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SOCIAL MEDIA
– NEW AND FUTURE-ORIENTED FORM
OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION DURING ELECTION
– AS IMPLEMENTED IN INDIA

INTRODUCTION

Year after year, the Internet has become increasingly ubiquitous. This has resulted in numerous changes in social and political life, consisting in going online with certain actions. This process is evident as regards marketing activity, for instance, which, apart from traditional media such as TV, press, or radio, is supported by – and presumably will in the future be superseded by – online activity. Such a shift stems from rising popularity of online services allowing for slightly different form of promoting a candidate, idea, or political party.

Studies on the forms of marketing communication used during the elections represent a separate sub-domain of research on representative democracy. The turning point in political marketing was election campaign of Barack Obama in 2008, when the current US president's staff first used on a large scale platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, MySpace or Twitter. In subsequent US elections in the year 2012 social media has been used even more widely, thereby showing a new perspective of use of online tools in political life.

Social media, despite the increasingly wider use in election campaigns, are still a new phenomenon in political communication, which requires further study, systematize knowledge and to show implementation in different regions of the world. Therefore, this article aims to show the customization of this tool in the Indian election campaign in 2014. As emphasized by researchers, the elections in India have always been very complicated. Firstly, it is the largest democracy in the

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world, and second thing – Indian society is diverse in terms of culture, language, ethnicity and religion. Accordingly, it is important to obtain a response to the question: How modern communication tools being adapted to such specific conditions? Also did, in this culturally different corner of the globe, work exactly the same mechanism as in the US? In addition, the article aims to systematize the knowledge regarding possibilities of using of social media in political communication.

1. THE GIST OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The concept of social media is identified with the media which "enable interaction between Internet users by means of technological tools, such as: blogs, forums, discussion groups, wiki, e-mails, instant messengers, sharing music, videos and photos[1]", including, e.g., social networking services, blogs and micro-blogs, forums, as well as content-related services, such as YouTube. We must note, however, that this definition of social media is a consensual definition, as this is a constantly-developing area, i.e., there are new things created on the one hand, and old services are being revised and modernized on the other hand.

The factor that distinguishes social media from so-called old media, such as TV or radio, is the range of interactions between the users offered, as well as their openness, since they depart from the traditional division into authors and recipients of the online contents. Here, each user can be both an author of services, and contents themselves can be constantly modified and enriched with new threads.

In present days it is blogs and social networking services that play the most significant role in political marketing. Using those media in any election campaign has a dual nature[2]. First of all, it means transferring communication methods used to date to new tools. Secondly, it attests to transforming the process and objectives of political communicating. Both the Internet, and the social media themselves, serve many different purposes. Their typology was presented by Kirsten A. Foot and Steven M. Schneider in their publication entitled *Web Campaigning*; they made an assumption that technological transformation implements the same political practices, as are usually implemented. They included here the

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[1] Definition of *social media,* see: http://socialmedia.pl/tag/spoleczne-media-definicja/ [accessed on 5.12.2014].

[2] J. ZAJĄC, D. BATORSKI (eds.), *Kampania w sieci. Analiza wyborów samorządowych 2010 roku*, Warsaw: Instytut Spraw Publicznych 2011, p. 21.

informative function, as well as the functions of connecting, involving, and mobilization[3].

The first one – the informative function, deals with an ability to reach out to the biggest possible group of receivers with a political message. Political parties or individual politicians, while designing their websites, reach a mass customer, since everyone can enter such website and go through it. Professional websites also allow for an appropriate selection of information so that the voter would not need to acquire unnecessary data; this is possible due to the use of sections, links and subpages which will guide the consumer through the information contained on the website in a way enabling him/her to eventually find all the data on the issues of his/her interest. The informative function is going to become increasingly significant for in the first decade of this century the rituals and way of processing information have changed[4]. Namely, the Internet has become the primary source of information for young people and they do not wait for evening news on a particular hour the way forty-year-old people do: by this time they could have read everything on the Internet and commented on it instantaneously. The function of connecting, in turn, consists in that social media connect candidates to people or places in the web. This function facilitates making contact through various forums or blogs entailing no need to being physically on the move. They make it possible for supporters of a given candidate to directly interact with him/her and take actions. The next function of social media – the involvement one – relies on supporters of a given candidate involving Internet users into interaction and participation in various activities concerning the election campaign, e.g., through deciding on a newsletter coverage or direct communication with voters by chats or e-mails. The mobilization function is also of immense importance in an election campaign; it is used by election think-tanks of a candidate or political parties to involve services' users into promoting the candidate. It is done both by means of the Internet, by designing websites, or administering a forum, and outside the Internet, by arranging election rallies or putting up posters.

