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Media Image of Former Olympian. Renata Mauer-Róžańska Case Study

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Abstract

This paper tackles the issue of image, with an emphasis on personal image (personal PR). Image was selected as the focal point of this article as, according to the author, it is an indispensable element of media life and functioning in the society. There are numerous definitions of image in both Polish and foreign literature. In his or her definition, each author attempts to incorporate the aspects most important to the world of business and its actors. This paper is centered on distinguishing between such concepts as image,

reputation and identity, as well as portrays the evolution of image in time and growing social awareness of the notion, and presents the methodology of building image.

This study aims to determine the image of Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańsk as it is presented in the national press. The articles referencing the former Olympian analyzed herein were sourced from three nationwide dailies: *Fakt*, *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Super Express*.

The entire material collected and analyses allow to conclude that Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska has a moderately positive image. On the one hand, she is viewed as an authority figure and a walking icon and, on the other, as a person who is withdrawn, afraid to step out of her comfort zone and avoids social media, as well as industry events.

Key words: image, reputation, identity, Renata Mauer-Róžańska, Olympic Games, press, Fakt, Super Express, Gazeta Wyborcza.

Introduction

Nowadays, when the pursuit of success in its broad sense is often at the forefront of human ambitions, every factor in the path to achieving it matters. In these struggles, image has strongly risen in prominence as, on the one hand, it presents the role that it plays in the functioning of the individual on a daily basis and, on the other, demonstrates the dependencies between the efforts the individual takes. Whether deliberately or not, everyone builds his/her image by making different decisions, be it choice of clothing, behavior or fostering his/her relationships with his/her environment.

In and of itself image is not a new concept; however, it has recently gained more strength that follows from its greater precision. It is beyond question that social awareness of the significance of image in running a business, doing politics or everyday life has grown. Individuals and business alike are considered (whether positively or negatively) through the lens of image on a daily basis. Another thing worth considering is crises in organizations or those focusing on the individual, where aside from purely organizational aspects, such issues are tantamount with an image crisis. One example is the stalemate in Alior Bank or the tarnished image of star cyclist Lance Armstrong. Armstrong's disgrace indirectly had an adverse effect on the image of the sports discipline as a whole. Why is image so important? This question is fundamental to the existence of image as it determines the functioning of the individual or a **business** in the environment, which follows from sympathies and antipathies which are derived from image. If someone deliberately builds his reflection in the eyes of others and every step matters to him/her, then his/her efforts or the efforts of a business are met with social approval, and his/her attitude or voiced convictions may be perceived as a model worth following.

In summary, image-building efforts must consider that is impossible for a company or individual to enjoy universally positive perception, a phenomenon that is attributable to freedom of beliefs, preferences or hierarchy of values.

Image, Identity, Reputation

1. Definition of terms - Image, Identity, Reputation

Image is a word that elicits a whole range of emotions. Understanding its essence requires tracing the roots of this concept. According to anthropologists, image has its origin in the German word *Viserung*, which means the mental imagery of something, a likeness

or picture. However, difficulties with an explicit definition of this concept emerge from the very beginning. Looking through the prism of applicable laws and norms, Żywila Cołoszyńska in her publication states:

The provisions of copyright law and the Civil Code do not provide a normative definition of image. The concept of "image" should therefore be based on doctrine supported by case law.¹

The author also points out that the above-mentioned notion takes on a fluid form. This is confirmed by doctrine which provides varying definitions and concepts of 'image'. **Within the confines** of generally applicable laws, we should refer to the definition stipulated in Article 81 of the Copyright and Derivative Rights Act of 24 February 1994. In their publication, *Komentarz do ustawy o prawie autorskim i prawach pokrewnych* (Commentary to the Act on Copyright and Derivative Rights Act) Bart and Markiewicz reference Article 81 in the following manner:

