nature of this problem is rather irrelevant, and the single-member districts may constitute a good example here.

The key postulates of the remaining candidates also complemented those of party leaders in the context of the parliamentary election and in that way they went far beyond the competence of the head of state. Korwin-Mikke, who run for the office for the fifth time, promised to abolish income tax and create an army equipped with atomic weapon. Ogórek, on the other hand, postulated the creation of a codification commission whose task would be to repair or write Polish law anew (Program of Ogórek 2015).

The concentration on domestic issues became one of the characteristics of Polish presidential election. In theory, taking into consideration the condition of the political system in Poland, it should be the foreign policy constituting the core of the programme strategies of particular candidates. In that manner the participants created a misleading impression that the election in question is far more important than it could be assumed from the constitutional role of the president (Dziemidok-Olszewska 2003: 147).



## ***Television coverage of the campaign***

The coverage of electoral campaigns is commonly associated with television. Although nowadays less and less people are waiting in front of their television sets for the main issues of news bulletins to begin (Mistewicz 2011: 159-160), such programmes still attract the attention of millions of viewers and constitute the major source of knowledge of the course of the campaign. Despite the growing ubiquity of the Internet, *agenda setting effect* (McCombs 2008), that is authenticating certain events by the media, can be still observed.

The social rank of particular elections highly depends on the interest of the major television stations. With regard to the elections that took place in the years 2014-2015, the parliamentary election was the most frequently reported on. During its last seven days the messages concerning the campaign constituted 47.14% of the whole broadcast (KRRiT 2015b: 10). Taking into consideration the airtime devoted to the campaign, the self-government election of 2014 seems to be the least interesting of the events (11.14% of the broadcast) (KRRiT 2014: 10), which obviously is the result of the local specificity of the election. It is, though, worth of remembering that self-government election means popular vote is organized in several thousands of entities in the whole country.

As regards the presidential campaign, there are certain discrepancies between the data concerning its particular stages. The percentage of the media interest amounted to 23.85% in the first round and 47.0% in the second (KRRiT 2015: 9-12; KRRiT 2015a: 9-12). This results most of all from the context of this rivalisation. The opinion polls carried out during the first round predicted the incumbent's victory, which contributed to the low interest in the event.

The result of the first round made the media realize that the outcome of the election is unpredictable. In the last week of the campaign two television debates were organized (on May 17th and 21st). The reports on the candidates' preparation constituted an attractive material for television channels to broadcast. Similarly, as in the case of important sport competitions, the final result is more important than preliminaries participated in by many players.

Such data make the conclusion ambiguous, as only the second round can be regarded as primary election. It is worth noticing, however, that although less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the news bulletins was devoted to the campaign, all the first ten most frequently shown politicians were the presidential candidates. What is important, the majority of them were "substitute candidates". Despite this fact, Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of the party that was commonly presented in the opinion polls, was classified on the eleventh position and the then Prime Minister, Ewa Kopacz on the twelfth in the aforesaid list (KRRiT 2015: 24-25).



This differentiated the aforesaid campaign from the self-government or EP ones. In the latter cases the television coverages were mostly focused on the leaders of particular parties rather than on candidates.

### *The Internet*

It seems justified to state that Andrzej Duda owes his victory to his impressive activity on two major social networks, that is facebook and twitter. The staff of the incumbent apparently did not notice that the social media act differently from the traditional ones. They serve the building of emotions rather than conveying information, also this negative, as in case of WP. The best example here is the failure to use online resources to show the triumph of the incumbent in the first television debate that took place on the 17th of May. It seemed that after this “won battle” Komorowski may regain initiative and “win the election war”. What lacked was the proper mobilisation of the president’s followers, which constantly characterised the team of Andrzej Duda. Such a conclusion comes from the report of the Sotrender service concerning the twitter campaign. In May 2015 one “tweet” of Komorowski evoked 74 reactions, while in case of Andrzej Duda over 3700 (Bendyk 2015: 17).

What was also important for the outcome of this particular election was the behaviour of the host and guest in the television show “Tomasz Lis na żywo” (“Tomasz Lis Live”; May 18, TVP2). Both Tomasz Lis and Tomasz Karolak, without verifying its authenticity, attributed to Kinga Duda, the candidate’s daughter, a fictitious opinion published on twitter. According to this fake message, if her father had won the election, he would have made effort to persuade the makers of the film “Ida” to give back the Oscar statue they had received in 2015. Despite Lis’s apology, this incident negatively influenced the image of Komorowski’s followers. One may have drawn the conclusion that the publicists supporting the incumbent lack any ethical limitations (Pieńkowski 2015).