Currently, it is social networking services that are most vigorously developing social medium. Such services "bring together people from the same communities or circles of interests. They enable users to create their own profiles and connect with other service users"[5]. A slightly different definition of social networking ser-

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[3] K.A. FOOT, S.M. SCHNEIDER, *Web Campaigning*, Cambridge: The MIT Press 2006, p. 21.

[4] See: S. COLEMAN, P.M. SHANE (eds.), *Connecting democracy: Online consultation and the flow of political communication,* Cambridge: MIT Press 2011, p. 38.

[5] S. TRZECIAK, *Marketing polityczny w Internecie*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Muza 2010, p. 78; see: M. FOTH, L. FORLANO, C. SATCHELL, M. GIBBS (eds.), *From social butterfly to engaged citizen:*

vices is proposed by Danah M. Boyd and Nicole B. Ellyson, who perceive them as "a service on the Internet consisting in offering to the user a possibility to create their own profiles which are public and showing on those profiles their links with other users"[6].

The main division of social networking services results from a type of a social group which they are targeted at. We can differentiate services for professionals (GoldenLine, LinkedIn), for students (NK.pl), as well as specialist services, such as konsylium24.pl designed for doctors. Today the most popular social networking service is undoubtedly Facebook, which brings together people from all social groups, making it a universal-profile networking service. Rising popularity of this type of services makes them applicable also to political marketing, first and foremost due to the fact that they enable to run targeted campaigns. According to the data presented by Megapanel PBI/Gemius, in January 2013, Facebook network recorded 10.3 million users, which amounts to 26.6 per cent of the Poles' overall population[7].

Possibilities offered by social networking services include primarily[8]:

– Creating profiles – they are a special kind of cards including basic information on the person, as well as current information about activities carried on for the moment, e.g., photos from meetings with voters, or from party conventions;

– Showing the list of friends (in the case of politicians' profiles this will be a list of contacts, since the people on the list might not always be their actual friends) – this tool enables to reach other politicians, or in a broader sense, a group of supporters. A contact list also allows for creating a so-called *Fanpage*, i.e., a website which brings together groups of fans. Hence such page makes it possible to direct contents only to a chosen group.

– Sending private and collective messages, which enables unlimited communication with voters through providing feed about, e.g., all the soonest meetings;

– Holding discussions in the form of posts: this enables to establish interaction with the voters;

– Placing links to ads, photos or other contents; thus it is a free of charge tool enabling promotion, as opposed to paid election advertisements.

Urban informatics, social media, ubiquitous computing, and mobile technology to support citizen engagement, Cambridge: MIT Press 2011, pp. 12-33.

[6] D.M. BOYD, N.B. ELLISON, *Social Network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship*, "Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication" 2007, p. 11.

[7] *10,7 mln użytkowników Facebooka w Polsce*, article as of 6.05.2013: http://www.wirtualne media.pl/artykul/10-7-mln-uzytkownikow-facebooka-w-polsce-serce-i-rozum-ma-najwiecej-fanow [accessed on 3.12.2014].

[8] S. TRZECIAK, *Marketing polityczny*, p. 80.