The concept of image as used in Article 81 of the Act on Copyright defines it as a intangible product which, using artistic means, presents a recognizable likeness of a given person. Aside from classic painted portraits, this also includes photographs and caricatures.²

One example of the variety of definitions relating to "one's reflection in the eyes of others" is the sheer number of publications dedicated to attempts of presenting a more accurate definition of image. In the modern world, a strong tendency exists to incorporate an increasing number of new elements into the concept of "image" with a view to offer better and more effective legal protection. In the scientific world,

¹ Cołoszyńska Ż., "Prawne aspekty ochrony wizerunku", *Prokurator*, 4(44)-2010/1(45)-2011, pp. 5-13.

² Barta J., Markiewicz R. (1995), *Komentarz do ustawy o prawie autorskim i prawach pokrewnych*, Warsaw, p. 629

researchers seem to be in a race to come up with increasingly precise definitions of image as they tirelessly attempt encapsulate the entirety and multi-layered nature of this notion.

Demonstrating the sheer scale of this process requires mentioning at least a few of the definitions. In her publication from 2010, *Personal PR czyli kreowanie wizerunku sportowca (Personal PR, i.e. Building the Image of an Athlete)*, Anna Adamus-Matuszyńska states that in the Polish language image has a dual context. The author cites the definitions provided in *Inny Słownik Języka Polskiego (Other Dictionary of the Polish Language)*. One of the colloquial interpretations involves perceiving image as a reflection of a given person or object presented in paintings, photographs and drawings. Examples of this include likenesses of rulers of different states on canvass paintings (by Jan Matejko). Another meaning provided in the *Other Dictionary of the Polish Language* is related to the psychological approach. From the perspective psychologists, it is the mental imagery of someone or something and the image we build when interacting with the outside world. Another author defined image as follows:

Typically, it means how an organization is perceived by its environment (external and internal).³

The division of image is crystallized further in the paper and includes the standard image, i.e. the external perception of an institution/organization outside, and the mirror image, i.e. how the institution/company/organization perceives itself. However, the most compelling definition, that will serve as the foundation of this study, was proposed by Ewa Cenker. ⁴

Stasiuk- Krajewska K. (2011), *Etyka Public Relations. Konteksty. Koncepcje. Kontrowersje.*, Wrocław, p. 82

⁴ *Ibidem*

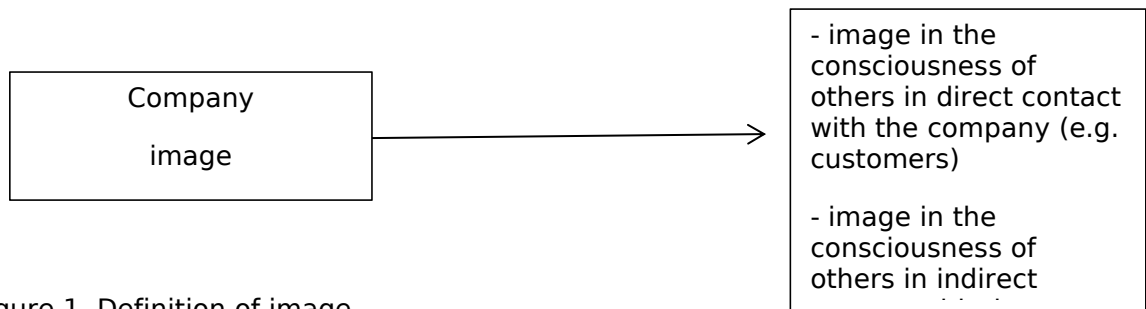


Figure 1. Definition of image.