What is worth highlighting, in the past the candidates who treated the mass media as their worst enemy suffered deep defeat. Kukiz, although he kept attacking the major Polish stations, was supported by one fifth of the voters (Mistewicz 2015: 105). He started the campaign as an independent and low-budget candidate, not financed by any political party. The key factor for his success was his activity in the social media. Firstly, due to the messages placed there the electors realized that it is socially popular to vote for such a candidate, since they could follow his Internet communication and make sure their votes would not be wasted. In that manner Kukiz started a snowball effect (Bendyk 2015: 17).

According to the research conducted by exit-poll IPSOS (2015a), the majority of Kikiz's supporters voted for Andrzej Duda in the second round (59.4%). The reasons for that were not only similar age, greater dynamism or Internet activity. Such decision of this group of electors resulted also from the aversion towards "the system", understood as traditional politics, embodied by Komorowski. The comparison made by Tomasz Szlendak (2015: 14) seems particularly accurate here. Using the nomenclature applied by the Internet users to avoid the election silence, he described the voters' dilemma as "choosing between pudding and cabbage stew". Young people, Szlendak claims, "usually do not search for such dishes in the menu", but the situation after the first round made them "eat anything". They preferred "the pudding" (Duda), as "the cabbage stew" (Komorowski) had been "served for too long".

### *Attendance*

Usually, the level of social participation in the direct presidential election is higher than in the parliamentary one, regardless of political conditions. There are several reasons for such a situation. They include the clarity of the rules according to which the winner is appointed as well as relatively small number of candidates, which influences their social recognition. The aforesaid factors are even more observable in the case of the second round of election.

The fact that the social participation in presidential elections is so high in Poland makes the strongest argument to classify them as "primary". However, the juxtaposition of all the Polish elections that took place in 2015 leads to interesting conclusions. To start with, in the first round the attendance was the lowest ever (48.96%). In the second round it was the highest since 1997, when the Constitution started to oblige (55.34%). That means that the discrepancy between the attendance level in the two rounds has been the greatest in history (6.38%). Last but not least, the attendance in the first round was 1.96% lower than in the parliamentary election, which had happened before only once, in 2007.

The reasons for this situation reside in the voters' understanding of the power of their votes. A week before the first round Komorowski's position seemed unthreatened. This could have discouraged numerous voters to participate in the ballot. After the surprising result of this voting, the other candidate took the initiative. The incumbent, however, could become the winner. The uncertainty about the final outcome made people realize the value of a single vote. This, in turn, influenced turnout.

The fact that social participation was higher in the parliamentary election (50.92%) than in the first round of the presidential one can be also explained by unpredictability of its results. The first problem in question concerned winning

the majority of seats in Parliament by the Law and Justice. Before the election it was obvious that the members of the Law and Justice and the Civic Platform would become MPs. For other parties the main goal was to pass the election threshold, which mobilised their electorate.

### *The results and their impact on the parliamentary election*

Heretofore, the results of the election to the Sejm and to the Senate, which always take place on the same day, were similar. What is worth remembering, the latter voting is regarded as secondary and subordinate to the former. More substantial disproportions may be observed as regards the support given to particular parties and their presidential candidates. The main reason for that is a greater level of personalisation in that type of voting. Moreover, the manner in which the result of voting is transferred into the election result is much clearer, and that encourages people to make more tactical decisions, especially in the second round.

Due to the fact that there was more to gain, in 2015 the parties focused on the parliamentary election. The presidential campaign was treated as a kind of prelude. As it was expected, these were the members of the two largest political organizations that fought in the second round, which is consistent with the electoral behaviour in the majority of countries. Their joint support amounted to 68.53% and was 9.53% and 0.9% lower than in 2010 and 2005 (the first round) respectively (the two elections were also dominated by the candidates of the Law and Justice and the Civic Platform). What is worth noticing, Duda's result was the worst among all the so far winners of the first round of presidential elections. Interestingly, he collected over million votes less (1.7%) than Jarosław Kaczyński, who was second in 2010. Komorowski's result, when compared to that in the previous election, was 7.77% worse.

Table 2. The results of presidential election and election to the Sejm in Poland in 2015.