The next component element of social media is that of blogs and micro-blogs. These are specific Internet services which enable, easily and cheaply, one to emerge online. The setting up of these services allowed Internet users to stop being merely passive. The term "blog" is pretty hard to define due to difficulty in identifying the set of features characteristic of all the blogosphere (i.e., entire amount of blogs)[9]. According to a definition suggested by Anna Gumkowska and Maciej Maryl a blog (a web log – a web diary) is "... a type of website on which the author enters dated posts, screened in a consecutive order, beginning with the most current ones. Usually a note is accompanied by a date of its posting and a title, whereas the readers are able to submit their comments under the posts"[10]. However, as noticed by Dominik Kaznowski, an expert in the field of marketing and new media, to be able to call a website a blog, "it should, besides the very structure and functionalities, reflect the personality or views of the author"[11].

In political marketing blogs predominantly serve the purpose of auto-promotion for a politician. They are a tool that enables to reach voters in a direct or indirect way, owing to journalists. Therefore we can enumerate two types of blogs[12]:
   – Politicians' blogs – a blog run by a politician;
   – Political blogs – blogs run by journalists and experts in politics;

Sergiusz Trzeciak – the author of a course book on Internet marketing, indicated the criteria to be met by a political blog[13]. First of all, it ought to include a determined set of topics: one should first and foremost expect political contents and comments on current political situation. The next criterion is reliability. For many journalists blogs are a valuable source of information. They often invoke the information included in blogs, which for sure increases popularity of such blog. But to be effective marketing tool, a blog has to be run on a constant basis, and its author should actively involve in discussions with readers of his/her diary.

A slightly different type of services are micro-blogs. And although Dominik Kaznowski enumerates micro-blogs as one of the types of blogs, we can, owing to development of micro-blog platforms, with confidence single them out as

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[9] See in more detail: A. GUMKOWSKA, M. MARYL, *Blog to…. blog. Blogi oczyma blogerów. Raport z badania jakościowego zrealizowanego przez Instytut Badań Literackich PAN i Gazeta.pl,* Warsaw: Agora S.A. 2013.

[10] Ibidem, p. 5.

[11] D. KAZNOWSKI, *Nowy marketing w Internecie,* Warsaw: Difin 2007, p. 97.

[12] T. GAJOWNICZEK, *Polskie blogi jako forma dyskursu politycznego – próba analizy zjawiska,* [in:] M. JEZIŃSKI (ed.), *Nowe media i polityka. Internet, demokracja, kampanie wyborcze*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek 2009, pp. 191-198.

[13] S. TRZECIAK, *Marketing polityczny*, p. 76.

a separate service[14]. Micro-blogs are characteristic due to the form of published messages.

Usually, the message is based on a single sentence and concerns, for instance, the thing the user is doing at the moment, or his/her whereabouts. According to Megapanel PBI/Gemius's research, Twitter is the most popular micro-blog service in Poland[15].

Twitter is a network "enabling posting and reading so-called tweets, i.e., short messages of maximum of 140 signs"[16]. Judging by popularity of the service in the US, where all senators and over 90 per cent of the members of the House of Representatives use it on a regular basis, one can presume that Polish politicians will also be equally eager to tweet[17].

Despite the fact that blogs and micro-blogs do not have the status of the traditional media, such as TV or the press do, it should be noted that they, however, do have a well-established status, and their impact on the public views has been on a constant rise.

A slightly different activity profile can be attributed to content-related services. These are predominantly film services generated by Internet users. What's characteristic of them is that they are integrated with other services, owing to which a given picture or film can be made accessible on a social media portal. This function facilitates content sharing. As claimed by Jarosław Roszkowski – an expert in the social media field, content-related services in social media are of enormous significance, for they ensure one of the most effective ways of generating *buzz*[18].

YouTube is also an excellent tool of political promotion, being the biggest free of charge portal for uploading, viewing and commenting on video films[19]. Political parties make use of this service to broadcast their election ads. Since the contents of the service can be shared on social media portals, internet users are eager to recommend films to one another, if such films are funny and smartly prepared at the same

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[14] S. KAZNOWSKI, *Nowy marketing*, p. 98.

[15] *Twitter rekordowo popularny w Polsce, ale mało atrakcyjny dla reklamodawców,* artticle from: http://www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/twitter-rekordowo-popularny-w-polsce-ale-malo-atrak cyjny-dla-reklamodawcow, [accessed on 14.12.2014].

