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## **CYBERGENIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES OF THIRD PARTIES IN THE UNITED STATES: THE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS WITH THE KEY ROLE OF NEW MEDIA**

### **Introduction**

New media can be termed as “techniques, technologies, and institutions used for communication, using digital methods for recording, saving, storing data, creating and transmitting messages. (...) they are characterized by a hyper-text structure of transmission and reception, the ability to program, interaction, cumulateness, global reach and, at the same time, individualization of access”<sup>1</sup>. This has made them a useful tool also used by politicians during the election campaigns. Researchers point out that the presidential campaign in the USA in 2008 was the breakthrough in this respect<sup>2</sup>.

Politicians perceive the benefits of using new media to reach out to undecided voters. On the one hand, they want to maintain relationships with citizens, but on the other hand, they want to present their ideas and vision of state and society. In order to achieve these goals, politicians have used the impact of traditional media, like the press, radio and television. However, using only traditional media in the rapidly changing world of information society entails a kind of exclusion from the

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<sup>1</sup> Z. Bauer, *Dziennikarstwo wobec nowych mediów. Historia, teoria, praktyka*, Universitas, Kraków 2009, p. 126. The researcher emphasised that the concept of “new media” was developed by authors such as: D.J. Bolter, R. Grusin, D. Kellner, L.A. Lierouw, M. Lister.

<sup>2</sup> J. Garlicki, *Komunikowanie polityczne – od kampanii wyborczej do kampanii permanentnej* [in:] J. Garlicki (Ed.), *Marketing polityczny i komunikowanie polityczne: nowe zjawiska, nowe wyzwania*, “Studia Politolologiczne” vol. 24, Institute of Political Studies of the Warsaw University, Warszawa 2012, p. 39. Researchers B. Dobek-Ostrowska and P. Baranowski indicate, just like A. Chadwick, that the presidential campaign from 2004 can be described as Internet. On the other hand, the campaign of Barack Obama from 2008 used the potential of new media on a broad scale. B. Dobek-Ostrowska, P. Baranowski, *Witryny internetowe partii politycznych jako narzędzie komunikowania wyborczego w kampanii parlamentarnej w 2011 roku*, *ibid.*, pp. 109–113.

global village. People spend more time on the Internet because they satisfy their natural need to find information e.g. using search engines, reading e-newspapers, watching the news on news portals and listening to podcasts. In addition, the society is not only looking for fun, but also people maintain contacts through social networks or e-mail, do some shopping online or make financial transactions. Thus, the Internet has entered every level of human activity, so it would be incomprehensible and unreasonable to disregard its role and potential for the political environment. A politician who does not have his own website and official profiles in social media has rather fewer chances of reaching potential voters. If a politician does not use new new media<sup>3</sup>, he will not create a desirable political image of himself and his party. Thereby, a politician misses an opportunity to communicate with the society spending more time on the Internet. It often happens that a politician could not present his/her full election program during an interview on television. The use of new new media, like Facebook or blogs, reduces the distance between a politician and voters.

In this article, I present the term “the third party”. I analyse the concept of cybergenic and its use in political communication<sup>4</sup>. In further considerations, I shortly describe the presidential elections in 2008 and 2012, which are the starting point for analysis and evaluation of the presidential candidates of “third parties” in the U.S during the last elections. I will try to answer the following questions: Is it possible to run a political campaign without traditional and mainstream media? Are new new media a chance for little-known politicians? Who was the first user of new new media in presidential elections? What does cybergenic mean? Do cybergenic qualities play a key role in contemporary political communication or not? Do cybergenic qualities influence the political image or not?

This study presents and evaluates the phenomenon of cybergenic in case of third-party candidates, like former Governor of New Mexico Gary Johnson and Jill Stein<sup>5</sup>, who attained the highest results among other third-party candidates. I have chosen these candidates for the following reasons: using new new media as the tool of communication in the 2016 presidential election campaign; the development and popularity of new new media in recent years and using various types of these media

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<sup>3</sup> Due to the dynamic transformations of new media, this concept, according to Paul Levinson, is insufficient. To new new media, Levinson includes: blogs, YouTube, Wikipedia, Digg, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, podcasts. At the same time, he emphasises their availability, unlimited flexibility and equality of consumers and media producers. This type of media is social in nature, but this should not be synonymous with new media, due to their use for individual practices (blog, podcast). P. Levinson, *Nowe nowe media*, Polish Edition, WAM Publisher, Kraków 2010, pp. 11–15.

<sup>4</sup> The concept “cybergenic” was formulated in 2008 by Paul Saffo. However, cybergenic qualities can be studied only since 2005, that is since the creation of YouTube. Previous campaigns could not be cybergenic, because there were no tools to analyse the cybergenic aspect.

<sup>5</sup> Other candidates in 2016: Evan McMullin (Independent), Darell Castle (Constitution Party).

by Johnson and Stein. It shows different ways of using new new media in the presidential election campaign in 2016. I underline the presidential election campaign of 2008 because of the beginning and development of cybergenic qualities in 2008, which is connected with YouTube and social media. These presidential elections also illustrate the perception of cybergenic qualities' impact on the popularity among voters. In this context, I analyse kinds of new new media which were being used by these candidates. Moreover, I evaluate the effects of using new new media and being a cybergenic candidate.