Presidential election			Election to the Sejm			Instability level
Candidate	II round [%]	I round [%]	Committee	%	Seats	
A. Duda	51.55	34.76	PiS	37.58	235	+2.82
B. Komorowski	48.45	33.77	PO	24.09	138	-9.68
P. Kukiz		20.80	Kukiz' 15	8.81	42	-12.97
J. Wilk		0.46				
M. Kowalski		0.52				
J. Korwin-Mikke		3.26	KORWiN	4.76		+1.50
M. Ogórek		2.38	Zjednoczona Lewica	7.55		+3.75
J. Palikot		1.42				
A. Jarubas		1.60	PSL	5.13	16	+3.53
G. Braun		0.83	Szczęście Boże	0.09		-0.74
P. Tanajno		0.20				-0.20
			.Nowoczesna	7.60	28	+7.60
			Partia Razem	3.62		+3.62
Attendance:	55.34	48.96	Attendance:	50.92		
Nett instability level						23.20

Source: author's own study based on the PKW data (2015; 2015a).

The decrease in the polarisation level of the voters' decisions may most of all reside in relatively good result of the candidate who took the third place. In this respect, the support for Kukiz was the biggest in history. This is even more surprising, as Kukiz lacked the backing of any political party or organization. According to the exit poll research, he gained support of 40.3% of the youngest voters (18-29 years of age) (IPSOS 2015).

The voting under analysis took place on the 25th October, 2015, that is five months after the presidential election. It was the second time in the history of the Third Polish Republic when both types of election happened in one year, but for the first time the presidential election preceded the parliamentary one. In 2005 the citizens of Poland attended polling stations three times during four weeks. At that time the parliamentary election was subjugated to presidential one, as the major parties and the mass media kept personalizing the message on the basis of the candidates running for the most important office in the country (Krasowski 2016: 23-33; Łódzki 2010: 108-180).

Among those who fought for the office in 2015 only two candidates (Kukiz and Korwin-Mikke) were the leaders of nation-wide committees in the parliamentary election, and Braun managed to register his lists only in several districts. This, however, does not mean that the course and result of the campaign had no impact on the parliamentary election.

Taking into consideration candidates' affiliation to a given party one can observe that in both elections the order of the three first places was identical. Nonetheless, the comparison of the percentage of votes collected by particular candidates and their parties proves a relatively high level of voters' instability (table 2). Despite his failure, Komorowski was still regarded as a relatively popular member of his party, which became irrelevant in the second round. Taking into consideration the incoming parliamentary election, he started to be treated as a kind of "ballast" by his colleagues, which was even more visible after he had ordered a referendum (September 6th). The comparison of the results of the first round of presidential election and voting to the Sejm shows that 23.2% of voters supported different political subjects. Such a high level of instability resulted from the fact that two nation-wide committees (Petru's Modern and the Razem Party) did not participated in the presidential election (table 2).

Duda's victory made the Law and Justice unquestionable favourite of the next election. Usually, when the parliamentary election is organized few months after the presidential one, the party represented by the newly chosen head of state gathers the greatest number of votes, which can be observed especially in France. The president, who is often more popular than the members of government, is naturally a valuable asset to his party. The Law and Justice aimed to win the majority of seats in the Parliament, and the aim became realistic after the victory of Duda. The paradox was that Kaczyński, the head of the party, due to the great level of social unpopularity (CBOS 2015), did not make a proper leader of his organization. In the years 2006-2014 the Law and Justice kept losing the elections when the party's image was based on the person of Jarosław Kaczyński, and when his contribution in the campaign was limited in 2015, the party's candidate managed to become president. For that reason on the threshold of the parliamentary campaign it was Beata Szydło, Duda's chief of staff and the vice-president of the party, who was designated the prime-ministerial candidate.

To a large extend the core of the Law and Justice strategies during the 2015 parliamentary campaign had been already used during Duda's fight for presidency. What is worth mentioning, in the initial phase of his rule, Duda took several actions that supported the promotion of his party, including the referendum initiative, tour around the country or the legislative initiative concerning the retirement bill. It is difficult to specify what impact the campaign and

presidency of Andrzej Duda had on the Law and Justice's success. However, it seems reasonable to claim that without these two factors the party would have not collected enough votes to rule the country.