[16] B.D. LOADER, D. MERCEA (eds.), *Social media and democracy: Innovations in participatory politics*, New York: Routledge 2012, p. 85.

[17] *Amerykańska polityka zdominowana przez Twittera*, artticle from: http://www. wirtualne media.pl/artykul/amerykanska-polityka-zdominowana-przez-twittera [accessed on 18.11.2014].

[18] *Buzz marketing* (Word-of-mouth marketing) – consists in generating buzz over a product or brand. Information and appealing messages regarding the product/brand appear in all of the key places, i.e., wherever a potential target group may be.

[19] M. MILLER, *YouTube For Business: Online Video Marketing for Any Business*, "Que" 2008.

time. Dissemination of such materials takes place by means of viral marketing[20]. The YouTube's potential was noticed by Barack Obama, who made this service the primary source of information on the course of his election campaign.

2. INDIAN SOCIAL MEDIA ELECTION 2014

In 2014 in Indian election to the parliament, social media were used on a large scale. This new political communication technique was predominantly directed to young citizens, since India is one of the youngest nation in the world. In this year's election as many as 100 million young people were to go to polls for the first time, therefore all the political parties were aware that winning their support could tip the balance in favour of one of the parties. "Moreover, according to the census of population, over 70 per cent of India's inhabitants are below 35 years"[21].

It was predominantly the Indian People's Party (Bharatiya Janata Party – BJP), which put a special emphasis on social media, and it won a landslide victory in the election, gaining 282 out of the 543 seats that could be voted on in the parliament[22]. They communicated with young voters namely by means of social media (in particular, they used Twitter, Facebook and YouTube). As admitted by Arvind Gupta – the head of the BJP's IT department, one of the authors of the social media campaign of the party – "The social media campaign was one of the crucial factors in their victory […] They opted for running such a campaign as they properly read the trend embraced by the youth of the country"[23], hence they made a bet on using new media and the latest communication tools, and first and foremost on constant presence in social media.

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[20] K. GAJDKA, *Nie tylko w krzywym zwierciadle. Samorządowcy w portalach joemonster.org i YouTube.com*, [in:] M. JEZIŃSKI (ed.), *Nowe media i polityka*, pp. 253-271.

[21] Until 2020, the weighted mean of age will be 29 years in India, which will make Indians the youngest nation in the Word – see in more detail: bbc.co.uk,theindu.com; J. KORUS, *Jak głosuje największa demokracja świata?*, "Newsweek Indie" 3-04-2014, arttticle from: http://swiat.newsweek. pl/wybory-w-indiach-jak-glosuje-najwieksza-demokracja-swiata-newsweek-pl,artykuly,283203,1.html [accessed on 18.08.2014].

[22] In India there are six country-wide parties operating (with the Indian National Congress and BJP at dominant positions), and 47 state-parties, with a total of 1,670 political associations registered. The biggest parties include the centre and secular Indian National Congress, which brought independence to India and which ruled the country from 1947: it gained only 44 mandates in 2014 election, whereas the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) – just 56. Election takes place in stages, and it lasted 10 election days in total in 2014, within a period exceeding one month (since 7 April until 12 May).

[23] *Social Media Played Big Role in India's Election*, June 06, 2014, arttticle from: http://www. voanews.com/content/social-media-emerges-as-a-key-tool-in-indias-election/1931238.html Voice of America, Idrees Ali [accessed on 18.09.2014].

The BJP's goal became an interactive dialogue with citizens and involving them in election actions. The election campaign on the Internet was focused on boosting the image of the party's leader, 63-year-old Narendra Modi, called by Internet users NAMO (the abbreviation of first letters of his forename and surname)[24]. Modi made a constant use of "e–mail, had a Facebook profile, and tweeted on a regular basis, swaying more than 4.1 million followers during the campaign and obtaining more than 9.3 million followers to date"[25]. In May 2014 he had over 16 million "likes" on Facebook[26], making him rank as the second most popular politician in the world, whereas on Twitter he ranked as the sixth most followed leader[27]. Due to these facts he proved to be more attractive leader for the young than his main competitor – 43-year-old Rahul Gandhi – the leader of the Indian National Congress.

