POLISH MASS MEDIA COVERAGE AND PUBLIC OPINION ON E-DEMOCRACY. THE CASE OF ELECTRONIC VOTING

Magdalena Musiał-Karg :: Izabela Kapsa

ABSTRACT *The rapid development of new technologies and their impressive communication capacity has fundamentally changed modern democracy by providing easy and universal access to information, as well as increasing participation and accessibility of political involvement tools. One of the electoral participation tools is e-voting which has been used in only a few countries. The main aim of the paper is to explore whether and how e-voting has been presented in Polish mass media (1), as well as to investigate people's opinions about e-voting against certain political factors (2). The research is based on a media content analysis (quantitative and qualitative), data collected via the Content Analysis System for Television (CAST) and a quantitative analysis of data from a survey conducted by the authors (2018, sample: 1717 Poles). The results of the analyses show that the debate on the implementation of e-voting is rather poor, but the support for e-voting among Poles remains considerable. The public media rhetoric is interlinked with attitudes towards political parties. To some extent, determinants are reflected in the public opinion on the implementation of e-voting since Poles declare both their support for the introduction of e-voting and willingness to vote online.*

Authors' note

Magdalena Musiał-Karg :: Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań **::** magdalena.musial-karg@amu.edu.pl
Izabela Kapsa :: Faculty of Political Science and Administration, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz **::** izabela.kapsa@ukw.edu.pl

INTRODUCTION

Due to the rapid development of new technologies and their impressive communication capacity, the Internet has fundamentally changed modern democracy by providing easy and universal access to information, increasing participation and accessibility of political involvement tools. Opinions among e-democracy theorists differ, but most share the belief that online communication may overcome the barriers in contemporary liberal-democracy politics.

The research subject described in the paper is related to e-democracy understood as the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support and enhance democratic institutions and processes (Grossman, 1995; Kersting, 2012; Lindner & Aichholzer, 2020; Noveck, 2004; Tsagarousianou, 2000; Vedel, 2006; Weale et al., 1999). E-democracy has the potential to widen the range of available participation tools and to strengthen participatory opportunities and prerequisites for citizens' political participation. Particularly, the Internet has become a new vehicle for traditional political activities and influence of democratic processes. One of electoral participation e-tools is *e-voting*. In the majority of countries, regardless of how many problems e-voting generates, citizens show very positive attitude towards the e-tool. This is noticeable at the public debate stage before e-voting is actually introduced.

The research is based on the *diffusion of innovation (DOI) theory* (Rogers, 1962/2003) that explains and measures the potential spread of e-voting among citizens (Vassil et al. 2016). As e-voting systems may be considered to be a technological innovation (Sambo & Alexander, 2018), we may assume that the e-voters profile in Poland will converge with the evidence from the research into the e-voting practice (Alvarez et al., 2009; Krimmer et al., 2020; Schlozman et al., 2010; Vassil & Solvak, 2016; van Dijk, 2005).

The main aim of the paper is to explore whether and how e-voting has been presented in the Polish mass media (1), as well as to investigate public opinions on this e-tool in the context of political factors (2).

According to the general hypothesis**,** although the debate on the implementation of e-voting is rather poor, there are significant differences in the way of presenting e-voting in various Polish mass media (news services). The attitude of the public media is rather negative towards e-voting, whereas the position of commercial media is neutral or rather positive. Such rhetoric is interlinked with attitudes towards certain political parties. Although the main determining factors are reflected to some extent in public opinion on the implementation of e-voting, Poles declare both their support for the introduction of e-voting and willingness to vote online.

The research is based on a media content analysis and data collected via the Content Analysis System for Television (CAST)[1] , as well as a quantitative analysis of data from a survey conducted by the authors (2018, sample: 1717 Poles). The media content analysis helps to investigate news services by three largest TV stations in Poland: *Wiadomości* (TVP1 - public), *Fakty* (TVN - private) and *Wydarzenia* (Polsat - private).

E-VOTING AS A TOOL OF E-DEMOCRACY

Information and communication technology (ICT) has changed social, economic and political life in many ways. It means that new electronic tools not only inform and communicate, but also mobilize, increase participation, engage citizens, and provide tools that have the potential to change previous relationships between citizens and governments. According to OECD (2003, p. 9), ICT is a powerful tool for enhancing citizen engagement in policy-making. However, we need to remember that technology is rather an enabler than a solution. In a similar way Jan van Dijk and Kenneth Hacker (2000, p. 1) describe digital democracy as the use of ICT and computer-mediated communication (CMC) in all kinds of media for the purposes of enhancing political democracy or the participation of citizens in democratic communication.