## Definition of the Third-Party Candidates: An Outline of the Issues

In the United States of America there is a two-party system, which has created a duopoly of power. The Republican Party and the Democratic Party have dominated American politics for decades. During presidential elections, mainstream media focused on candidates of the main parties, like the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. Do only two parties exist in the American political life? Many of us will say “yes”, because traditional media show the candidates who represent major parties. If we search new media, we see titles like “Who Is Running for President? Obama, Mitt Romney & Third-Party Candidates Compete in 2012”<sup>6</sup>, “In Close Race, Third-Party Candidates Could Tilt Election”<sup>7</sup> or “Don’t Forget the Third-Party Candidates!”<sup>8</sup>. Stefan Grobe points out that the Americans were electing either Clinton or Trump as their next president. which is due to a “two-party system”<sup>9</sup>, and he mentioned “two other candidates who are trying to get a shot at the electorate’s attention”<sup>10</sup> – Gary Johnson and Jill Stein. These quoted items show that Democratic and Republican candidates play a dominant role because they are mentioned by their

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<sup>6</sup> *Who Is Running for President? Obama, Mitt Romney & Third-Party Candidates Compete in 2012*, 6.11.2012, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/06/who-is-running-for-president\\_n\\_2082465.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/06/who-is-running-for-president_n_2082465.html) (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>7</sup> J. Predengast, *In close race, third-party candidates could tilt election*, 5.11.2012, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2012/11/05/ohio-third-party-candidates-tilt-election/1681311/> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>8</sup> T. Snyder, *Don't Forget the Third Party Candidates!*, 6.11.2012, <http://dc.streetsblog.org/2012/11/06/dont-forget-the-third-party-candidates/> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>9</sup> S. Grobe, *US presidential election: Meet the third-party candidates who are also running*, 18.10.2016, <http://www.euronews.com/2016/10/18/us-presidential-elections-meet-the-third-party-candidates-who-are-also-running> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

surnames. In case of third parties, we notice these candidates form a common group of anonymous people.

Third parties are described as all parties that are not one of the Democrats and Republicans. They are formed by individuals who are dissatisfied with the major two parties. This disappointment could be due to disagreements over policy positions, leaders, or unaddressed issues<sup>11</sup>. Donald J. Green presents a short history of third parties: "(...) third parties need the two established parties as electoral foils. By 1840, the modern two-party system coalesced around the Wings and Democrats. When the Wings imploded in the 1850s over slavery, the Republicans took their place, and so for 169 years of the United States has had an unbroken tradition of two-party rule. Each offered a philosophy of governance, a large competitive following, and an organization to support nominees at the local, state, and national levels. This very stability gave third parties their opportunities. In catering to an established constituency and dearly beloved beliefs, main parties are less likely to stray into unknown territory unless forced to by a compelling third-party insurgency"<sup>12</sup>. The author also emphasises that none of the third-party candidates during the presidential election in 2008 "had an impact on the race"<sup>13</sup>.

Some authors give the following reasons for the two-party dominance: the historical foundations of the system, political socialization and practical considerations, the winner-take-all electoral system, state and federal laws favouring the two-party system<sup>14</sup>. Scholars also noticed an important role of the "thirds". The "thirds" indicate the public mood, which is reflected in various grouping. Moreover, the "thirds" create new political trends and show the society's expectations to main parties. This way, candidates of third parties, consistent in the expression of their ideas and values, get noticed by voters. Main parties can adopt the solutions of the "thirds" to attract undecided voters. Political scientists have divided the "thirds" due to their ideology: Populist, Socialist, Communist, Progressive, American Independent, Libertarian, Reform and Green<sup>15</sup>. I mention the electoral preferences in June 7–10, 2012 which were analysed by Gallup<sup>16</sup>: Barack Obama – 47%; Mitt Romney – 40%; Gary Johnson/

<sup>11</sup> L. Sabato, H.R. Ernst, *Encyclopedia of American Political Parties and Elections*, Infobase Publishing 2014, p. 455.

<sup>12</sup> D.J. Green, *Third Party Matters: Politics, Presidents, and Third Parties in American History*, ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara 2010, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> B. Bardes, M. C. Shelley, S.W. Schmidt, *American Government and Politics Today: The Essentials*, Cengage Learning, Boston 2010, pp. 272–273.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> J.M. Jones, *Little Support for Third-Party Candidates in 2012 Election*, 6.06.2012, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/155537/little-support-third-party-candidates-2012-election.aspx> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

Libertarian – 3%; Ron Paul – 2%; Jill Stein/Green – 1%; Virgil Goode – less than 0.5; other candidates – 1%. It implies that the “thirds” were supported by 7% of voters including the support for candidate Ron Paul. This list shows that the “thirds” are a minority. But if we compare the result of Ross Perot in 1992, we will notice a considerable popularity of non-favourite candidates in mainstream media<sup>17</sup>. The influence of Perot’s popularity among the public opinion was due to his demand for the state’s fiscal care and the proposal of concrete solutions<sup>18</sup>. He received 19% of the vote<sup>19</sup> thereby demonstrating the presence of other parties. However, the support for the “thirds” might be useful to gain an advantage of one of the main candidates.

