

# Audiovisual political advertising in communication strategies of Polish political parties: The case of the parliamentary campaign in 2011



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**ABSTRACT:** The article presents the results of empirical research on the use of audiovisual advertising by Polish political parties in election campaigns (both on television and distributed on the Internet). The goal is to show the current trends and most often used means of persuasion during the condensed construction, political information-persuasion message, which is the election advertisement. The commercials were analysed of political parties distributed in the period of the parliamentary election campaign in 2011. The results of the analysis were compared with the results of previous research in this matter, which exhibited certain tendencies in the communication strategies of the Polish political parties.

**KEYWORDS:** audiovisual election advertising, election campaign, personalization, content analysis, political parties, communication strategy



## INTRODUCTION

So we are shaking hands, we have to believe that this country is a paradise, let's say stop the war, a new day is rising for Poland. (PSL, 2011)<sup>1</sup>

The ongoing processes of professionalization and mediatization can be increasingly seen in marketing actions undertaken by political parties in Poland. The depicted elections offer, in an attractive way (*infotainment*) for the recipients, create chances for political parties to reach potential voters, especially that in the media society “there is no market without advertisement, there is no culture without television, there is no election campaign without the public and there is no credibility without *public relations* [...] what does not exist relatively in media, doesn't exist at all” (Michalczyk, 2008, pp. 44–45).

<sup>1</sup> Fragment of the election song of the Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe — PSL) from 2011.

Observed at the beginning of the 21st century, media influence in Poland and even the tabloidization of politics shows changes taking place in the way of constructing and conducting election campaigns. The television spot as the tool of persuasion influence has taken an important place in political campaigns almost since the beginning of the 1990s. It is upheld by a view that a mass medium reaching the biggest part of society, which is television, can be characterised most of all by a high degree of the message's credibility.

These findings are confirmed in the opinions of respondents — results of the study carried out before the parliamentary campaign in 2011 by the Public Opinion Research Centre and the Institute of Public Matters (see Roguska & Zbieranek, 2011), indicate that television is the basic medium from which the respondents derive information on political parties. Next to information and current affairs programmes (63 per cent of respondents), for 31 per cent of the respondents the source of election information is also election commercials on the radio and on television (see Roguska & Zbieranek, 2011, p. 8). Thus, the fact of substantial expenses incurred by political parties in connection with the production, and especially with the transmission of audiovisual election commercials, is not surprising. The comparison of electoral committees' expenses for the transmission of audiovisual advertising on television in recent years (see Table 1) indicates that this channel of reaching its recipients is extremely important, especially for the largest parties.

Table 1. Expenditure of main political parties on the transmission of paid election commercials on television (public and commercial) in terms of one seat in the Sejm of the Republic of Poland from 2005–2011

Political party	Parliamentary campaign		
	2005	2007	2011
	Sum of expenditure on the paid commercial [PLN]	Number of obtained seats	Value of one seat [PLN]
Civic Platform (PO)	7 000 000	133	53 000
	8 000 000	209	38 000
	7 780 000	207	38 000
Law and Justice (PiS)	10 600 000	155	68 000
	9 100 000	166	55 000
	3 800 000	157	24 000
Polish People's Party (PSL)	2 800 000	25	110 000
	5 920 000	31	190 000
	780 000	28	28 000

Political party	Parliamentary campaign		
	2005	2007	2011
	Sum of expenditure on the paid commercial [PLN]	Number of obtained seats	Value of one seat [PLN]
Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)	2 500 000	55	45 000
	5 120 000	53	96 000
	3 900 000	27	145 000
Palikot Movement (RP)	Does not concern Does not concern 240 000	Does not concern Does not concern 40	Does not concern Does not concern 6 000
Poland Comes First (PjN)	Does not concern Does not concern 65 000	Does not concern Does not concern 0	Does not concern Does not concern Does not concern

Source: own study based on KRRiT's reports and PKW announcements in case of financial statements of electoral committees participating in elections to the RP Sejm and Senate (KRRiT, 2005, p. 23; 2007, p. 7; 2011, pp. 5–7; PKW, 2008).