Some researchers do not raise the issue of participation and define electronic democracy as any democratic political system in which computers and computer networks are used to carry out crucial functions of the democratic process, such as information and communication, expression of interest and aggregation, and decision-making (both deliberation and voting) (Hagen, 1997). Nevertheless, it is difficult to dispute the statement that the contemporary civilization faces the era of electronic democracy based on modern ICT tools and a new method of exercising democratic power (Musiał-Karg, 2014, p. 99). Moreover, the Internet has transformed the political process together with the space of communication (Castells, 2011, p. 101). The previous mass-media monopoly that was controlled by businesses and governments has been replaced by the Internet which is not easily controlled. We observed the power of the Internet (and its communication and mobilization potential) during revolutions that took place at the beginning of the 21st century, e.g., in Iran, South Korea, Arab countries (Kapsa, 2018; Park, 2010; Tufekci, 2014).

While applied to democratic processes, ICT has the potential to overcome barriers which prohibit the electorate to participate in decision-making (Musiał-Karg, 2014, p. 104). Apart from numerous examples of citizens using ICT to influence governments, new technology enables to deliver public services by governments more conveniently. It facilitates three types of activities: information sharing, involvement in political debate, and participation in political decision-making (Tsagarousianou, 1999). The latter also applies to elections. According to the Council of Europe (2009, p. 16), we deal with

---

[1] The Content Analysis System for Television (CAST) serves as an archive of TV content. Additionally, it is a digital tool that might be applied in a process of coding and analyzing audiovisual data. The system uses DVB-S and DVB-T signal. The signal t is later processed by a digital headend and multicasted into the LAN (approx. 20 concurrent TV channels, Polish and foreign). The signal is then recorded and stored based on EPG data.

e-voting when an election or referendum involves the use of electronic means at least to cast votes. Moreover, remote e-voting accelerates procedures, enables voting to be electronically monitored and votes electronically registered, and facilitates participation of people in remote locations and people with special needs. For the first time, electronic systems were used in voting in 1970. E-voting machines, called Direct Record Electronic (DRE), were used in the 2000 election in the United States. As many as 10.7% of American voters chose to cast their votes electronically (Tokaji, 2005, p. 1722). A few years later, in the Mid-Term Congressional Election (6 Nov 2018), DRE voting machines were used in 15 states, with five states relying on them exclusively (OSCE, 2019). E-voting typically means that voting takes place via computers or terminals in a polling station relevant to one's voting residence. It might also enable voters to cast their votes in any polling station. Moreover, remote e-voting supports voting via special computers and public terminals (*kiosk voting*), as well as via the Internet (*i-voting)* on virtually any computer, phone or a television set (Mider, 2011, pp. 224-225).

We have been witnessing an interesting situation, since three quarters of the population have access to the Internet but electronic voting is used only in a few countries (i-voting solely in Estonia). Citizens benefit from digital communication more in other spheres than politics. Although most of the e-voting experiments in European countries have failed, the popularity of electronic voting is growing. Many voters prefer e-voting (especially online voting) over traditional methods because it is far more convenient and faster. It seems that technology which supports governing systems should also benefit citizens. The use of 20th-century political methods can be facilitated by the 21st-century technology. The technology supporting participatory instruments is readily available (Council of Europe, 2009, p. 41). The challenge is to do it in a secure and accessible manner. Actually, despite the advantages of e-voting, some experts or scientists are concerned with the possibility of electoral fraud or the lack of transparency of the election process. The issue is that "all processes of data generation, transformation, and storage occur in 'black boxes' that are often not fully transparent even for technical experts" (Gerlach & Gasser, 2009, p. 5). Moreover, a concern has been growing regarding the participation gap, also known as the 'digital divide'. It may be an important factor increasing welfare disparities between geographical regions. Most of them seem to be surmountable, but the governments do not take the challenge.

E-VOTING EXPERIENCE IN POLAND

Poland has very little experience with using IT systems during elections. Although for the first time such a system was used during the 1993 parliamentary election, it is still impossible to vote over the Internet in national elections. The Internet was also used for the first time in the 2000 presidential election to transfer data and in some constituencies during local elections of 2002. As a part of a pilot program, encrypted data confirmed with the electronic signature were sent directly from polling stations to the central database of the National Election Commission. Voters could follow results over the Internet. This system evolved and supported election committees several times. Due to the problems

which occurred during the 2014 local elections, vote counting and reporting were not possible, and regional committees had to count votes manually. Finally, in consecutive local elections, the use of the system was auxiliary only. Instead of counting votes, the system supports election committees in the preparatory phase, e.g., storage of data regarding voting, candidates (e.g., numbers, names, political affiliations) and composition of election committees in particular constituencies. During voting, the system helps to collect information about turnout and afterwards to examine the arithmetical compliance of data in reports and accuracy of results. The platform is used to transfer voting results, revised by election committees, from constituencies to the National Election Commission. It also enables voters to check results over the Internet (Musiał-Karg & Kapsa, 2020, pp. 146-147).