In the electoral preferences during the last campaign in September 2016 showed that Gary Johnson's support “was at 9% nationally”<sup>20</sup> while support for Jill Stein was at 2% nationally<sup>21</sup>. If we compare voters' general election preferences in August 2016, we see 10% registered voters for Johnson and 4% for Stein<sup>22</sup>. Then, a conducted survey by Gallup in July 2016 showed that 63% Americans were unfamiliar with Johnson and 68% with Stein<sup>23</sup>. Researchers also underlined that Libertarian and Green Party candidates received far less media attention than main parties<sup>24</sup>. Moreover, they did not rule out that Americans would be looking for an alternative candidate because Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were “the two least popular presidential candidates in any US election since at least 1984”<sup>25</sup>.

Republicans and Democrats play a key role in the Congress of the United States so people are convinced of their political power and effectiveness. Larry Sabato claims

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<sup>17</sup> Lisa Klobuchar wrote about the media’s approach to Perot beginning to change e.g. unflattering reports (Perot had hired private detectives to spy on business rivals, employees). L. Klobuchar, *Third Parties: Influential Political Alternatives*, Compass Point Books, Minneapolis 2008 p. 11.

<sup>18</sup> Perot’s electoral motto: “United We Stand: How We Can Take Back Our Country”. K. Zielińska, Trzeci kandydat w wyborach prezydenckich na przykładzie kandydatur Rossa Perota i Ralpha Nadera, [in:] “Przeгляд права konstytucyjnego”, 2011, no. 3(7) p. 154.

<sup>19</sup> S. Welch, J. Gruhl, J. Comer, S.M. Rigdon, *Understanding American Government*, Cengage Learning, Boston 2009, p. 169.

<sup>20</sup> *US election poll tracker: Who is ahead – Clinton or Trump?*, 8.11.2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-37450661> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Pew Research Center, *Voters' general election preferences*, p. 2., <http://www.people-press.org/2016/08/18/1-voters-general-election-preferences/> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>23</sup> J. Jones, *Third-Party Candidates Johnson, Stein largely unknown*, 5.08.2016, [http://www.gallup.com/poll/194162/third-party-candidates-johnson-stein-largely-unknown.aspx?g\\_source=&g\\_medium=&g\\_campaign=tiles](http://www.gallup.com/poll/194162/third-party-candidates-johnson-stein-largely-unknown.aspx?g_source=&g_medium=&g_campaign=tiles) (Retrieved 22.07.2017).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ch. England, *Record number of people disapprove of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, new poll shows*, 1.11.2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-poll-popularity-record-low-us-presidential-election-2016-a7390346.html> (Retrieved 22.04.2017). See also political graphics by A. Williams, T. Meko from “*The Washington Post*”, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/2016-election/unpopular/> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

that Americans do not vote for the “thirds” because the political stage is polarised. He has also outlined the way of thinking of Americans: “They hate the other side so much they’re not going to waste their vote. We’ve been trained to think of our system as two-party and we’re wasting our vote if we cast it for another candidate. That’s how most Americans think”<sup>26</sup>.

Secondly, mainstream media influence voting behaviour. Wolsfeld noticed that the media form political loyalties of voters long before a campaign starts<sup>27</sup>. These remarks are the result of the analysis of information on Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton<sup>28</sup>. In his opinion the media have an impact on how and what voters think about politics<sup>29</sup>. Wolsfeld defined it as the “effects” to which he has included: framing, agenda setting, and priming<sup>30</sup>. In support of this thesis I compare the media messages. At the beginning, I go back to the case of Ron Paul. CNBC removed the poll after the debate where Ron Paul won<sup>31</sup>. Tom Cohen from CNN has described Gary Johnson and Virgil Goode as the candidates who “have no chance of winning the November 6 presidential election”<sup>32</sup>. The Cohen’s article has quoted the following words of CNN Polling Director Keating Holland: “In all states CNN has polled so far, the minor party candidates are getting no more than 4% of the votes, and usually closer to 1%–2%, and it’s difficult to make the case that the minor party candidates are affecting the race”<sup>33</sup>.

Moreover, Sam Bollier noticed that the “thirds” are at a disadvantage because “they are largely ignored by the national media”<sup>34</sup>. Then in a short video we see people indicating two main candidates: Obama and Romney<sup>35</sup>. In this poll, no one reported the name of another candidate like Goode or Johnson. As noted by Bollier, the “thirds” are “(...) shut out from the presidential debates between the Democratic and Republican presidential nominees unless polls find they have at least 15 percent of support”<sup>36</sup>. It could mean that these voters who support the “thirds” may think

<sup>26</sup> T. Geoghegan, *US election: The third-party candidates*, 22.10. 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-20019651> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>27</sup> G. Wolsfeld, *Making Sense of Media and Politics. Five Principles in Political Communication*, Routledge, New York and London 2011, p. 97.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 98–99.

<sup>31</sup> A. Wastler, *An Open Letter to the Ron Paul Faithful*, 11/10/2007, <http://www.cnbc.com/id/21257762> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>32</sup> T. Cohen, *Little-known candidates could harm Romney, Obama bids*, 26.10.2012, <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/10/25/politics/third-party-candidates> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> S. Bollier, *Meet America’s third-party candidates*, 6.11.2012, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/us2012/2012/10/20121021204958945524.html> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

that they have no impact on the situation in their state. If these people know that only main candidates win the presidential election, they will not engage in political life. In my opinion, it may lead to adverse effects for the society.