The result of the Polish parliamentary elections in 2011 was the first after 1989 with the re-election of the previous governing coalition, which from 2007 has been created by the Civic Platform (PO) and Polish People's Party (PSL). Pre-election polls indicated the high support of society, just like 4 years before, for the two biggest political parties: the governing Civic Platform and the main opposition party, Law and Justice (PiS). Subsequent election failures of PiS (from 2007) have led to its disintegration, and as a result to the split of the party, the consequence being the establishment by politicians excluded and voluntarily resigning from the PiS membership, of a new party called Poland Comes First (PjN). Parliamentary elections in 2011 also confirmed the position on the political stage of the systematically (from local government elections in 2010) losing support Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) — the first time since 1989 that this party won fewer votes than the Polish People's Party, but also from the left-liberal Palikot Movement (RP) debuting on the political stage (see Ruch Palikota, 2012).

The Parliamentary campaign in 2011 was preceded by an attempt to implement the new "Election Code" (see the Act 2011a, 2011b)<sup>2</sup> prohibiting among others the transmission of paid election commercials on television, which showed the meaning of the new channel of distribution of audiovisual media — the Internet, which is also visible in the significant decrease (apart from PO, which spread parallel

<sup>2</sup> Changes introduced on January 5, 2011 in the "Election Code" were to be valid from 1 August 2011. However in July 2011 these changes were overruled by the Constitutional Tribunal.

commercials both in television and in the Internet) in expenditure for the transmission of advertisements on television.

During the parliamentary campaign in 2011, in contrast to previous campaigns (see Cwalina et al., 2005; Cwalina & Falkowski, 2006, 2008; Adamik-Szysiak, 2012a), the audiovisual election advertisements were most often used by parties enjoying, according to the polls results, a small amount of support among society. It is worth mentioning that commercials of these parties in the considerable majority were only on the Internet, which was undoubtedly connected on the one hand with a smaller budget collected for the election campaign, and on the other — the potential of the new medium reaching especially young voters. The technical possibilities offered by the Internet allow the political entities to independently construct various messages, especially alternative — often ignored or even having no reason to exist in the ‘mainstream media’ (see Foot & Schneider, 2006). The above mentioned CBOS-ISP research indicates that running the campaign by using commercials is relatively well evaluated by young respondents (18–24 years old) — even though they believe that advertisements are not an exhaustive source of information, but they are still required (60 per cent of respondents). The Internet is for this group of recipients (65 per cent of respondents) the most important source of knowledge about elections (see Roguska & Zbieranek, 2011, pp. 7–8).

The basic service, which was used to spread the audiovisual commercials by Polish political parties in 2011 was the YouTube channel, enabling the free posting and watching of film materials by Internet users. From the point of view of goals of the political parties carried out especially during the election campaign, this undoubtedly convergent communication service, combining the advantages of television with the possibilities of the Internet, not only makes the free publication of numerous and various number of materials possible, but it also enables the almost immediate reaction of subjects and the strategic exposition of media or their right directions (“targeting”).

Using tools of political marketing by political entities can be an indicator of the professionalization of electoral operations. One of the elements of marketing is the positioning of the political entity (see Newman, 1994, p. 86; Nimmo, 1970, p. 146; Bowler & Farrell, 1992, p. 9), which may carry the signs of the ideological positioning (concentration on the views and values exhibited by the candidates/politicians), situational positioning (highlighting current problems and promoting proposals of their solutions) or innovative positioning (relying on creative, original proposals, ideas, forms of communication). The final goal of positioning is the candidate/party’s choice of such a way of presentation of their own political offer, so that it gets the acceptance of the previously defined target group.

Innovative positioning played a special role in the strategies of outsiders on the Polish political stage in the parliamentary campaign in 2011. Unconventional ideas to create one’s own image and to present the programme offer appeared in electoral rivalry conducted both at a national and regional level. Vivid examples of

innovative positioning were the audiovisual spots distributed on the Internet, of which several examples causing the greatest media resonance during the electoral campaign in 2011 are discussed in detail below.

## RESEARCH MATERIAL

The gathered research material in the form of 85 different election commercials broadcast on television and the Internet of 6 election committees was analysed in terms of quality-quantity in order to show the current trends and the most often applied media during the creation of the condensed, audiovisual information-persuasion communication, which is election advertising. The subject of the research were the commercials of election committees spread in the period preceding the elections to the RP Sejm, which took place on 9 October 2011 (see Table 2).

Table 2. Name of the political parties and the number of analysed commercials

Electoral Committee	Obtained support [per cent]	Number of analysed commercials
Civic Platform (PO)	39.18	20
Law and Justice (PiS)	29.89	14
Palikot Movement (RP)	10.02	8
Polish People's Party (PSL)	8.36	9
Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)	8.24	12
Poland Comes First (PjN)	2.19	22

Source: National Electoral Commission (PKW, 2012) and own study.