Regarding e-voting, it is worth mentioning that before its use in the presidential election of 2010, the national leadership of Platforma Obywatelska (PO, Civic Platform), one of the main political parties in Poland, decided to elect the party's official candidate by two methods of voting, namely Internet and postal voting. Any member of the party registered in the central register of party's members had the right to vote. Members who chose the traditional method had to cut the ballot paper from the *POgłos* magazine, insert it into an envelope, and send it by post (Musiał-Karg, 2011). To prevent double voting (on-line and traditional), members were advised to attach one-off codes to the envelope together with their ballot papers. After opening of the envelope, it was not possible to send a valid vote by mail. Turnout in the PO primary election was 47.47%. PO voters definitely preferred the Internet. Over 17,000 votes were cast via the Internet, whereas 4,000 were sent by mail.

Currently, Poland does not have laws supporting electronic voting (Musiał-Karg, 2020, pp. 44-47) and Polish authorities are not even working on implementing any of the electronic voting methods. It is caused by the shortage of infrastructure of the internet-based voting system and lack of relevant legal solutions. Despite limited experience with this method of voting, it has been present in the public discourse. Political parties raise the issue during electoral campaigns, mainly to boost their election capital. Some of them declare their willingness to implement innovative voting methods (e.g., i-voting) to make the election process more convenient for those eligible to vote. They expect it to mobilize the electorate which typically do not utilize their universal suffrage. However, one political party rejected the possibility of introducing e-voting in Poland.

POLISH MEDIA POSITION ON E-VOTING

Methodology

The research in this part of the article contains quantitative and qualitative media content analysis based on data collected via the CAST (Content Analysis System for Television) including the broadcasting coverage by the main news services delivered by three nation-wide TV stations of the top rating (Kordupski, 2020) - Fakty TVN, Wiadomości TVP and Wydarzenia by Polsat. The content of TV news programs was recorded and

archived with the use of the CAST[2], and thanks to the advanced search engine, it was possible to construct complex queries, allowing for precise selection of materials for analysis. Data collected via the CAST included the broadcasting coverage in two study periods, 24 September – 7 October 2019 and 27 April – 10 May 2020. The analysis covered 1248 items of news in 28 newscasts of the three TV stations. The study was designed to examine the position of top-rated TV stations on e-voting in their main newscasts. Additionally, the analysis covered data from news websites. In this part, analyzed information was published in the 2015-2020 period.

The quantitative approach was used to extract components of debate on e-voting, which allowed the determination of the frequency of appearance of e-voting topic, related issues, as well as the number of TV materials. For the purpose of quantitative research, a two-part codebook was developed. The first part was adapted to television news program materials, while the second one was prepared as a tool to encode Internet press material.

Results

The media content analysis (quantitative and qualitative) of data collected via the CAST has been carried out as follows:

> in the case of electoral news, examined in detail, certain developments have their influence on the media content: voting methods as such were criticized (i.e., mail voting), parliamentary voting on the bill introducing voting by mail; the main criticism resulted from the fact that a few days before the election, no one knew whether the election would actually take place;
> news was considered to support the advantage of voting by mail when it referred to the fact that initially, according to the law, the Polish Post was to be responsible for the organization of the election, and then, after the J. Kaczyński - J. Gowin conflict, the State Electoral Committee. It was considered positive, as it emphasized better anonymity, faster delivery of ballots, better conditions for Poles abroad.

In none of the periods examined was e-voting or other voting methods present in the news. The general conclusion is that the debate on implementation of e-voting in Poland is rather poor. Undoubtedly, the main reason is that Poland has no specific legal provisions for introducing this voting method and a shortage of technical infrastructure (e-voting system), and the access to the Internet seems to be problematic.

Considering the above, it was assumed that newscasts could periodically include announcements, chiefly in the context of the election, on the introduction of Internet voting to other methods available in Poland, especially that Internet voting had become increasingly popular in various countries. In this respect, Estonia is considered to be the global leader (e-voting has been used since 2005). In many other European countries and

---

[2] The CAST is a system developed and implemented by the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism of the Adam Mickiewicz University. Its primary task is to record, store, and make television programs available. Since mid-2014, the system records six channels: TVP 1, TVP 2, Polsat, TVN, TVN24, and TVP Info continuously, 24 hours a day. The programs are stored in a database, described by metadata generated on the basis of EPG (Electronic Program Guide).

elsewhere in the world, online voting has been considered and tested (e.g., Switzerland, Norway, Belgium, Canada and other). As mentioned above, Polish experience in Internet voting is somewhat scarce (e.g., discussion before the pre-term election in 2007, the primary election in Civic Platform before the 2010 presidential election, a growing popularity of online voting for local citizen budgets). Undoubtedly, the public discussion on the new technologies in elections has been evolving. However, it has not led to broad media debates as yet. The assumption was made that the content analysis performed might reveal a very limited presence of e-voting, and news presented would be positioned in the context of the upcoming national election.