The BJP owes its election success not only to using those new communications channels, but also to applying them in an innovative and interactive way, which mobilized voters to act. Modi's supporters not only read and listened to him, but also came up with slogans on WhatsApp and created info-graphics they sent out to their friends. Also the special India272+ portal and fanpage on Facebook edited by volunteers were set up[28]. As Modi explained himself, "The only thing which needed to be done was to log in to the website and begin working – either online, or offline – in the real world"[29]. The BJP also made use of Google Hangouts [Google cafes] in order to seek information on the desirable moves by the party – such a feedback is pivotal to effective public relations[30].

The Indian People's Party also set up its own information channels, created active hashtags, dictated talking trends, as well as made regular posts on Twitter [there were between 5 and 10 thousand posts each week], which served to encourage discussions, sometimes creating a real hurricane of tweets[31]. There was perfect timing of all the activities, appropriate hours of providing information

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[24] See: *Narendra Modi set appointed as Chairaman of BJP's Central Election Campaign Committee*, [in:] "The Economic Times" from 9 June 2013.

[25] https://twitter.com/narendramodi [data as on 7 January 2015].

[26] He has obtained over 26,790,000 "likes" until January 2015, see more: https://www.facebook.com/narendramodi

[27] *Social Media Played Big Role in India's Election*.

[28] See: https://www.facebook.com/india272

[29] M. BONIKOWSKA, *Indie: krajobraz po wyborach. Inspiracje dla Europy,* Raporty i analizy – Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych, no. 2, [6]/2014, p. 7; see too: www.india272.com

[30] See: *Political Marketing for BJP*, Published in: News&Politics, artticle from: http:// www.slideshare.net/alokpratap/political-marketing-for-bjp

[31] A. GUPTA, *The role of social media in 2014 Lok Sabha elections*, artticle from: http:// ibnlive.in.com/news/the-role-of-social-media-in-2014-lok-sabha-elections/460803-3.html [accessed on 18.09.2014].

were chosen; monitoring media all the time, they changed talking points once in a while to prevent their potential voters from being bored. Films, pictures and other actions widely commented on and promoted on social networking services and by means of dedicated websites, also played a major role.

Furthermore, the BJP set spreading political awareness and encouraging young and new voters to go to polls as its goal. They used simple psychological mechanisms, since young people are susceptible to trends and are easily influenced by their peers, that is why it was so important to send them a proper message, and inspire as well as motivate them appropriately. The point was to show them that politicians are to serve them. Judging by voter turnout, which amounted to as many as 66.4 per cent (551 mln people), including, according to estimates, 80 million voters who were below 24 years of age[32], one can say with confidence that making use of social media – the place where the young spend most of their time, was an excellent communication strategy.

Of course, making use of social media is by no means going to replace traditional forms of communicating with voters, yet it does stabilize the image of one's own political party. The BJP made a bet – apart from social media – on door-to-door marketing and numerous meeting with electorate, which, as must be clear, were given extensive publicity and were widely commented on in the virtual world. Over 8 months, the party leader held 440 election rallies, all of them being packed with people, and reached over 4 thousand places; his volunteers, in turn, carried leaflets to millions of Indian houses[33]. During the campaign the party was the first in the world to use 3D screens enabling 3-dimension presence of the leader in rallies. Concise and specific election platform, as well as cell phone mobile applications by which SMS and MMS messages were sent on a large scale, also contributed to the victory to a high extent. Modi himself described his campaign in three words: "extensive, innovative, satisfying"[34].

Making active use of social media made it possible to get to voters all over the country, with no need of physical/actual travel to those places. Taking account of the area/territory of India, as well as demography, in 2014 there were almost 814.5 million people eligible to vote[35], which was a highly significant reason for directing election campaign towards social media having such a vast range.

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[32] D. SANDEEP, *How BJP's online campaign proved vital for success*, [in:] "Business Today (India Today)" from 20 May 2014. Ibidem.