Source: Own study based on Cenker E. (2000): *Public Relations*, Poznań

The above definition provided in the figure shows the multi-layered nature and contextual variety of the notion of image. Identity is another vital element in the creation of “one’s reflection in the eyes of others”. In his paper from 1993, Sam Black points out the fundamental difference between image and identity (by some misinterpreted as a synonym of the word image). He defines it as a personality composed of numerous aspects. The aspects are company philosophy, history, culture and strategy. He also highlights the management style, reputation and the behavior of employees as representatives of a company. Further, he particularly emphasizes that:

Just as in the case of individuals, based on the way a company is perceived, it develops the character perceived by the environment and builds a certain reputation in the minds of others.⁵

Similarly, another researcher, Anthony Davis, believes that a company’s image and identity are two separate entities. In his book entitled *Public Relations*, he provides the following definition:

⁵ Black S. (2001), *Public Relations*, Cracow, p. 96

An organization's identity is a strategically planned and operationalized self-presentation that incorporates the desired image.⁶

In other words, a company's identity is the path it follows in presenting itself to others. Such a self-presentation strategy yields many benefits. The author pays particular attention to a breakthrough in thinking about a company's identity. He once wrote that in the past identity was equated with a given symbol or logo, but currently, apart from robust and recognizable branding, other major aspects also include: company presentation, personality, conduct, communication and its numerous connections. In conclusion, the fundamental aspect of this statement is that people perceive a company as whole, but at the same time analyze its individual constituent elements. The final vital analyzed concept is the reputation of an individual/business. Warren Buffet, one of the wealthiest people in the world, often said that he will be understanding towards an employee who loses money for his firm. However, if the same employee loses a shred of reputation for the firm, he will be ruthless. He also claimed that building a reputation takes many years of hard work and five minutes to ruin it. In the not so distant past, the terms image and reputation were used interchangeably as synonyms. Today, however, more and more researchers are attempting to distinguish between the two concepts and formulate separate definitions. These attempts have garnered waves of criticism as it is difficult to identify and indicate explicit boundaries to differentiate what should and what should not be included in its definition. John Dalton, the director of one of London's Public Relations schools, asserts that no universal definition of the term that would enjoy widespread acceptance exists. He refers to the definition of the CEO of USA's Reputation Institute according to which:

⁶ Varey R. (2007), "External Public Relations activities", [in:] Davis A., *Public Relations*, Warsaw, p. 53

Reputation is the common assessment of an organization's past actions and their effects, reflecting the organization's ability to generate results that provide value to stakeholders.⁷

Another researcher who attempted to crystallize the definition of reputation is A. Davis. He draws attention to an issue that exists in society, i.e. equating image with reputation. In his publication, he explains the fundamental differences between the two concepts and concludes that the cornerstone of reputation is experience, which in turn is necessary to create and define image. A. Davies also distinguishes between indirect and direct experience. He emphasizes that most typical reputation-building situations involve contact with another person.⁸

In summary: The terms analyzed above, i.e. image, identity and reputation are closely correlated, but cannot be used interchangeably. The situation is presented in the figure below.

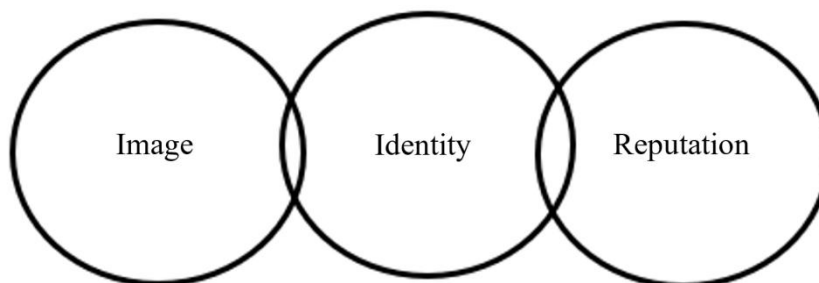


Figure 2. Image, identity, reputation

Source: Davis A. (2007): *Public Relations*, Warsaw

⁷ Fombrun Ch., van Riel Cees (1997), "The reputational landscape.", *Corporate Reputation Review*, p.5 [after:] Dalton J. (2011), "Reputation and Strategic Issue Management", [in:] Hiles A., *Reputation Management: Building and Protecting Your Company's Profile in a Digital World*, London, pp. 203-216.