Moreover, if it comes to the nature of media in Poland, the authors assume that there should be significant differences in the presentation of e-voting in various Polish TV stations (news services). Due to the fact that the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) [3] has a negative opinion on introducing e-voting, the public media rhetoric is rather negative towards this way of participation in elections, whereas the commercial media message is neutral or positive (attributable to their commitments with opposition parties, which are more open to innovative voting methods). Therefore, the media rhetoric depends on their attitudes towards political parties. Although Poles declare both their support for the introduction of e-voting and their willingness to vote online, determining factors are reflected to some extent only in public opinions on the implementation of e-voting.

The media content analysis covering the top-rated TV news in Poland has confirmed that the media debate regarding the introduction of e-voting in Poland is virtually non-existent. In the period concerned, the analysis showed that no news discussed electronic voting. The analysis included the terms such as electronic voting, e-voting, Internet voting, i-voting, and online voting).

According to the study, the main top-rated TV news in Poland neither convey information about e-voting nor initiate debate on the subject. Surprisingly, no information about e-voting was present in any of the TV news during the Covid-19 pandemic and a debate on having a safe presidential election in the country. While discussing the reform of the electoral law and the introduction of all-postal voting, references were made to the experience of other countries, such as Switzerland, which tested e-voting in parallel to postal voting. The Swiss experience could be a pretext to discuss e-voting as one of safe voting options.

Due to the lack of data, the authors decided to expand the analysis and examine web-based TV news of the same TV stations (TVN24, Polsat news, TVP Info). It should be emphasized that this part of the analysis covered an extended period of January 2015 - May 2020.

The generally available Internet resources contain eight news items on electronic voting, of which the earliest one was published in 2015 and the latest in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic.

---

[3] The English translation of the party's name is "Law and Justice".

Table 1. **Analysis of web-based TV news on e-voting**

Station	Date	Context	Broadcaster	Party affiliation	Voting method	Attitude	Ex.
TVN24	11/03/2015	after election – new MPs	Piotr Liroy-Marzec	Kukiz'15	e-voting, i-referenda	positive	-
TVN24	06/12/2017	Meeting of KUKIZ-15 leaders with President	Paweł Kukiz	Kukiz'15	e-voting, Internet voting, electronic voting system	positive	-
TVPInfo	09/03/2017	Tyszka requests BAS opinion	Stanisław Tyszka	Kukiz'15	Internet voting, i-voting	positive	Estonia
TVN24	08/15/2019	#SzóstkaSchetyny – electronic voting	Grzegorz Schetyna	PO	Internet voting, electronic voting	positive	Estonia
Polsat News	04/18/2020	election during the pandemic	-	-	i-voting , Internet voting	positive	Estonia, Sierra Leone
Polsat News	04/19/2020	election during the pandemic	Izabela Leszczyna	KO	Internet election	-	-
TVN24	04/25/2020	election during the pandemic	Toomas Hendrik Ilves	Estonia president	i-voting, Internet election	positive	Estonia
Polsat News	04/28/2020	election during the pandemic	Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz	PSL	Internet election	-	-

Based on the findings, the following conclusions have been drawn:

> Since 2015, the main initiator and the promoter of the debate on e-voting in Poland is Kukiz-15[4]. Since it appeared on the Polish political stage in 2015, the political camp has been promoting the increase of citizen participation in decision making using direct democracy tools (they promote introduction of obligatory referenda) and encouraged

---

[4] Kukiz'15 is a political party in Poland led by rock musician turned politician Paweł Kukiz. Initially it was an informal movement, then formally registered as an association in 2016 and later as a political party in 2020. Since its creation, the Kukiz'15 has been considered as the main right-wing populist opposition to the government of the Law and Justice (PiS) party. However, Kukiz'15 has supported the PiS on some key votes in the parliament.

to consider e-voting during elections and referenda while assuming that the use of new methods can boost citizen interest and participation;

> Interestingly, according to the media content analysis, in spring 2020m during the pandemic, electronic voting was referred to in web-based news chiefly by journalists (twice) and representatives of the Civic Platform (once) and the Polish People's Party (once);

> Law and Justice representatives did not refer to e-voting at all in the news analyzed. In one of the news, Paweł Kukiz, the Kukiz'15 leader, mentioned after the meeting with Andrzej Duda that the incumbent president (affiliated to PiS) would consider the introduction of e-voting in state referenda;

> All the news presented Internet voting in a positive manner as an opportunity to increase citizen participation in decision-making;

> All web-based news referring to the experience of other countries mentioned Estonia as the main reference and a positive example of using ICT in elections;

> News on Internet voting were most frequent in commercial TV stations (four times in TVN24 and three times in Polsat News). Only one news item was broadcast by the public TVP Info.