[33] M. BONIKOWSKA, *Indie: krajobraz po*, p. 7.

[34] See: *Election Manifesto 2014*, see: www.bjp.org. BJP, from 7 April 2014.

[35] In this one of the fastest developing and most inhabited countries in the world live 1.237 billion people and almost two thirds of them are eligible to vote.

Many politicians in India have become recognizable namely thanks to social media. Owing to the media, politicians can create their own history, brand and bring their views and life closer to the society. By means of social media one can clearly see/ track who's more popular, whose views make their way to a concrete social group.

The India's election commission rolled out guidelines relating to making use of social media in the election campaign, making an assumption that new regulations refer to running the campaign first and foremost in five different types of social media: collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia); blogs and micro-blogs (e.g., Twitter); content communities (e.g., YouTube); social networking sites (e.g., Facebook); virtual game-worlds (e.g., Apps)[36].

Making amendments to law was grounded on „the necessity of transparency and ensuring level playing field in election". To avoid any breach of the election legislation, candidates were obliged to: provide information on their official accounts as part of broadly understood Social Media; initial Certification of Political Advertisements; verify the bills issued by Facebook and Twitter; bringing transparency to budgets and detailed account of expenditure on advertising and social media, as well as to observe and apply the ethical code of procedure to contents on the Internet as part of political struggle[37].

To sum up, it was the first time in the country's history that social media were of such a great importance. According to Michael Kugelman – senior associated in the South-Eastern Asia programme in Woodrow Wilson Center – this was "social media election […] and the BJM became aware that social media is and extended version of the campaign trail"[38] Arvind Gupta makes an estimation that appropriately conducted "campaign in social media affected 30 to 40 percent of the overall seats, a number he said could go up to 60 percent by the 2019 general elections. In many constituencies, social media was amongst the top three communication tools, overtaking traditional methods such as advertisements"[39].

Furthermore – Modi scripted such an unprecedented win, who simply understood the "changing demographics" of India-a "younger, aspirational and up-

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[36] ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA, No. 491/SM/2013/ Communication Dated: 25th October, 2013, New Delhi, see: http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/current/SocialMedia_CI25102013.pdf [accessed on 20.08.2014].

[37] N. PAHWA, *On The Social Media Guidelines From The Election Commission Of India*, October 26, 2013, artticle from: http://www.medianama.com/2013/10/223-election-commission-social-media-india [accessed on 20.08.2014].

[38] *Social Media Played Big Role*.

[39] *Meet Vikas Pandey, the man who led BJP's social media campaign*, First Post. 2014-05-20. Archived from the original on 20 May 2014.

wardly mobile society". He also ran an energetic, focused and expensive campaign amply helped by an unquestioning media, a listless rival, a discredited ruling government, and a maverick anti-corruption crusader who shot himself in the foot. Luck favours the brave, and Modi certainly proved himself to be a doughty fighter[40].

3. SUM-UP

Marketing in social networking portals is only one of the forms of online marketing – and it is an enormously efficient, economical and effective tool. Actions within the scope of marketing campaigns in social media are based, to a large extent, on the principles of viral marketing, that is Internet users communicating information on a word-of-mouth basis[41], and thus spreading a word about events of their interest, absorbing Tweets or views, as well as particular persons' initiatives. What's also noteworthy is that in social media viral marketing takes a much more elaborate form, since recommendations as to the preferable views reach a vast number of users of a given service, in which the information published by a politician as regards his/her preferences are screened on the portal's main site.

Apart from this evident advantage of social networking portals, there also occur many other reasons for which it's worthwhile to use this group of services for marketing purposes. First, as has been proved, the Internet is already a medium of popularity almost matching that of TV, and some people use this medium much more often than traditional ones[42]. Second, classic marketing campaigns are highly costly, and abilities of measuring their effectiveness are meagre. In such case it may also be observed that campaigns in social media are not only cost-effective, but one can also track all their results by means of tools offered by institutes or Internet portals, such as Google Analytics.