## What Does Cybergenic Mean?

I begin my reflections with William F. Buckley's expression: "Do we insist on a telegenic President?"<sup>37</sup>. In the modern world, where new media start playing a dominant role, the reflection proposed by Buckley needs to be revised in the context of election campaigns. The modernisation campaign, which was characterised by the era of television, gave way to the postmodernist campaign and the digital age. Do we still need only telegenic politics in the postmodern world? Or should we require something more, like political debate via the Internet and official profiles on Facebook? We are accustomed to political debates on television. Main candidates participate in debates, which are some kind of a show. Political advisors take care not only of appropriate expressions of candidates, but also of their good appearance. We evaluate the following items like clothing, gestures or behaviour. These indicators can be assessed thanks to television, which is more engaging our senses, like hearing and sight than radio and newspapers. For this reason, we can easily consume media messages because it is a convenient way.

Though TV is still an important medium for politicians, it should also take into account the growing popularity of new new media and the phenomenon of convergence. Researchers note that today's election campaigns are becoming voter-oriented post-modernisation campaigns<sup>38</sup>. Therefore, a politician should not only be ready to enter the virtual world, but also to be active in this space. This activity can manifest itself in a variety of ways, from informing about the main points of the electoral program, to the dialogue with the voters. In the 1996 elections, the major parties, third parties, and many candidates had websites for disseminating information<sup>39</sup>. The changes in the field of media and communications, initiated by the development of technology and the Internet, have caused a term "new media". The appearance of websites, search engines and e-mail in the 90s of the last century was

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<sup>37</sup> This quote is from <http://americanheritage.yourdictionary.com/telegenic> (Retrieved 22.04. 2017).

<sup>38</sup> In this type of campaigns connected with the digitalization era, the main role is played by: network communication, new media. B. Dobek-Ostrowska, *Komunikowanie polityczne i publiczne*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2011, pp. 252–254.

<sup>39</sup> J. Moore (Ed.), *Elections A-Z*, Routledge 2013, London-New York, p. 236.

a novelty, and even to some extent the revolution that gave birth to what we call today new new media.

According to Paul Levinson new new media are: blogging, YouTube, Wikipedia, Digg, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Second Life, podcasts<sup>40</sup>. Although new new media perpetuated the achievement of their predecessors, and thus took over their features, they also developed their own. Levinson pointed out the flexibility of new new media, indicating the possibility of self-determination of where and when you listen to a broadcast in the form of a podcast, you read a blog or watch a video on YouTube. This flexibility can also be understood in the category of access and adequacy of communication offered, in line with the pace of human life<sup>41</sup>. Levinson observes that new new media have expanded freedom of society, thus giving pluralism, an opportunity to participate in the discourse, which can be seen as a form of power. In his opinion, the popularity of new new media outweighed their social nature, which makes them dynamic. The Internet meets bloggers and their customers, editors and readers of Wikipedia, Facebook and Twitter users, the authors of podcasts, videocasts and video on YouTube, where the materials are subscribed. Moreover, he underlines the important role of Facebook and YouTube in the U.S. presidential campaign of 2008 and the transfer of political struggle to the Internet. This caused the candidate not only to be photogenic and good-looking on TV, but also cybergenic.

While terms such as “cyberspace”, “cyberculture” have been ordered and defined, and found their place in science and society, the very concept of “cybergenic” is a symbol of new new media. Paul Saffo used as the first the word “cybergenic” for Barack Obama, the Democratic candidate for U.S. president in 2008. Saffo pointed out that since the defeat of Richard Nixon’s in television debate by John F. Kennedy in 1960, it appeared a political axiom that successful candidates should be “mediagenic”, that means well presented on television to convince the voters<sup>42</sup>. He understood political activity on the network as surfing on the Internet, writing a blog, using Twitter to reach out to the society. Saffo analysed the strategy of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama and noticed that Clinton did not take the power of the Internet and new new media seriously. On the other hand, Obama recognized the potential of cyberspace and also ran his presidential campaign on the network. As Saffo notes, this contrast was even greater between Obama and Republican McCain, who did not realize the impact of the Internet and new new media on the contemporary society.

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<sup>40</sup> P. Levinson, op.cit., p. 11.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>42</sup> P. Saffo, *Obama's 'Cybergenic' Edge*, 11.06. 2008, [http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/Politics/story?id=5046275&page=1#.UWV\\_EJOePh4](http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/Politics/story?id=5046275&page=1#.UWV_EJOePh4) (Retrieved 22.04.2017).