The analysis enables to conclude that e-voting is not the lead topic of the debate on the introduction of alternative voting methods. Moreover, although the Covid-19 pandemic boosted the discussion on new forms of participation, it failed to increase the presence of e-voting in the media debate.

E-VOTING IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL FACTORS

Methodology

This part of the article is based on the data sets collected during a 2018 survey conducted by the authors on a sample of 1717 Poles. It was a quota-based sample taking into account the demographics of the population. Respondents filled out paper or electronic questionnaires with questions and statements referring to their participation in elections and political preferences, the use of the Internet, as well as a number of statements on electronic voting and electronic administration.

The article presents mean results regarding e-voting including answers to all questions and statements in the questionnaire[5]. These also include declarations regarding the use of the Internet to vote during elections, provided there is such an option, assessment of e-voting regarding its convenience and transparency in counting votes, as well as possible

---

[5] "1. I use electronic administration services. 2. I would like to see more matters to be dealt with over the Internet in Poland. 3. The introduction of voting via the Internet seems to be a question of time only. 4. In Poland, we should have voting via the Internet as an additional form of election participation. 5. I would use the possibility of voting via the Internet during election, provided there is such an option. 6. If voting via the Internet is introduced, it should be possible before the election day (e.g., in the week preceding election Sunday) and it should be available for several days. 7. I do not want any additional voting methods to be introduced. 8. Traditional voting is better. 9. Voting via the Internet diminishes the significance of voting. 10. Voting via the Internet facilitates participation in elections. 11. Voting via the Internet reduces the probability of an error. 12. E-voting is more convenient. 13. Voting via the Internet boosts turnout. 14. E-voting poses a threat to the universal nature of voting. 15. Voting via the Internet creates the possibility of election fraud. 16. No confidentiality can be guaranteed with Internet voting. 17. Compared to voting in a polling station, e-voting is less safe."

negative consequences of its application and the inability to ensure full confidentiality. Negative answers were recorded, and the general e-voting support indicator was built; the higher the result is, the stronger the support for e-voting. Answers were placed on the Likert scale (particular options had a specific number of points assigned as follows: *definitely yes* – 5 points, *rather yes* – 4 points, *hard to say* – 3 points, *rather no* – 2 points, *definitely no* – 1 point).

Political preferences of respondents were recorded as their declaration about frequency of participation in parliamentary elections as well as their answers to the following question: "If the parliamentary election was held today, who would you vote for?". The respondents could choose among: a) "Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej" (Democratic Left Alliance); b) "Wolność Janusza Korwin-Mikke (KORWIN)"; c) "Kukiz '15"; d) "Nowoczesna" (Modern); e) "Partia Razem" (Together); f) "Platforma Obywatelska RP" (Civic Platform); g) "Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe" (Polish People's Party); h) "Prawo i Sprawiedliwość" (Law and Justice); i) another party, which one?; j) "hard to say"; k) "I would not vote". Political parties mentioned in all possible responses included those represented in the Polish parliament during the period of the research.

Answers to research questions necessitated statistical analyses of descriptive data together with Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, U Manna-Whitney tests, Kruskal-Wallis tests, χ2 tests and precise Fisher tests. In the analysis, we also took into account the political preferences of respondents, expressed in their declaration of support to a given political party and frequency of their participation in parliamentary elections. Moreover, regarding the characteristics of e-voting supporters, the study looked for the correlation between time spent on the Internet as a variable useful to determine whether the use of the Internet had any influence on using it as a voting tool.

Results

The analysis of survey results starts from descriptive statistics and the e-voting support index. Quite a high mean was reached (*M=3.61*) with a high level of support for e-voting in Poland. Although the distribution differed from the Gauss distribution, the skewness indicates that it was not so much asymmetrical (standard deviation *SD=0.74*; skewness *Sk.=-0.60*; Kurtosis *K=-0.12*; lowest distribution value *Min.=1,* highest distribution value *Max.=5;* Kolmogorov-Smirnov test result *K-S=0.08;* significance *p<0.001*).

Data presented in Table 2 demonstrate that respondent opinions regarding e-voting differ depending on their political preferences. This, however, does not apply to electoral participation. Political participation has no significant effect on the level of support for electronic voting, the level of support declared by abstainers was very similar to that of those participating frequently in parliamentary elections. Therefore, since non-participants consider electronic voting methods attractive, they might be encouraged to participate provided innovative e-tools are used. This seems to be promising although experience in e-voting has a very limited impact on turnout (only a few countries practice

this method of voting). Nevertheless, the study by Germann and Serdült (2017) showed that voting online has the potential of becoming more convenient than postal voting.