Most of all, taken into account were the advertisements of parties broadcast on national television (including public channels: TVP1, TVP2, TVP Info and commercial: TVN, Polsat) and popularized on websites of political parties and on YouTube. The complementation of the research were the spots distributed by regional candidates from individual parties — for detailed analysis, selected were only those which stood out thanks to an innovative approach.

The study of audiovisual commercials is an attempt to recreate the contents and goals of electoral media fully controlled in case of the form and contents by the given political party (see Nelson & Boynton, 1997; Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2006). The perfect advertising message should be designed to influence the recipient not only in a permanent way, which is somehow written in the specificity of this form of communication, but also different at individual stages of communing with the unit. The research questions thus oscillated around several matters: Do the entities construct audiovisual spots based on the next phases of the campaign, which would prove the professionalization of electoral activities? What was the role of

the political leader in election commercials? What kind of arguments prevailed in marketing communications — positive or negative?

The preliminary analysis of the collected source materials allowed us to issue two research hypotheses. According to the first hypothesis in the Polish parliamentary campaign in 2011 there dominated audiovisual advertisements exposing most of all image issues with the relative marginalisation of media of the substance character (programme). The second hypothesis is a refinement of the first one, stressing that the crucial role in the parliamentary campaign in 2011 was played by advertisements constructed on the model of the music video, which as a result contributed to the slogan representation of the assumptions of the electoral programme, and thus the concentration of subjects mostly on the creation of the specified image.

### FORMATS OF AUDIOVISUAL ELECTION ADVERTISEMENTS

Examination of the source material from the point of view of the content and its form allowed us to classify each of the commercials to one of two basic categories: a message dominated by the verbal layer and a message dominated by the visual and musical layer (see Figure 1).

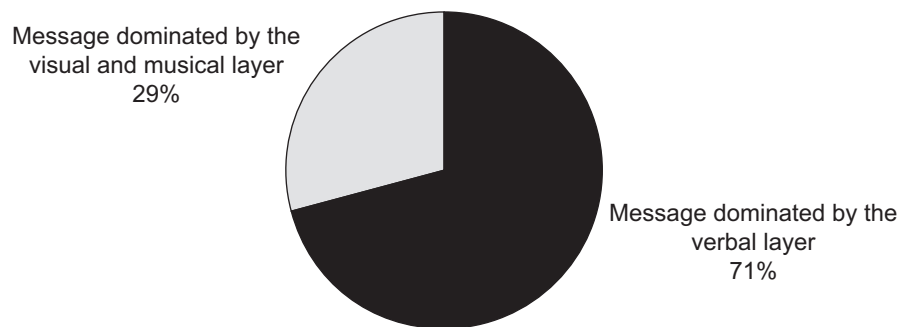


Figure 1. Formats of election advertisements from the parliamentary campaign in 2011

Source: research data.

Results of the detailed analysis of formats (see Kaid & Johnston, 2001, p. 36; Diamond & Bates, 1992, pp. 289–345; Cwalina & Falkowski, 2005, p. 302)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In the literature researchers suggest various typologies of formats, most often distinguishing subsequent ones based on existing ones, e.g. Lynda Lee Kaid and Anne Johnston distinguish the following formats: documental, introspective, certificate, questions — answers, concentrating on the rival, dramatisation of the problem, music video (Kaid & Johnston, 2001, p. 36), while Wojciech Cwalina and Andrzej Falkowski documental, introspective, social support, question — answer, confrontation, dramatisation of the problem, mutual enthusiasm and effort (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2005, p. 302).

dominating in the construction of particular advertisements showed the progressive formal standardization of electoral commercials. Political parties in the accepted communication strategy more often use the already tested formats, which proved to be effective not only for the given party/candidate, but also for political competitors. In the category of messages dominated by the verbal layer the scheme used in the campaign from 2011 can be successfully arranged to the following formats: introspective (including: talking heads) — 28 per cent, certificates (including: authorities and famous people, family members, man in the street ads) — 23 per cent and dramatisation of the problem — 20 per cent of all analysed advertisements.