From the perspective of time it seems that for Kukiz the presidential election constituted a stage of a larger strategy rather than a major goal. His result decided not only about the registration of his committee in the parliamentary campaign. Obviously, the level of personalisation is lower in such campaigns. On the other hand it seems impossible to lose the support of over 3 million voters during a three month period and not to introduce the members of his party into the Parliament. What is more, he desired to take advantage of other presidential candidates' potential. However, only Wilk accepted his invitation. The electoral lists of Kukiz'15 were joined by the representatives of the National Movement, excluding Kowalski. Kukiz became one of few people who managed to use the potential of presidential campaign in the parliamentary one. To mention the others, we should remember about Jan Olszewski (1995 and 1997) and Andrzej Olechowski (2000 and 2001).

The results of the left-wing presidential candidates contributed to the unification of this fraction. The joined support for Ogórek (the Democratic Left Alliance) and Palikot (Your Movement) amounted to 3.8%. Due to this fact it became clear that cooperation is the only method to put left-wing politicians into the Parliament. Although the United Left gathered twice as many votes as the aforesaid candidates, the 8% election threshold for coalition was not reached (tabela 2). This lack of success was caused by the wasted period of the presidential campaign, which could be used to promote Barbara Nowacka, an unrecognisable person who could potentially make a great leader. What is worth remembering, however, is that in 2014 both left-wing parties were strongly in favour of her participation in the presidential election, which she opposed (Dziedzic 2015: 17).

## ***Conclusion***

The deliberations presented in the article were to answer the following question – was the 2015 presidential election first or second-order? For this purpose six aspects were analysed and each of them was judged on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means definitely second-order, 2 – moderately second-order, 3 – neutral, 4 – moderately first-order and 5 – definitely first-order. Finally, the results were averaged, which enabled clearer interpretation of the conclusion.

Table 3. The presentation of the research process results

The analysis surface	Character assessment
The choice of candidates	1.5
Programme strategies	2.5
The relations in the news bulletins	4.0
New media	5.0
Attendance	4.0
The impact on the 2015 parliamentary election	4.5
Average:	3.58

Source: Author's own study

The final quantitative result of this analysis does not clearly specify the character of the election in question. The value of 3.58 locates it somewhere between neutral and moderately first-order. The reasons for it are most of all certain fundamental discrepancies between particular components of the analysis, mostly visible in the news bulletins reports and voters' attendance. This might have been caused by the electorate's decisions in the first round, which resulted in certain changes in the course of the campaign.

The fight for the most important office in the country was dominated by "substitute candidates". It was motivated by leaders' "self-preservation instinct" who were already planning their campaigns in forth-coming parliamentary election,. The course of the campaign was supposed to be predictable and boring. It turned out, however, that the surprising outcome of the first round made the second part of the rivalisation far more interesting. What is more, the effects of the presidential election strongly influenced the results of the parliamentary voting. But for Duda's success the Law and Justice would have not won the majority of seats in both houses of Parliament and Kukiz'15 could have found it extremely difficult to introduce its members into the Sejm.

The presidential campaign constituted a prelude to the parliamentary one, which was reflected in the programme strategy of the main political subjects. Issues typically associated with the head of state, that is foreign affairs and defence were treated marginally, and the main focus was on domestic policy and social matters. The candidates at times behaved as if they had fought for the position of prime minister (and had the majority of the seats in parliament guaranteed). This, however, did not influence the level of voters' attendance, which was visible especially in the second round.

The 2015 presidential campaign will be remembered especially for the impact that the Internet and the social media had on the electorate. Obviously, that phenomenon should not be exaggerated and Kukiz's and Duda's campaign ought not to be equalized to 2008 Barack Obama's performance. Nevertheless,



the 2015 election was a breakthrough in Polish political campaigns, especially due to the influence that the social media had on the youngest and other “angry” voters, that is strategically relevant segments. During the election under analysis, for the first time the winner owns his success to his Internet activity.

The course of the presidential campaign in 2015 showed that the role of the traditional media is weakening in favour of the Internet. This can be exemplified by the case of Adam Michnik. In the past, his articles “Your President, Our Prime Minister” (1989) or “Comes Rywin to Michnik” (2002) had a strong impact on the course of political events. Nowadays, however, they would not have such an effect (Mistewicz 2011: 161). In 2015, after the first round of the presidential election the managing editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza* appealed not to “leave Poland in the hands of squirts” (wPolityce.pl 2015). His appeal, however, did not mobilize voters to support Komorowski. Moreover, his address was regarded as an attack on the youngest voters. This clearly means that what is important today is not the opinion of a renown journalist but rather the activity of the social media.

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