The analysis of support to electronic voting in relation to political variables demonstrates that political preferences are a statistically significant predictor for voters' attitudes towards the introduction and use of Internet voting (Musiał-Karg & Kapsa, 2019). We observe the lowest level of support among voters supporting PiS (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, Law and Justice) and PSL (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe,* Polish People's Party), who could be described as conservative and not necessarily progressive. It needs to be emphasized that the only political party expressing their objection to e-voting in Poland is Law and Justice, the governing party. The representatives of the other political parties were overtly positive about e-voting. The positive attitude to e-voting among supporters of other political parties in Poland is scored higher than the population average. It also corresponds with views of these political parties on electronic voting. Some political parties in Poland have considered the implementation of e-voting. These include PO (*Platforma Obywatelska,* Civic Platform), Kukiz'15, Partia Razem (Together) and Janusz Korwin-Mikke Party (Korwin).

Table 2. **Political features and e-voting support index**

Political factors	e-voting support index (M)	
Participation in parliamentary elections		
never	3.55	*H(4) = 15.48;*
rarely	3.5	*p = 0.004*
hard to say	3.6	
often	3.55	
always	3.67	
Political preferences		
Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (Self Left Alliance)	3.52	*H(4) = 15.48;*
Wolność Janusza Korwin-Mikke (Freedom of Janusz Korwin Mikke)	3.85	*p = 0.004*
Kukiz'15	3.82	
Nowoczesna	3.88	
Partia Razem (Together)	3.98	
PO (Civic Platform)	3.76	
Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish People's Party)	3.4	
PiS (Law and Justice)	3.27	
other	3.81	
hard to say	3.56	
I would not vote	3.24	

M – mean; U – U Manna-Whitney test result; p – statistical significance; r – impact rate;
H – Kruskal-Wallis test result

Interestingly, supporters of parties promoting the introduction of online voting are relatively reserved and discrete in declaring their support to the use such solutions, since they better recognize certain threats than supporters of other political parties. Such differences can be explained by the correlation between age and education and the proficiency in using technology. Younger and more educated people (most of them supporters of parties promoting e-voting) have probably higher levels of computer skills, and they are more critical about security issues than people who lack the knowledge to be able to detect a potential threat to security.

CONCLUSIONS

The Internet has fundamentally influenced democracy by providing easy and universal access to information, increasing participation and accessibility of political involvement tools. It is a completely new medium that "we don't 'watch' as we watch television" (Castells, 2011, p. 100). We live with and on the Internet, so we are permanently connected. As the research by Luengo and Vázquez shows (n.d., p.243), there is a negative influence of watching television on political activity and a significant connection between the use of the Internet and levels of political engagement, which in all instances is positive. The Internet has changed not only the communication but also the relationship between citizens and governments. The use of new technology for the purpose of enhancing political democracy or the participation of citizens in democratic communication is the pillar of electronic democracy. E-voting is one of e-democracy tools. Although it is not a widely used by governments, the method of voting seems to be of great interest among citizens.

The main goal was to answer a question about the presence of a debate on electronic voting in general and remote or Internet voting, in particular in Polish news. The authors analyzed the presentation of this particular voting method in the media as an alternative to other voting methods available in Poland, and to draw attention of people promoting such a debate/discussion on e-voting. In the period concerned, the survey analyzing the main news services by the three largest TV stations in Poland: *Wiadomości* (TVP1 - public station), *Fakty* (TVN - private station), *Wydarzenia* (Polsat - private station) has confirmed that the media debate on the possible introduction of e-voting in Poland does not exist. The analysis examined media content data from the CAST which proved that no news actually referred to electronic voting (the terms examined included "electronic voting", "e-voting", "Internet voting", "i-voting", and "online voting").

According to the study, the main top-rated TV news programs in Poland neither convey information about e-voting nor do they initiate debate on the subject. Surprisingly, no information about e-voting was present in any of the TV news programs during the Covid-19 pandemic, neither was there debate on having a safe presidential election in the country. While discussing the reform of the electoral law and the introduction of all-postal voting, references were made to the experience of other countries, such as Switzerland,

which tested e-voting in parallel to postal voting. The Swiss experience could be a pretext to discuss e-voting as one of safe voting options.

Due to lack of data, the authors decided to expand the analysis and examine online news by the same TV stations (TVN24, Polsat news, TVP Info). The generally available Internet resources have contained eight news items on electronic voting, of which the earliest one was published in 2015 and the latest one in 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The study of public opinion on the implementation of e-voting as an alternative participation in elections has proven that the general public in Poland declares a high level of support (mean general e-voting support index was 3.61 out of 5). We find some differences in attitudes of Poles towards e-voting depending on their political preferences, rather than on their electoral participation. The results of our study indicate that e-voting has the highest support among people supporting parties other than PiS (the only political party in Poland which overtly objected to e-voting) and PSL.

Therefore, we may conclude that, regardless the presence of e-voting in the media, the access to the Internet, a medium which is neither controlled by the media nor by business, encourages citizens to use the tool. Preferences shaped by the web-based community can be surprising and the example of Poland is the best proof of it. Although neither politicians nor traditional media have managed to develop support for e-voting as an alternative voting method, it is still the voting method most frequently referred to.

