

Summary of doctoral dissertation  
written under the guidance of Prof. Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska,  
***Model of the presidential election campaign in the Republic of Korea in  
2017. The role of social media***

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The subject of the dissertation is the presidential election campaign in the Republic of Korea in 2017 and the role of social media. The main purpose of the work is to discuss both what the 21st century electoral campaigns are and what role social media play in them, as well as show the policies in South Korea, which allows to create a model of the presidential election campaign in this country. The doctoral dissertation aims to broaden knowledge and facilitate understanding of the specifics of political communication in South Korea, which is a country poorly described in Polish literature. In addition, it can be a starting point for further comparative studies with other countries – both other new democracies, middle power countries (in the context of foreign policy themes appearing in election campaigns), or in the context of using populism as a communication strategy.

For South Korea 2017 was a special year. After thirty years of military dictatorship (1961-1987), the country transitioned to democracy, and 2017 marked the thirtieth anniversary of this transition. In addition to summaries and cross-sectional analyzes appearing around the world for this occasion, it was also a year of special challenges for South Korean democracy. The most important was the scandal leading to the impeachment of president Park Geunhye, and consequently to the early elections in May 2017, as well as the situation on the international arena and growing tensions in the region related to the tests conducted by North Korea on the one hand, and the diplomatic conflict on the other China.

The research questions included both those regarding the content of the campaign itself and, more broadly, its organization. Therefore, answers were sought to questions related to such issues as concentration on the candidate and focus on the political party, personnel and program issues, personalization of the campaign, references to "people" (a manifestation of the so-called thin populism), references to anti-establishment content, main issues in published posts, references to foreign policy and diplomatic relations with other countries. By posing these questions, three main hypotheses were formulated. The first hypothesis was that Americanization was a leading feature of the South Korean presidential election campaign. The

United States is a role model for many countries around the world, being a pioneer in many campaign solutions. The study of the South Korean campaign aimed to check whether the features of American campaigns, such as personalization or professionalization, are clearly visible in it. The second hypothesis was that populism is the dominant communication strategy in social media. Populism understood as a communication strategy was well studied in European campaigns, but it was interesting to verify whether it is equally present in the campaign on another continent - in South Korea. The third hypothesis pointed to international relations as one of the most important issues in social media. Given the unique geopolitical conditions, the crisis in diplomatic relations with China, and the special activity of North Korea in ballistics testing at the turn of 2016 and 2017, it was very likely that these issues would be present in the messages published by individual candidates.

The hypotheses were verified on the basis of empirical research. The collected materials, posted on Facebook and Twitter accounts by the three most important candidates in the campaign, were analyzed using mixed (qualitative and quantitative) research methods. The hypotheses have been partially confirmed. Americanization was the leading feature of the South Korean presidential election campaign (H1), however populism was a dominant communication strategy for only one candidate (H2), and international relations were not the most important issue in social media on any of the accounts analyzed (H3).

In addition to describing the results of empirical research, the doctoral dissertation provides a broader context regarding political communication in the Republic of Korea. The analysis can also be a start point for future comparative research.

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