After the formulation of the concept by Saffo, Levinson has analysed cybergenetic qualities. In his opinion, cybergenetic is a combination of telegenic and YouTube. According to Levinson, cybergenetic is not just a good, or effective presentation on the Internet, but also the ability to function in cyberspace. In his opinion, we should remember about the catalytic relationship between the old and new new media because telegenic is the starting point and necessary condition for the cybergenetic phenomenon<sup>43</sup>. In support of this thesis, the scholar cites the case of Ron Paul who was ignored by mainstream media and this politician focused on the campaign on the Internet<sup>44</sup>. Levinson has described ABC's behaviour which did not mention the winning by Paul in an after-debate poll. ABC removed the comments of Paul's supporters from an online chat forum<sup>45</sup>. Brendan Spiegel wrote about Ron Paul: "News about Paul has an outsize presence on Digg and Reddit, two sites that allow users to highlight their preferred content. Paul's YouTube channel has been viewed over one million times, dwarfing efforts from competitors like John McCain and Rudy Giuliani"<sup>46</sup>. Why is Ron Paul so popular on the Internet? I think that we can find the answer in Spiegel's article: "Paul's libertarian message – he is against big government, the war, and pretty much anything that costs taxpayers money – has attracted a group of anti-establishment, tech-savvy supporters who have taken everyone by surprise"<sup>47</sup>. If the traditional and mainstream media ignore other candidates, the "thirds" should search for other tools of communication like Ron Paul did. I focused on Ron Paul's case because "Paul's poll numbers award him less than 2 percent of the vote among Republican candidates"<sup>48</sup> and he was not the favourite in the Republican primaries. For this reason, he can be classified into the "thirds". New new media promoted not only Ron Paul as an independent candidate for the office of the President of the United States but, above all, allowed the presentation of the ideas and values constituting his electoral program to a broader circle of voters. It can, therefore, be said that this cybergenetic quality should be treated in two ways: in the context of the candidate himself and the electoral program, given the specific situation of third-party candidates in the political system.

It is difficult not to agree with the proposed understanding of cybergenetic but in my opinion, we should pay attention to some other aspects. The recognition of

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<sup>43</sup> P. Levinson, *op.cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>46</sup> B. Spiegel, *Ron Paul: How a Fringe Politician Took Over the Web*, 27.06.2007, [http://www.wired.com/politics/onlinerights/news/2007/06/ron\\_paul](http://www.wired.com/politics/onlinerights/news/2007/06/ron_paul) (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> D. McCullagh, *Ron Paul: The Internet's favourite candidate*, 6.08.2007, [http://news.cnet.com/Ron-Paul-The-Internets-favourite-candidate/2100-1028\\_3-6200893.html](http://news.cnet.com/Ron-Paul-The-Internets-favourite-candidate/2100-1028_3-6200893.html) (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

cybergenic qualities in the context of third-party candidates is of special nature. While in Barack Obama's case, the classic definition of cybergenic is applicable, in the context of third-party candidates cybergenic should be considered in a different way. What has been repeatedly emphasized, the Republican and Democratic candidates draw more attention of traditional media than the other candidates. For this reason, new new media are the main place to promote the candidate and the electoral program. The multitude of these media will make political debates and political videos be broadcast exclusively on YouTube, blogs, videocasts or less well-known online channels. Electoral spots, which are posted on popular websites, were subscribed by users because of the availability, flexibility and freedom of choice. The vast impact of, e.g., social media as useful tools in political communication is reflected by their functions, particularly useful in the election campaign: informing, engaging, connecting and mobilizing<sup>49</sup>. In the case of third-party candidates, this type of media makes it possible to communicate with voters. Cybergenic qualities of the candidates of these parties should be measured not only by their personality, but also by the electoral program and the ways of using new new media in communication with voters. Thus, this cybergenic aspect of such candidates should be considered in two parallel areas: the candidate and the electoral program. For this reason, cybergenic should be treated in a broader sense, which was defined by Levinson, as well as in a narrower scope. From this it follows that cybergenic would be understood as a good presentation on the Internet with a smaller emphasis on the telegenic condition that could be replaced with efficient use of new new media. Politicians who occasionally appeared on television like the "thirds", would be able to reach out to voters in this way.

## Presidential Election Campaign in 2016 – Gary Johnson Versus Jill Stein

According to Matthew Dean Hindman and Bernard Tamas, communication technology has made it easier for third parties to organize and reach out<sup>50</sup>. I focus on exploiting the potential of new new media by the two other politicians like Gary

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<sup>49</sup> P. Jaworowicz refers to the functions of social media and other portals functioning online proposed by K.A. Foot and S.M. Schneider. P. Jaworowicz, *Wideokomunikowanie polityczne w internecie. YouTube i polskie partie polityczne w latach 2011–2014*, Difin 2016, Warszawa, pp. 164–165.

<sup>50</sup> M.D. Hindman, B. Tamas, *The U.S. has more third-party candidates than it's seen in a century. Why?* 31.08.2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/08/31/the-u-s-has-more-third-party-candidates-than-its-seen-in-a-century-why/?utm\\_term=.f9b516404a91](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/08/31/the-u-s-has-more-third-party-candidates-than-its-seen-in-a-century-why/?utm_term=.f9b516404a91) (Retrieved 10.09.2017).

Johnson and Jill Stein from politically opposite poles. The analysed candidates received the highest social support among the third-party candidates (Libertarian Party and Green Party) taking into account the results in the 2004–2012 elections<sup>51</sup>. Both were the third-party candidates and traditional media were not interested in them in contrast to the main candidates. In my opinion, Ron Paul showed other “thirds” that they should not count on mainstream media but they should look for more opportunities for communication.