References
>Alvarez, R., Hall, T., & Trechsel, A. (2009). Internet Voting in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Estonia. *PS: Political Science and Politics, 42*(3), 497-505. https://doi.org/10.2307/40647646
>Castells, M. (2011). Democracy in the age of the Internet, *Transfer: journal of contemporary culture 6*, 96-103. Retrieved from https://llull.cat/IMAGES_175/transfer06-not01.pdf
>Council of Europe (2009). *Electronic democracy (e-democracy), Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)1 and explanatory memorandum*. Retrieved from https://www.coe.int/t/dgap/democracy/Activities/GGIS/CAHDE/2009/RecCM2009_1_and_Acomp_Docs/6647-0-ID8289 Recommendation%20on%20electronic%20democracy.pdf
>Gerlach, J. & Gasser, U. (2009). *Three Case Studies from Switzerland: E-Voting*. Berkman Center Research Publication No. 03.1.
>Germann, M., Serdült, U. (2017). Internet voting and turnout: Evidence from Switzerland. *Electoral Studies, 47*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2017.03.001
>Grossman, L.K. (1995). *The Electronic Republic. Reshaping Democracy in the Information Age*. Viking.
>Hacker, K. L. & van Dijk, J. (2000). *Digital Democracy: Issues of Theory and Practice*. Sage Publications.
>Hagen, M. (1997). *A Typology of Electronic Democracy*. Retrieved from https://www.uni-giessen.de/fb03/vinci/labore/netz/hag_en.htm.
>Kapsa, I. (2018). E-politics in the citizens' perspective. The role of social networking tools in influencing citizens. *Przegląd Politologiczny, 3*, 145-153. https://doi.org/10.14746/pp.2018.23.3.11
>Kersting, N. (2012). The Future of Electronic democracy. In N. Kersting, M. Stein & J. Trent (Eds.), *Electronic Democracy* (pp. 11-54). Verlag Barbara Budrich. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvddzwcg.5

>Kordupski, M. (2020, April 2). *Duży spadek oglądalności „wielkiej czwórki" w marcu. Rekordowe wyniki TVP Info, TVN24 i Polsat News.* Retrieved from https://www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/ogladalnosc-telewizji-marzec-2020-tvp1-lider-m-jakmilosc-hit

>Krimmer, R., Volkamer, M., Beckert, B., Küsters, R., Kulyk, O., Duenas-Cid, D. & Solvak, M. (Eds.) (2020). Electronic Voting. E-Vote-ID 2020, Lecture Notes in Computer Science. vol 12455. Springer.

>Lindner, R. & Aichholzer G. (2020). E-Democracy: Conceptual Foundations and Recent Trends. In L. Hennen, I. van Keulen, I. Korthagen, G. Aichholzer, R. Lindner, R. Nielsen (Eds.), *European E-Democracy in Practice. Studies in Digital Politics and Governance* (pp. 11-45). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27184-8_2

>Luengo, O. & Vázquez, (n.d.) R. Surfing politics: Internet use and political activism in Europe. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/1280361/SURFING_POLITICS_INTERNET_USE_AND_POLITIAL_ACTIVISM_IN_EUROPE

>Mider, D. (2011). Głosowanie przez Internet a demokracja, *Studia Politologiczne 20*, 222-267. Musiał-Karg, M. (2016). Electronic Voting as an Additional Method of Participating in Elections. Opinions of Poles. In R. Krimmer, M. Volkamer, J. Barrat, J. Benaloh & N. Goodman (Eds.), *Electronic voting: first International Joint Conference, E-Vote-ID 2016, Bregenz, Austria, October 18-21* (pp. 218-232). Springer.

>Musiał-Karg, M. (2011). The Political Market and the Application of the Internet. In Prosser A. (Ed), *EDEM2011. Proceedings of the 5th Conference on Electronic Democracy 2011* (pp. 67-76). Austrian Computer Society.

>Musiał-Karg, M. (2014). The use of e-voting as a new tool of e-participation in modern democracies, *Przegląd Politologiczny, 4*, 99-110. https:10.14746/pp.2014.19.4.7

>Musiał-Karg, M. (2020). Elektroniczne głosowanie w opiniach Polaków. Postawy i poglądy na temat e-voting. UAM-WNPiD.

>Musiał-Karg, M., Kapsa, I. (2019). Attitudes of Polish Voters Towards Introduction of e-Voting in the Context of Political Factors, In S. Katsikas & V. Zorkadis (Eds.), *E-Democracy – Safeguarding Democracy and Human Rights in the Digital Age. e-Democracy 2019*, Communications in Computer and Information Science, vol . 1111 (pp. 144-160). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37545-4_10

>Noveck, B. S. (2004). Paradoxical Partners: Electronic Communication and Electronic Democracy. In P. Ferdinand (Ed.), *The Internet, Democracy and Democratization*, Routledge.