The format of evidence has been popular in Polish electoral campaigns in recent years (proving the positive features of the candidate applying for this position) — in 2011 it was also applied by all entities. In advertisements from the analysed campaign most often the evidence was given by people known to a wider audience (other politicians, actors, authorities), so called “common citizens” (“people from the street”) representing various regions of Poland and members of the candidates’ families. Contrarily the format of evidence in the spot aimed at attacking political opponents has been used by PiS by implementing the advertising modelled on the spot popularized also in 2011 by Mitt Romney (Republican Party candidate in the USA) entitled “Bump in the Road” (see Romney, 2011). In the PiS advertisement entitled “Words of truth” (see PiS, 2011), so called “common citizens” not only as-sented the positives of the specified group, but also about the negative consequences of exercising power by the political opponent — PO (and more precisely, the leader of this party, Donald Tusk).

Adverts concerned only with the image and music (sound layer) resembling music videos or cartoons were mostly characterised by the focus of the message content on the political image of the promoted party or political rival. Political groups using the format of the electoral video clip focused on promoting the candidates/leaders of the given party in a positive light. Animation and computer graphics dominated in advertisements presented in a distorting mirror the current activity of politicians sitting in the parliament — rivals.

It is worth noticing that electoral songs so far have been created most often for the needs of campaigns implemented by two parties or candidates (in case of presidential elections) at a national level, the parliamentary campaign in 2011 was also extensively conducted by candidates from particular parties at a regional level, and it showed that personalization and professionalization are phenomena clearly defined also in marketing strategies implemented on this level (see Przedpełski, 2012).

Electoral songs promoting two candidates of PSL in the district of Lublin: Krzysztof Hetman and Piotr Rzetelski were used to authenticate and emphasize the style of the created image of the candidates as well as obtaining support, especially that of the younger electorate. From the song composed in the rhythm of

hip-hop, the recipient got to know not only that Rzetelski “gets the cha-cha and is a good guy,” but also about his contributions for the local community, including the construction of the ski lift (see Rzetelski, 2011). The need to support the representative of the younger generation, as the 37-year-old PSL leader was created — Krzysztof Hetman, was expressed by the words of his electoral song: “Lublin is our home, this guy knows it. He deserves my vote — Krzysiek Hetman is ok” (Hetman, 2011).

Innovative musical convention in the Polish electoral campaign was used by the SLD candidate from the district of Szczecin, Jędrzej Wijas. The 34-year-old candidate constructed a spot (see Wijas, 2011) based on the music video for a heavy metal song. The main character of the advertisement and at the same time the leader of the band was the aforementioned Wijas growling, to the accompaniment of electric guitars and drums, slogans of his electoral campaign which were simultaneously displayed on the screen in the form of subtitles.<sup>4</sup>

Media resonance not only at the regional or national scale, but world scale (see mk/tr, 2011), was sparked by one of the spots of the SLD candidate from the district of Lublin — Katarzyna Lenart. Constructed only on the basis of the methodical line and image, the verbal layer was completely omitted. The theme of the spot was a striptease performed by the candidate, and in the climax naked breasts were covered with the inscription: “censored.” The culmination of the message were the subtitles appearing on the screen: “You want more? Vote for SLD! Only we can do more!” and on the official Lenart electoral billboard — the only elements in the advertisement indicating to the recipient that he is watching an electoral spot. The candidate, stating her reason for adopting such original electoral advertising on the pages of the national press explained:

I wanted to catch the attention of the media to my programme. When I presented it previously, it remained unnoticed. I decided that I needed to shock. That was one of the concepts. I don't think this was something vulgar. There is nothing obscene in there, to be honest you cannot see anything. Only a bra and that's all [...] I bet on the body, because my campaign is aimed at young people. Unfortunately, the young can only be interested in something controversial. (Kublik, 2011, p. 2)

The mentioned example seems to be a perfect exemplification of this phenomena occurring in mass culture, also known as the “culture of revealing” due to the clearly apparent sexualisation of public and media life (see McNair, 2002).

It is noticeable that the described category of formats (video clip, animated film) was directed primarily to Internet users, which is proven even by promoting them mainly in the network. The leader of the audiovisual commercials spread on the Internet was the PSL commercial presenting the election song entitled “Man is the most important,” where the number of hits to the end of November

<sup>4</sup> Slogans are: “secular country, worth life, freedom.”



2011 had reached more than 220 thousand. The second place in terms of the number of hits was the RP message, entitled “Do not wake up too late” — more than 100 thousand. Making the election message even more attractive by using modern technologies is an undoubted attempt to interest and stimulate a certain approach, especially by young, often passive recipients, towards activities of specific political parties.