Political analyst Ron Faucheux wrote about the presidential election 2016 as “if there was ever an opportunity for a serious independent or third-party presidential candidacy, this was the year”<sup>52</sup>. He also underlined that “antipathy towards both major-party candidates is deeper than any time before since the Civil War. In addition, a recent Gallup Poll finds that 57% of Americans believe the Democratic and Republican parties are so lacking that another major party is needed”<sup>53</sup>. Faucheux added that the political message from the Democrats and Republicans was that they wanted to influence the supporters of Johnson and Stein and it would cause the “binary choice”<sup>54</sup> of Clinton and Trump.

I focus on the phenomenon of cybergenic in the case of Gary Johnson (Libertarian Party) and Jill Stein (Green Party). Both competed in the 2012 presidential election. Additionally, using new media has become more common than ever before. After the last campaign, there has been a revolution in communication. YouTube is the most well-known service which publishes millions of videos every day. Also, social media have become more important. Politicians communicate via Facebook and Twitter. They appear more frequently, and take advantage of new new media to communicate with voters. As I presented earlier, the idea of cybergenic combines both telegenic and YouTube and therefore, I will concentrate just on this type of services.

Firstly, I analyse the cybergenic qualities of Gary Johnson. He received 4,448,221 (3.3%) votes in the general election of 2016<sup>55</sup>. He was the Libertarian Party nominee

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<sup>51</sup> Presidential election 2004: Michael Bandarik (Libertarian Party) got 397,265 votes (0.32%), David Coob (Green Party) got 119,859 votes (0.10%), *Federal Elections 2004*, Washington 2005, p. 5. <https://transition.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2004/federaelections2004.pdf> (Retrieved 10.09.2017). Presidential election 2008: Bob Barr (Libertarian Party) got 523,715 votes (0.40%), Cynthia McKinney (Green Party) got 161,797 votes (0.12%). *Federal Elections 2008*, Washington 2009, p. 5. <https://transition.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2008/federaelections2008.pdf> (Retrieved 10.09.2017). Presidential election 2012: Gary Johnson (Libertarian Party) got 1,275,971 votes (0.99%), Jill Stein (Green Party) got 469,627 votes (0.36%), *Federal Elections 2012*, Washington 2013, p. 5. <https://transition.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2012/federaelections2012.pdf> (Retrieved 10.09.2017).

<sup>52</sup> R. Faucheux, *This was the year a third party candidate could have won the election*, 19.10.2016, <https://qz.com/813355/2016-presidential-election-this-was-the-year-a-third-party-candidate-could-have-won-the-presidency/> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=2016> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

for President of the United States in the 2012 and 2016 election. Johnson, through CNN's website, outlined the broader background of his decision to run for president, which composed of: politics dominated by two parties; emphasizing the idea for the state's functioning similar to the approach of the Libertarian Party; political experience<sup>56</sup>. Brian LaSorsa wrote that "Third-party candidates don't poll well unless they're given a chance to debate"<sup>57</sup>. Johnson did not participate in political debates due to the lack of any invitation. In this context, some media agreed that Johnson should debate with Clinton and Trump<sup>58</sup>.

Although I will not analyse the website, I would like to point out that at this stage a website is one of the cybergenic elements. The website has social plug-ins to Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, Instagram<sup>59</sup>. Such a website makes the candidate be well presented on the Internet, namely he is cybergenic. Johnson founded the official channel "Governor Gary Johnson" on YouTube in October 2013<sup>60</sup>. In my view, such an activity was intended to get the permanent campaign to promote libertarian ideas. Johnson published 57 videos as campaign advertisements<sup>61</sup>, his appearance in mainstream media, his participation in CNN, FOX NEWS<sup>62</sup>. This account was subscribed by 8,602 users and displayed 5,583,695 times. Moreover, many users published videos with Johnson, which contributed to his popularity. His official account on Facebook is liked by 1,696,683 users and is observed by 1,662,627<sup>63</sup>. On this official account users can find detailed information about Johnson, like his private interests, political views, career<sup>64</sup>. So far, he has posted 305 photos and 153 films focused on the last presidential election. A group of Johnson's supporters called "Gary Johnson 2020" has been formed on Facebook<sup>65</sup>. Moreover, Johnson is very active on Twitter. He has posted 5172 tweets, 547 photos/films and he is observed by 356,000 users<sup>66</sup>. Johnson has also published 456 posts which are observed by 75,100 users on

<sup>56</sup> G. Johnson, *Why I'm running for president*, 23.06.2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/06/09/opinions/why-running-for-president-johnson/index.html> (Retrieved 10.09.2017).

<sup>57</sup> B. LaSorsa, *Let Gary Johnson Eat Cake (and Debate)*, 4.10.2012, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-lasorsa/let-gary-johnson-eat-cake\\_b\\_1938819.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=elections-2012](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-lasorsa/let-gary-johnson-eat-cake_b_1938819.html?utm_hp_ref=elections-2012) (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>58</sup> #LetGaryDebate, media: "Chicago Tribune", "The Charlotte Observer", "Richmont Times Dispatch", "The Post and Courier", <https://www.facebook.com/pg/govgaryjohnson/videos/> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>59</sup> See <https://www.johnsonweld.com/> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>60</sup> See <https://www.youtube.com/user/GovernorGaryJohnson/about> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>61</sup> See ads.: "This is the year", "Crash the party", "Been there - Johnson Weld 2016", *ibid*.

