

**SUMMARY**  
**of doctoral dissertation**  
**„Celebrization of politics as a tool for shaping the political stage in Poland”**

Doctoral dissertation in the field of social sciences in the discipline of political and administration sciences

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The media are currently the main source of information concerning social, cultural and political life. The political stage in Poland is subject to more and more evident mediatization, and celebrization and a bias towards entertainment, resembling a popularity contest, a fame ranking or a chase for existence in all the media, instead of offering a profound analysis of the society and state institutions. Some politicians are much more interested in appearing in TV programmes, on covers of glossy magazines or on tabloid-like Internet websites rather than in getting involved in any kind of political activity for the good of the country and its citizens. On the other hand, political issues are frequently discussed by media stars who are increasingly considered as political experts, while having no political experience, knowledge or social support whatsoever.

Polish society is nowadays witnessing a progressive process of celebrization of the political stage. This process, in turn, more and more often determines our perception of politics and policy makers.

The author of the dissertation aims at a thorough analysis of the contemporary phenomenon of celebrization of politics as a tool for shaping the political stage in Poland, as it has not been sufficiently addressed, especially by political science.

Basic theoretical notions of the dissertation include: celebrities, celebrization, celebrity support, media-image and political stage. What has been discussed and interpreted in the dissertation are the reasons for celebrization of the political stage, the course of this process, its instruments as well as its positive and negative influence on the political stage. The author has also presented a range of prognostic hypotheses.

The main hypothesis of the dissertation is that celebritization of politics is increasingly creating the image of the political stage in Poland. Furthermore, four additional hypotheses have been formed in the dissertation:

1. Celebritization of politics is a more and more striking trend in Polish politics.
2. Within the last several years politicians' privacy has been severely explored both in their public activity as well as in their media coverage in Poland.
3. The entertainment media in Poland are more and more willing to take up political topics, whereas politicians gradually adopt patterns of behaviour characteristic for celebrities.
4. Political celebrities in Poland impose patterns of behaviour on political life.

The main hypothesis as well as the first three additional hypotheses have been positively verified, whereas the fourth additional hypothesis has been verified positively and negatively.

In the dissertation there are also four main research questions addressed in particular chapters and they are not directly connected with any of the hypotheses.

The author of the following dissertation has referred to articles and monographs of Polish and foreign scholars. She has also analysed fiction, press articles and media news published in the Internet, as well as TV interviews and information or even TV series and feature films. In the course of writing the author explored the resources of numerous libraries in Poland and abroad, Internet portals (including YouTube), Polish and foreign press, her private collection, materials of the National Election Commission, conversations with journalists, politicians and questionnaire respondents.

The dissertation would not be completed without the analysis of the author's own research material, namely questionnaires addressed to over 500 people from Poland, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Canada. This material enabled the author to refer to particular examples of political celebrities, define their features and describe how they are perceived by Polish society.

The research methods used in the following dissertation include: the quantity and quality analysis of media coverage and of the author's own research comparative material, concerning the perception of political celebrities in Poland and selected other countries; the system method which presupposes that some political phenomena and processes, such as celebritization of politics, cannot be analysed in isolation, but in the wide context of the whole political system; the comparative method with reference

to the typology of political celebrities<sup>972</sup> and juxtaposition of similarities and differences of particular political types, events, processes and other entities of political life. Finally, the descriptive method helped to systematize the knowledge of celebritization of politics in Poland and precisely describe its complexity.

The dissertation consists of an introduction in which the choice of the subject is explained and the hypotheses, research questions, methodology used and the state of the study are presented, and of the main body comprising four chapters (each one consists of three subsections):

- the first chapter describes and interprets the theoretical and practical aspect of celebritization of politics; within the main scope of interest in this part of the dissertation there are mutual relationships and connotations between celebrities and politicians; the author aims at defining the phenomenon of celebritization of politics and presents a number of foreign examples of political celebrities;
- in the second chapter the phenomenon of Polish political celebrities is analysed and the their auctorial typology is presented. The notions of "celebritizing politicians" and "politicizing celebrities" have been introduced as well as the issue of famous politicians' relatives who got engaged in different sorts of public activity. The proposed division has been confirmed with specific examples;
- the third chapter provides the analysis of media coverage in Poland in terms of patterns of behaviour of political celebrities in the media. The research material comprises: three entertainment programmes of two commercial TV stations – „Taniec z gwiazdami”, „Szymon Majewski Show” and „Kuba Wojewódzki”, two women's magazines „Twój Styl” and „PANI” and two Internet entertainment programmes „Ucho Prezesa” and „20M<sup>2</sup>”;
- the fourth chapter presents the results of the author's research. The analysed material indicates that celebritization of politics is a world-wide phenomenon; in Poland, however, it is perceived and evaluated in a very special way.

The final part of the dissertation includes conclusions from the analysis of the given research problems as well as prospects of the future development of the phenomenon of celebritization of politics in Poland. There are also some additional

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<sup>972</sup> In the dissertation the term political celebrities denotes politicians who follow patterns of behaviour and methods of communication established by celebrities (hence a politician becomes a celebrity); celebrities (the media people, e.g. artists, journalists, actors, singers, the Internet and tabloid stars, sports people, scientists etc), who got politically engaged and stood for general elections, becoming members of the Parliament, mayors, leaders of political parties, diplomats and activists of local governments. Besides, the category of political celebrities also includes relatives of people involved in politics.

elements which the dissertation comprises – the summary in English, the bibliography, tables of photos, and charts, lists of abbreviations and the annexe with the relevant questionnaires.