**CONTENT ANALYSIS**

The study of advertising political parties from the parliamentary campaign in 2011 for the arguments based on constructing and/or promoting the particular image of the given party (own or political rival) and presenting election demands, showed a clear dominance (apart from PO and PjN commercials) of messages, whose goal is most of all the creation of the image (see Figure 2). The image of one’s own party was the fundamental element of the construction of advertising of PSL and RP, which constituted respectively 71.5 per cent and 62.5 per cent of all advertisements of these two parties. Exactly half of PiS and SLD election commercials (50 per cent) were devoted to the creation of a negative image of political rivals, especially members of the previously governing coalition of PO and PSL. Most information about the election programme and/or the position of the group in certain cases the voter could find in PO advertisements — 70 per cent and PjN — 50 per cent of all commercials, the least — in RP commercials (12.5 per cent).

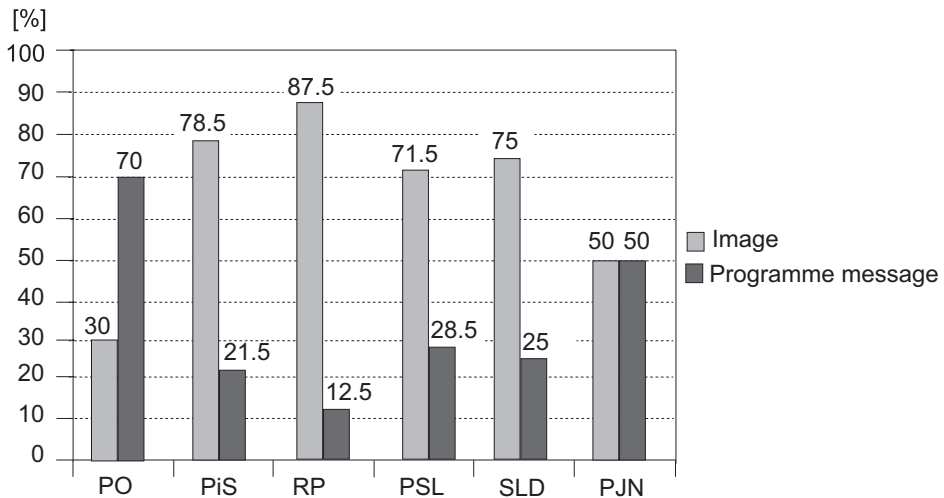


Figure 2. Image and programme message — audiovisual commercials from the parliamentary campaign in 2011

Source: research data.

Audiovisual adverts of three parties (PO, PJN and SLD) informed the recipient in the verbal layer (reader/candidate) and/or visual (subtitles on the screen) about specific programme proposals. In the parties' messages we can distinguish, among others, promises regarding: family politics and education (PO — easier access to flats, relief for the third and subsequent child, building schools and kindergartens; PJN — 400 PLN a month for each child, 200 PLN for an educational account, school duty from the 7 years of age, SLD — free kindergartens), public health (PO — better equipment in hospitals, improvement of registration of the sick, PJN — Regional Health Insurance Fund, SLD — jobs for nurses, decrease of drugs prices), pensions (PO — permanent increase of pensions, SLD — significant increase of pensions and allowances) or assistance for the poorest (SLD — free legal aid for the poorest; PJN — lack of tax increases, tax relief). The domain of the advertising message of other analysed groups (PiS, RP, PSL) was the presentation of the election programme based mainly on universal, timeless values, like: justice, honesty and truth, thrift, Poland — modern, prosperous, strong and loyal, decent and safe life, fair work and pay, Poland of equal opportunities (PiS) (see Adamik-Szysiak, 2012b, pp. 66–67), civil country, friendly, social and modern (RP) or equality, freedom, country's safety, economic safety, social and food, environmental protection, equal chances between regions (PSL).

Electoral mottos were used to emphasize and reinforce the leading themes of electoral campaigns of particular political parties in the voters' minds. The properly formulated electoral motto becomes an attribute not only in distinguishing the message of the given entity from the competition, but it also affects the recipient's imagination, prompting him to reflect on the future of the country.

Messages contained in electoral mottos from 2011 referred to the demands emphasized in the campaign, defined the current problems and needs of society, informed, promised and encouraged potential voters to being active in the elections. Electoral mottos were usually accented in the last frame of the spot (visually and verbally), which has additionally emphasized their role in the form of the advertisement's punch line.