<sup>62</sup> We can find playlists entitled: #LetGarydebate; Gary Johnson 2016: campaign advertisements; The 3<sup>rd</sup> Party candidate doc; Gary Johnson 2016. Other playlists: Gary Johnson videos (41 films), <https://www.youtube.com/user/GovernorGaryJohnson/playlists> (Retrieved 10.09.2017).

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/govgaryjohnson/> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>64</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pg/govgaryjohnson/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/govgaryjohnson/about/?ref=page_internal) (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/garyjohnson2012/?ref=ts&fref=ts> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>66</sup> @Gov.GaryJohnson, <https://twitter.com/GovGaryJohnson> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

Instagram<sup>67</sup>. Furthermore, Johnson has official accounts on Google+, LinkedIn, and Pinterests in which he promoted himself as a candidate in the presidential election of 2016, his libertarian ideals and he maintains contacts with potential voters. On Wikipedia site we can find more details about Johnson, like his political career, presidential campaigns, political position and personal life, which confirms his growing popularity among the society.

Jill Stein from the Green Party received 1,449,542 votes (1.1%)<sup>68</sup>. She is a physician, activist and a politician<sup>69</sup>. On her website she presents her current activity, like promoting pro-health attitudes, environmental protection, obtained election results over the years, and some awards for health and environmental protection<sup>70</sup>. Stein also declared that whistle-blower Edward Snowden would be a member of her cabinet<sup>71</sup>. She also attached 3 photos and a short film entitled “The Two-Party System Is Broken” to her biographic note, in which she underlined that “people are hungry for more choices”<sup>72</sup> and people hear “don't vote for your values, vote for your fears”<sup>73</sup>. After the short biographic entry, we can see 431 users' reactions, like posts on Twitter, Facebook<sup>74</sup>. On the website, she published endorsements e.g. of actress Susan Sarandon<sup>75</sup>. We also find information about the main pillars of the Green Party, the concept of “The Green New Deal” (a reference to Roosevelt's “New Deal”)<sup>76</sup>. Her website is more dynamic and contains more information than Johnson's website. Her account “Stein/Baraka 2016” on YouTube was created in 2015<sup>77</sup> and contains 109 films. Her account was subscribed by 3,222 users and displayed 365,772 times<sup>78</sup>, which is definitely less than Johnson's. Her official account on Facebook is liked by 661,828 users and followed by 647,012<sup>79</sup>. She or her staff posted 709 photos, 457 films focused on

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/govgaryjohnson/> (Retrieved 22.04.2017).

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=2016> (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

<sup>69</sup> She also competed in the elections for governor of Massachusetts in 2002, 2010. P.J. Reilly, *Who is Jill Stein anyway? Green Party candidate discuss her background*, 1.10.2012, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/peterjreilly/2012/10/01/interview-with-green-party-candidate-jill-stein-part-one/#d9bce05fd64> (Retrieved 10.09.2017).

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.jill2016.com/about> (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

<sup>71</sup> S. Kinane, *Jill Stein says Edward Snowden would be in her cabinet if she becomes president*, 13.07.2016, <http://www.wmnf.org/jill-stein-says-edward-snowden-cabinet-becomes-president/> (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

<sup>72</sup> *The Two-Party System Is Broken*, 0:16, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NjkCfjU-FY> (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

<sup>73</sup> 0:35, *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.jill2016.com/about> (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.jill2016.com/endorsements> (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.jill2016.com/greennewdeal> (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

<sup>77</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQI0IDMjf\\_01A6lTTkhgkYA/about](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQI0IDMjf_01A6lTTkhgkYA/about) (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/drjillstein/> (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

the last presidential campaign<sup>80</sup>. Moreover, a group of Stein's supporters was formed on Facebook<sup>81</sup>. Jill Stein has also an account on Twitter and describes herself as “Green Party 2016 candidate for President, activist, medical doctor (...)”<sup>82</sup>. Stein is a very active user on Twitter. She posted 11,800 tweets and her profile is observed by 275,000 users<sup>83</sup>. On Wikipedia website we can find more details about Stein, like her political career, presidential campaigns, political position and personal life. The information posted on Wikipedia website concerning Jill Stein is the proof of social interest. Similarly to Johnson, Jill Stein also created an official account on Google+ and Instagram.

## Conclusion

All politicians appreciate the opportunities offered by new new media, especially the “thirds”, which are ignored by mainstream media. This situation results from a change of communication tools. We can track the information on a candidate in social media and YouTube. Anytime we can see election commercials on YouTube, download a politician's podcast, find out about election rallies from Facebook and Twitter, and edit information about a candidate in Wikipedia. Moreover, new new media allow two-way communication. Voters are more aware of the various sources of information. This is due to the fact that they also want to participate in the public discourse. Public life has been reserved for politicians and journalists, but now it has been extended to users of new new media. Users published videos with third-party candidates to promote other ideas which did not appear in mainstream media. Their activity caused people to begin to talk about other political options than the Democrats and Republicans. The transfer of political campaigns to the Internet resulted in paying attention to a candidate's cybergenic qualities.