>OECD (2003). *Promise and Problems of E-Democracy. Challenges of Online Citizen Engagement.* https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264019492-en.

>OSCE (2019). *United States of America. Mid-Term Congressional Elections 6 November 2018. ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Final Report.* Retrieved from https://www.osce.org/files/US%20Midterm%202018%20LEOM_final%20report_13.02.2019_wth%20MM.pdf

>Park, S. (2010). Inoperative Community in Post-Authoritarian South Korea: Football Fandom, Political Mobilization and Civil Society, *Journal for Cultural Research 14*(2), 197-220. https://doi.org/10.1080/14797580903481322

>Sambo, P. & Alexander, P. (2018). A scheme of analysis for eVoting as a technological innovation system. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries 84.* https://doi.org/10.1002/isd2.12020

>Schlozman, K. L., Verba, S. & Brady, H. E. (2010). Weapon of the Strong? Participatory Inequality and the Internet, *Perspectives on Politics 8*(2),487-509. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592710001210

>Smith, E. & Macintosh, A. (2003). e-Voting: Powerful Symbol of e-Democracy. In R. Traunmüller (Ed.), *Electronic Government. EGOV 2003*. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol 2739. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/10929179_43

>Tokaji, D. P. (2005). The paperless chase: electronic voting and democratic values. *Fordham Law Review, 73*(4), 1711-1836.

>Tsagarousianou, R. (1999). Electronic democracy: Rhetoric and reality. *Communications: The European Journal of Communication Research, 24*(2), 189–208.

>Tsagarousianou, R. (2000). Electronic Democracy in Practice: One, Two, Three... Countless Variants, *HERMÈS,* 26-27, 233-246.

>Tufekci, Z. (2014). Social movements and governments in the digital age: evaluating a complex landscape, *Journal of International Affairs, 68*(1), 1-18.

>van Dijk, J. A. G. M. (2005). *The deepening Divide: Inequality in the information society.* SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452229812

>Vassil, K. & Solvak, M. (2016). *E-voting in Estonia: Technological Diffusion on the Other Developments Over Ten Years (2005-2015),* Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu in cooperation with Estonian National Electoral Committee.

>Weare, C., Musso, J. A., & Hale, M. L. (1999). Electronic Democracy and the Diffusion of Municipal Web Pages in California. *Administration & Society, 31*(1), 3–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/009539999400935475

IZVJEŠTAVANJE MASOVNIH MEDIJA I JAVNO MNIJENJE O E-DEMOKRACIJI U POLJSKOJ: SLUČAJ ELEKTRONIČKOG GLASOVANJA

Magdalena Musiał-Karg :: Izabela Kapsa

SAŽETAK *Brz razvoj novih tehnologija te njihov impresivan komunikacijski kapacitet iz temelja su pro-mijenili modernu demokraciju, omogućujući jednostavan i univerzalan pristup informacijama, kao i sve veću participatiju te dostupnost alata za političko sudjelovanje. Jedan od alata za sudjelovanje na izbori-ma je e-glasovanje koje se koristi u samo nekoliko zemalja. Glavni cilj ovog rada jest istražiti je li i kako je e-glasovanje predstavljeno u poljskim masovnim medijima (1) te istražiti mišljenja ljudi o e-glasovanju u odnosu na određene političke čimbenike (2). Istraživanje se temelji na analizi medijskog sadržaja (kvanti-tativnoj i kvalitativnoj), podacima prikupljenim putem Sustava za analizu televizijskog sadržaja (Content Analysis System for Television - CAST) te na kvantitativnoj analizi podataka prikupljenih anketom koju su proveli autori (2018, uzorak: 1717 Poljaka). Rezultati analiza pokazuju da je rasprava o implementaciji e-glasovanja prilično loša, ali podrška e-glasovanju među Poljacima ostaje značajna. Također, rezultati pokazuju da je retorika javnih medija povezana sa stavovima prema političkim strankama. Donekle se te odrednice odražavaju u javnom mnijenju o implementaciji e-glasovanja, budući da Poljaci daju potporu uvođenju e-glasovanja te izražavaju spremnost za glasovanje putem interneta.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

ELEKTRONIČKA PARTICIPACIJA, E-GLASOVANJE, POLJSKA, POLJSKI MEDIJI, JAVNO MNIJENJE

Bilješka o autoricama
Magdalena Musiał-Karg :: Fakultet političkih znanosti i novinarstva, Sveučilište Adam Mickiewicz u Poznańu **::** magdalena.musial-karg@amu.edu.pl
Izabela Kapsa :: Fakultet političkih znanosti i administracije, Sveučilište Kazimierz Wielki u Bydgoszczu **::** izabela.kapsa@ukw.edu.pl