A clear competition on the level of electoral motto was observed between the biggest ruling party (PO) and the main opposition group (PiS). PO's message "We will do more" was the party's declaration that after 4 years in power the next term will be even more effective. The slogan "Time for bold decisions" promoted by PiS in the period of the so called "information campaign,"<sup>5</sup> criticized the actions of the ruling PO-PSL coalition (among others the actions of the government in the area of the pension system), was the prelude to the actual electoral campaign, whose

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<sup>5</sup> Such expression of the conducted campaign has been intensively emphasized by its creators, especially facing the charges of political rivals and media about the conduct of the electoral campaign almost half a year before the statutory time limit.

essence were the announcements of significant changes in the area of the political and economic area (“Time for bold decisions,” “Poland deserves more”) and social (“Poles deserve more,” “Fair country”).

One of the slogans of PJN was the party’s name, which, on one hand served to consolidate in the consciousness of potential voters the name of the new group on the political scene, and on the other hand was the signal for the recipients that the party’s program can be summed up in words, constituting the essence of its existence. While the message “Anything is possible” was to convince society that voting for the party, which has low support in the polls, makes sense, one of the PJN’s leaders, Marek Migalski, emphasized during press conferences that if the party managed to collect 250 thousand signatures of support on their lists, it is also possible that they will exceed the electoral threshold and enter the Sejm.<sup>6</sup>

The anthropocentric slogans were referred to by the folk PSL in advertisements (“Man is the most important”) and left-wing SLD (“Tomorrow without fear”). Both parties have most of all accepted the interest in matters of the “common people,” social security —lowering of unemployment, increasing wages and pensions (see Mar and PAP, 2011; Jagor and PAP, 2013).

The Palikot Movement, apart from the main slogan “Modern Country,” which hid the slogans of a country: civil, secular, friendly and social, paid attention to the spectacular and cyclical (just before the electoral campaign) changes of views by politicians (“We will end political prostitution”). Examples magnified by RP, included joining PO leading in the polls by politicians from other parties, including Joanna Kluzik-Rostkowska (firstly an MP of PiS, then founder of PJN) and Bartosz Arłukowicz (from the beginning of his political career connected with left-wing groups, among others, SLD).

The standard of the parties’ communication strategies, in order to present assumptions or programme proposals in commercials, is the usage of the introspective format, however the analysis of groups’ or candidates’ actions in subsequent Polish campaigns indicates the departure from a highly popular format of talking heads, in which the politician visible on the screen speaks directly to the viewer (100 per cent). Concentration of the viewer’s attention on the problem is obtained thanks to the achievement of more creative methods used to visualise the message.

Ways of building advert messages, whose task is to evoke desire schemes of interpretation of the receiver (video rhetoric) became superior during the creation of the audio-visual commercial. The significance of the applied images, and especially construction of relations between these images and the advert subject are to show the rhetoric superiority of the sender (see Richardson, 2002; Nelson & Boynton, 1997, pp. 27–54).

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<sup>6</sup> In Poland in elections to the Sejm there is a 5 per cent electoral threshold in the nation’s scale.

A moving sequence of frames with touching music was used by PiS in advertisements, distributed about half a year before the official beginning of the election campaign. Adverts, designed as music videos (archive photos shown in the rhythm of melancholic music) evoked memories of the Smolensk disaster, in which died, among others, the presidential couple Maria and Lech Kaczyński. The attention is drawn by the narration of one of the commercials, obtained thanks to the right combination of frames. Images resembling Lech Kaczyński in the period of his presidency (including, among others, meetings with the president of the USA, George Bush or the president of Georgia, Mikhail Saakashvili) were presented, with the scenes showing the sequence of: remains of the crashed plane in Smolensk visible through barbed wire, social conversation of the Prime Minister Donald Tusk with the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, frame showing the smile on the face of the president of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, presented against the Polish flag during the visit in Poland, and Jarosław Kaczyński kneeling over his brother's coffin. The succession of frames in the described fragment of the commercial suggests relations between the RP Prime Minister and at the same time the leader of the main opposition party (PO) Donald Tusk and the leaders of Russia and the catastrophe of the plane, in which died, among others, coming from PiS, governing from 2005, the RP President, Lech Kaczyński. The mentioned message undoubtedly proves the undertaking of actions entering permanent provocation (see Karwat, 2007, p. 92) especially towards the main political rival — PO.

The mentioned format of talking heads becomes popular in constructing commercials based on the model of “address” — the last advert in the campaign with the function of a punchline of the previous messages. The goal of this kind of advert is the mobilization of society to active participation in elections by emphasizing the importance of the undertaken decision, with the simultaneous indication of one's own party as unbeatable. The final message of the leaders of three parties (PO, PiS, RP) was based on extensive arguments, other politicians have confined themselves in their statements to the spare punchline stressing most of all the electoral slogan of their own party campaign.