Despite the privileged position of the two main parties on the American political scene, which also translates into the media interest, third-party candidates seek voter attention in various ways. In a world dominated by technology and new new media, politicians are looking for new ways of reaching out to the public. Running an election campaign in the real and virtual world is complementary. During the presidential campaigns in 2004–2014, the results achieved in the general election

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<sup>80</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pg/drjillstein/videos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/drjillstein/videos/?ref=page_internal) (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/409145052589332/?ref=ts&fref=ts> (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

<sup>82</sup> @DrJillStein, <https://twitter.com/drjillstein> (Retrieved 23.04.2017).

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

of the third-party candidates recorded an upward trend, and the best results were achieved by the candidates analysed above in the last presidential election. The initial censorship is related to the emergence of the YouTube service in 2005, which revolutionized the circulation of the video content on the Internet. If we associate this fact with the importance of YouTube and similar sites with the activity of these candidates in the virtual world, the recent results show that Johnson and Stein and their views are cybergenic. Johnson and Stein used the potential of new new media with a good result to communicate with the electorate. First of all, they both focused on the propagating of the ideas similar to the represented groups through these media. In this way, they were striving for mainstream media attention and tried to convince the American society to their ideas. In both cases we can talk about a budding phenomenon of the cybergenic concept. Their popularity among voters has increased since the last presidential election. This is due to the fact that new new media have taken on greater importance than in 2008. This has made the information about the “thirds” infiltrate into the mainstream.

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### **Cybergenic Presidential Candidates of Third Parties in the United States: the Analysis of Selected Political Campaigns with the Key Role of New Media**

This article focuses on selected political campaigns of the Third Parties in the United States. The main purpose of this work is to present how these candidates promote themselves and communicate with voters. Traditional and new media

are playing a crucial role in public life during presidential elections. Not only do they inform society but also are a tool of political communication. Voters can get to know a candidate and his/her election program via the media. Journalists are conducting interviews with main candidates, especially the Democrats and Republicans, which are leaders in the polls. But what should the candidates from other parties do? Those who do not appear very often in the mainstream media? How do they gain public support for their ideas? Do we insist on a telegenic president, as William F. Buckley indicated, or a cybergenic president in the contemporary world? Considering the increasing role of the Internet in modern society, these candidates use new new media to promote themselves. Therefore, in this article I will describe the importance of new media, their effectiveness in presidential campaigns and a cybergenic candidate as a standard of modern political communication.

Keywords: cyberspace, cybergenic, new new media, third parties candidates, political campaign

### **Les candidats cybergéniques de « Troisièmes Partis» pour la présidentielle aux États-Unis – l’analyse des campagnes politiques sélectionnées avec le rôle clé des nouveaux médias**

Ce texte se concentre sur des campagnes politiques sélectionnées du soi-disant «Troisième Parti» aux États-Unis. Le but principal de ce travail était de présenter les façons dont ces candidats se font connaître et communiquent avec les électeurs. Lors de l’élection présidentielle, les médias traditionnels et nouveaux jouent un rôle clé dans la vie publique. Non seulement ils informent la société, mais sont aussi un outil de communication politique. Les électeurs peuvent connaître le candidat et son programme électoral à travers les médias. Les journalistes interviewent les principaux candidats, en particulier, les Démocrates et les Républicains qui sont des leaders dans les sondages. Que devraient alors faire les candidats des autres partis qui n’apparaissent pas dans les médias du courant dominant pour obtenir le soutien du public? Insistons-nous toujours sur le président télégénique, comme l’a dit William F. Buckley, ou plutôt sur le président cybergénique dans le monde moderne? Étant donné le rôle croissant d’Internet dans la société moderne, les candidats utilisent les nouveaux «nouveaux médias» pour leur promotion. C’est pour cette raison que ce travail présente le rôle des nouveaux médias, leur efficacité dans la campagne présidentielle et le phénomène de cybergénéicité que constituent des éléments de la communication politique moderne.

Mots-clés: cyberspace, cybergénique, nouveaux « nouveaux médias», candidats de «Troisième Parti», campagne politique

### **Кибергенные кандидаты в президенты от третьих партий в Соединенных Штатах – анализ избранных политических кампаний с ключевой ролью новых средств массовой информации**

В статье внимание уделяется избранным политическим кампаниям кандидатов так называемой «третьей партии» в Соединенных Штатах. Основная цель работы заключается в том, чтобы указать как эти кандидаты продвигают себя и общаются с избирателями. Во время президентских выборов традиционные и новые средства массовой информации играют ключевую роль в общественной жизни. Они не только информируют, но и являются инструментом политического общения. Избиратели могут узнать кандидата и его избирательную программу через средства массовой информации. Журналисты проводят интервью с главными кандидатами, особенно с демократами и республиканцами, которые являются лидерами в опросах. Но что должны делать кандидаты от других партий, которые не появляются очень часто в основных средствах массовой информации? Как они получают общественную поддержку? Неужели мы все еще настаиваем на телегенном президенте, как говорил Уильям Ф. Бакли? Учитывая растущую роль интернета в современном обществе, кандидаты используют новые медиа для продвижения себя. В статье указана важная роль новых СМИ, их эффективность в президентской кампании и кибер-феномены, которые являются элементами современной политической коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: киберпространство, новые медиа, кандидаты третьих партий, политическая кампания