⁸ Davis A. (2007), *Public Relations*, Warsaw, p. 53

In this figure, identity only partially overlaps with image, and image as well as identity are both factors that determine reputation.

Biography of Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska⁹

Born on 23 April 1969 in Niesielsko (Mazowieckie province), Olympian Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska started her sporting career in Związkowy Klub Strzelecki (a sports shooting club) in Warsaw, to later move to the sports shooting division of WKS Śląsk Wrocław. Her first coach was Zdzisław Stachyra (teacher of civil defense preparation at the Construction Trades Schools in Warsaw), later succeeded by Piotr Kosmatko (sports shooter, participant in the XXII Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980), and Andrzej Kijowski (master-class coach of sports shooting and sports shooting judge). She specialized in shooting with an air rifle and rifle in three positions: prone, standing and kneeling. Her first Olympic Games were the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona where she failed to win a medal. Four years later, she got another call up to the national team. The 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta gave Mauer-Róžańska her first success. The website of the Polish Olympic Committee reads:

- 1996 Atlanta: 50m rifle (3x20 shots) 3 positions (prone, standing, kneeling) - in qual. (38 contestants) 1st place with 589 points (Olympic record), 3rd place in the final (8 contestants.) with 679.8 points, winner of bronze medal; 10m air rifle (40 shots) standing position - in qual. (49 contestants.), places 2-4 with 395 points; 1st place in the final (8 contestants) with 497.6 points, winner of gold medal.¹⁰

1996 was also happy period in the Olympian's family life as she gave birth to her daughter, Natalia, who became the apple of her eye. Her next success came after four years at the Sydney Olympic Games (2000) where she won yet another gold medal in 50m rifle 3 positions

⁹ Fedor D. (ed.) (2008), *Słynni polscy olimpijczycy. Renata Mauer-Róžańska. Strzał w dziesiątkę*, Warsaw

¹⁰ <http://www.olimpijski.pl/pl/bio/1463,mauer-rozanska-renata-malgorzata.html> [accessed: 23.09.2016]

(3x20 shots). Mauer-Róžańska won most of her medals in international sporting competitions as she was: a two-time world champion, two-time European champion, multiple Polish champion (43 gold medals) and multiple record holder and medalist of other competitions. Currently, the former sports shooter is an academic lecturer at the University of Physical Education in Wrocław (since 2006) and at the University of Lower Silesia (since 2009).

Presentation of research methodology. Justification of research tools choice.

The research methodology used to achieve the goal of this paper, which is to examine the image of Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska, involves analysis of the national press according to the idea of quantitative methods. These methods facilitate capturing the dependencies and processes that occur between the researched items to a greater extent than qualitative tools. Thus, there is a distinct difference between qualitative researchers and researches applying quantitative methods. This becomes apparent in the first stage of research design. In presenting the said difference, Graham Gibbs wrote:

Qualitative researchers focus on striving to decipher, using meaningful and detail-rich categories, how people form the world around them, what they do or what happens to them, by analyzing the experiences of individuals or groups, analyzing interactions and acts of communication as they happen and analyzing documents or other traces of human experiences and interactions.¹¹

Qualitative research strongly emphasizes case studies, as well as capturing experiences and the context of statements. Researchers relying on qualitative tools seek opportunities to craft new theories or topple existing ones, they also look for anomalies that have no place

¹¹ Gibbs G. (2013), "Analizowanie danych jakościowych", [in:] Świtalska A.K., *Perspektywy rozwoju branży PR na Lubelszczyźnie*, Lublin, p. 59

in quantitative research. They are also characterized by a strong focus on exploring the specifics of a given phenomenon. To grasp the essence of individual phenomena, two nomothetic and idiographic approaches are considered. The first of the them is centered around searching for dimensions that are universal in their existence and, at the same time, define differences between situations and individuals.¹² The idiographic approach involves characterizing a single case through the perspective of mutual interactions. Sometimes the differences between two different cases are more significant than the similarities. The idiographic approach is attributed with particular advantages of qualitative research, and is used for bibliographic and narrative analysis techniques.