## **PERSONALIZATION AND PRESIDENTIALIZATION OF POLITICS**

The image of the political group is built through the prism of its leader, this trend clearly noticeable through the promotional materials of Polish political parties. The leader — the chief — becomes a kind of personification of the party. This is a progressive phenomenon of the personalization and presidentialization of politics, which seems to be justified from the psychological point of view — the voter can much easier refer to the particular person than to general slogans or most often difficult to define or precise explanation slogans (see Wiszniewski, 2000, p. 85; Poguntke & Webb, 2007). The growing meaning of the leader's participation in election adverts in the period of three parliamentary campaigns is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Leader in the election commercials from the parliamentary campaign in 2011

Leader (party)	Percentage of adverts with the participation of the leader (100 per cent of sound and image) in parliamentary campaign
Donald Tusk (PO)	45
Jarosław Kaczyński (PiS)	43
Grzegorz Napieralski (SLD)	30
Waldemar Pawlak (PSL)	14
Janusz Palikot (RP)	50
Paweł Kowal (PjN)	18

Source: research data.

The ways of framing the leaders in commercials, especially the application of close plans creating the illusion of intimate discussion of the candidate with the voter, are becoming standard. The leader directly turning to the viewer (i.e. 100 per cent<sup>7</sup>), is a permanent element of almost half of all adverts of political parties in the years 2005–2011. A different procedure was used in commercials in 2011 by PSL, despite the fact that the hero of most adverts was the party's leader, Waldemar Pawlak. Still he directly turned to voters only in 14 per cent of messages, the remaining part of the politician was limited to the frequent recalling of the very image of the leader presented in different situations. The small share of the PjN leader in commercials (18 per cent) was connected with the situation of a relatively long period of time without the emergence of one leader of the party.

The conducted analysis showed that in audiovisual adverts spread by political parties in the period of the parliamentary campaign in 2011, a positive argument dominated. Both in the visual and verbal layer of the messages there dominated the presentation showing in the positive light their own candidate/party and/or the selected issues from the suggested programme offer.

Negative commercials, mostly image (see Kaid & Johnston, 2001, p. 18; Cwalina & Falkowski, 2005, pp. 480–482; Richardson, 2001, pp. 775–800; Benoit, 2001, pp. 109–126; Biocca, 1991, pp. 18–19; Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991) appeared to a different degree in the strategies of almost all (apart from PSL) parties (see Figure 3). A negative message, aimed primarily at PO and Donald Tusk dominated the communication strategy of SLD.

<sup>7</sup> 100 per cent — sound and image is a frame when the recipient both sees and hears the person who is speaking.

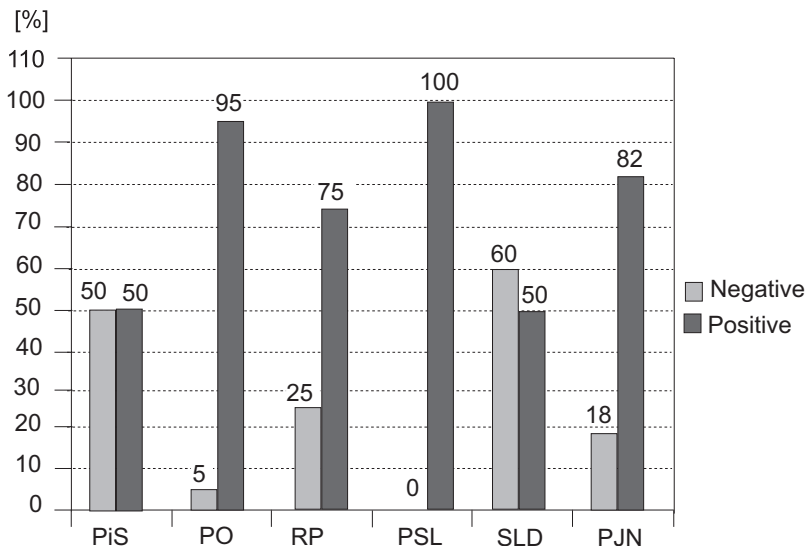


Figure 3. Positive and negative messages in election commercials from the parliamentary campaign in 2011

Source: research data.

## CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the results of the analysis of audiovisual advertising spread in the period of the parliamentary campaign in 2011 have proven the superiority of the emotional argument. A vast majority of groups focused on the advert image, ignoring so-called “the problem advertising,” which informs the outline and plans of a given party. The issues of self-presentation have turned out to be very important in the strategy taken by PSL, and also RP. Comparison of the received research results from 2005–2011 allows us to state that party image is more and more built by the prism of leaders, which proves the personalization and presidentialization of parliamentary campaigns.

The proof of the professionalization of electoral activities taken by Polish political entities both at the national and regional level are spots constructed on the basis of the next phases of the campaign: identification, convincing, comparison and consolidation (see Diamond & Bates, 1992, pp. 289–345). In the tactics of almost all the entities, messages appeared which contained elements of information wanting to distinguish the candidate from rivals, including: concerning the selected aspects of the candidate’s biography (party’s genesis), electoral programme and position on current social and political issues, and direct request of the candidate for the voter’s vote. These elements, corresponding to successive stages of the campaign in the majority, especially in strategies of outsiders of the Polish political scene, constituted the composition of one message.

Commercials containing elements attacking rivals in negative commercials were usually based on computer graphics and/or photographs of particular politicians. It was similar in case of the soundtrack — here the voice was lent by an anonymous reader or actor, these operations aimed at avoiding the effect of boomerang. The most often criticised politician was the Prime minister, Donald Tusk, and his party, PO, which was trying to be re-elected. The summary of results of research from subsequent election campaigns shows that negative advertising has a greater significance in the communication strategies of PiS and SLD (see Table 4). This situation is supported by the fact that both parties created in the analysed period of time opposition. The party which occasionally refers to negative messages is PSL — the party performing on the Polish political scene the function of the pivot party.

Table 4. Negative messages in election commercials from the parliamentary campaign in years 2005–2011

Subject	Negative adverts or adverts in which there were fragments attacking the political rival(s) [in per cent]		
	Parliamentary campaign		
	2005	2007	2011
PO	37.5	66	5
PiS	40	56	50
SLD	34	61	60
PSL	20	12.5	0

Source: research data.

The most varied adverts in 2011 were constructed by PJN debuting on the political scene — however, these commercials, due to the channel of distribution (the Internet) and the form (computer animations, music videos) and the message content (based mostly on humour, sarcasm, implications) were mostly addressed to young voters. We should also notice that the level of implementation of PJN adverts was significantly different from high standards,<sup>8</sup> to which subjects (especially PO and PiS) accustomed the recipients in recent years.

Analysing audiovisual commercials in terms of the applied techniques of persuasion, what we see is the phenomenon of standardisation in the ways of constructing advertising messages (subjects often use already tested operations, both in their own strategy, as well as political rivals). Next to the introspective format, enjoying great popularity in Polish campaigns since the beginning of the 1990s, including especially its version of talking heads, the role of the certificate format increases. The campaign in 2011 has also shown the crucial role of the music video — a message based on an image, whose content and manner of interpretation is marked out by an adequate melodic line (music).

<sup>8</sup> PJN adverts resembled amateur film recordings, while the evoked commercial of PO or PiS in the majority were accomplished through professional advertising agencies.

Modelled on the communication strategies accomplished by political entities on the level of national campaigns the candidates from particular regions have willingly built emotionality and intimacy of the message based on close plans. Establishing eye contact with the viewer aims at the creation of a semblance of direct reality, honest conversation. What is also interesting is the fact of omitting in strategies of entities at the regional level, messages attacking the rival — in the analysed time period there was not stated any kind of such messages, the occasionally appearing allusions and direct phrases in advertisements indicated or suggested the candidate's dissatisfaction with the overall situation of the region, without striking the images of individual rivals.

An important “novelty” influencing the shape and content of audio-visual adverts was, in communication strategies of all parties in 2011, the construction of at least several advertisements only for the needs of the Internet. These messages were usually characterised by the greater immediacy of messages (not only in the verbal layer, but also the visual) from those broadcast on television. The regularly increasing number of Internet users, including potential voters of the younger generation, is undoubtedly an important factor influencing decisions of politicians about the use of the Internet's potential in marketing strategies.

The effectiveness of the applied techniques of persuasion in audiovisual advertisements undoubtedly requires further detailed studies. The final electoral result is decided, however, by many more factors — it is the whole marketing strategy, where electoral spots are only one of the elements. Hence, in spite of great creativity in designing advertisements, often supported by high financial expenditure, the end result of electoral rivalry can be unsatisfactory for political parties.

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