Thirdly, nowadays the voter becomes increasingly demanding and expects much more involved forms of interactions with politicians, and there is no doubt that social media offer such possibilities.

Application of new strategies of online marketing based on interaction with potential electorate, and in particular entering the market of social networking portals, will bring a candidate or a political party numerous gains. First and foremost, it offers possibility to a larger number of people to get acquainted with the

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[40] R. SARDESAI, *2014. The Election That Changed India*, Penguin Random House 2014, pp. 22-24.
[41] D. BAREFOOT, *Znajomi na wagę złota*, Warsaw: Polskie Wydawnictwa Profesjonalne 2014, p. 29.
[42] Ibidem, p. 30.

materials published directly by an organization or a politician, with no necessity to use traditional media. It also helps become aware of the voters' opinion on specific events and initiatives, as well as heighten the amount of users following the publications of political parties on other portals and services, and what's most significant, improve amount and quality of interactions with potential voters.

The BJP's election campaign proved that both today and in the future no political fraction will be able to ignore Social Media. This sophisticated form of communication turned out to be a perfect tool for building strong bonds with voters, encompassing the function of blurring the barriers between the politician and his/her electorate.

It can also be assumed that for future voters, brought up in a way by Internet services or instant messengers, this is going to be the primary source of acquiring knowledge about political activity. Consequently, winning their support will entail effective image creation by means of online marketing tools. The role of political PR is also going to increase, since social media require long-term, scheduled and systematic interaction rather than merely being online just before an election campaign. Therefore social media are a perfect tool for serving the purposes of political PR.

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SOCIAL MEDIA –
NOWA I PRZYSZŁOŚCIOWA FORMA KOMUNIKACJI POLITYCZNEJ
PODCZAS WYBORÓW – IMPLEMENTACJA INDYJSKA

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

Internet, a wraz z nim *social media* stają się podstawowym środkiem komunikacji we wszystkich sferach ludzkiej działalności, także politycznej. To właśnie Twitter, Facebook, YouTub zapewniają nowe sposoby pobudzania zaangażowania obywateli w życiu politycznym, tworzą nową formę dialogu politycznego i są odzwierciedleniem demokracji uczestniczącej. W aktywności politycznej stają się ważnym narzędziem informowania, rekrutowania zwolenników, organizowania działań i zdobywania władzy. W artykule skoncentrowano się na kampanii wyborczej narodowo-konser-

watywnej Indyjskiej Partii Ludowej (Bharatiya Janata Party – BJP), która swoje zwycięstwo w wyborach parlamantarnych w 2014 r. zawdzięcza wykorzystaniu na szeroką skalę *social media*. Celem BJP stał się interaktywny dialog z obywatelami i włączenie ich w działania wyborcze, a także szerzenie świadomości politycznej i zachęcenie młodych wyborców do tego, aby poszli zagłosować.

Słowa kluczowe: Indie, komunikacja polityczna, wybory, media społecznościowe, Indyjska Partia Ludowa.

SOCIAL MEDIA – NEW AND FUTURE-ORIENTED FORM
OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION DURING ELECTION
– AS IMPLEMENTED IN INDIA

S u m m a r y

The Internet, and social media alongside, are becoming basic communication means in all fields of human activity, including the political one. It is namely social media, i.e., Twitter, Facebook, YouTube that ensure new methods of encouraging citizens to involve in political life, establish a new form of political dialogue and reflect participating democracy enabling highly direct communication. In political activity, such media become a significant tool serving to inform, recruit supporters, arranging for actions and gaining power. As proved by the election campaign of the national and conservative Indian People's Party (Bharatiya Janata Party – BJP) in 2014, vigorous running of a social media campaign is going to be one of the major factors determining victory in election in the future. Today social media cannot yet replace a traditional campaign, but what they can do, however, is to impose a platform of public debate, with traditional media – the press and TV which reach majority of voters – increasingly using them as a source of information on politicians and their views. It is the indirect impact that makes social media an indispensable communication tool for politicians.

Key words: India, political communication, elections, social media, the Bharatiya Janata Party.