5. Analysis of the image of Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Różańska in daily press.

The image of Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Różańska as presented by the media was analyzed on the basis of daily press. Research materials were selected taking into account studies commissioned by Polskie Badania Czytelnictwa Sp. z.o.o and conducted by the Millward Brown Institute. The aim of the study was to specify the most frequently read dailies in Poland, while the research sample was selected from the PESEL (Polish personal identification number) survey and was divided into two age groups: 15-75 years (table 2) and 16-59 years (table 3).

¹² Gibbs G. (2015)., *Analizowanie danych jakościowych*, Warsaw, p. 26

Age: 15-75 years	November 2014 : April 2016	November 2014 : April 2016	Chan ge
Title	percentage of respondents		In pp.
Fakt	11.19%	11.68%	- 0.49 %
Gazeta Wyborcza	7.63%	8.64%	- 1.01 %
Super Express	3.96%	4.41%	- 0.45 %
Przegląd Sportowy	3.11%	3.19%	- 0.08 %
Dziennik Gazeta Prawna	1.93%	1.41%	0.52 %
Rzeczpospolita	1.63%	1.50%	- 0.13 %
Nasze Miasto	1.02%	1.05%	- 0.03 %
Sport	0.41%	0.43%	0.02 %
Puls Biznesu	0.31%	0.24%	0.07 %
Parkiet Gazeta Giełdy	0.11%	0.05%	0.06 %

Table 1. Results of study: for the most popular daily from November 2014 to April 2015, and from November 2015 to April 2016 among the 15-75 age group.

Age: 16-59 years	November 2014 : April 2016	November 2014 : April 2016	Chan ge
Title	percentage of respondents		In pp.
<i>Fakt</i>	10.23%	10.78%	- 0.55 %
<i>Gazeta Wyborcza</i>	8.03%	8.63%	- 0.60 %
<i>Super Express</i>	3.45%	4.01%	- 0.56 %
<i>Przegląd Sportowy</i>	3.27%	3.40%	- 0.13 %
<i>Dziennik Gazeta Prawna</i>	2.23%	1.58%	0.65 %
<i>Rzeczpospolita</i>	1.79%	1.50%	0.29 %
<i>Nasze Miasto</i>	1.08%	1.06%	0.02 %
<i>Sport</i>	0.46%	0.39%	0.07 %
<i>Puls Biznesu</i>	0.37%	0.26%	0.11 %
<i>Parkiet Gazeta Giełdy</i>	0.12%	0.05%	0.07 %

Table 2. Results of study: for the most popular daily from November 2014 to April 2015, and from November 2015 to April 2016 among the 16-59 age group.

Source: wirtualnemedi.pl

The research was conducted using the CAPI technique. In November 2014-April 2015, 13559 persons were analyzed and in November 2015-April 2016, the case test sample included 10041 persons (10765 and 7810 persons, respectively, in age group 16-59) The numbers given are CCS (Seasonal Cycle Readership) ratios.

The tables indicate that the daily newspaper with the highest readership is *Fakt*, followed by *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Super Express* in third place. The media image of Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska was analyzed based on the above dailies. The analyzed articles were sourced from the internet versions of the outlets published in 2004-2015. The articles were searched for as follows: using the daily's

own search engine and entering the following phrase: Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska. The results obtained were subject to deduction. The first articles subject to qualitative analysis were published in *Fakt*. Throughout 2009-2015, there were eight pieces referencing Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska.

The first search result is an article entitled “Oto nowa rada miasta” (“Here's Wrocław New City Council”) published on 23 November 2010, which presents background information on the roots of Wrocław's new councilor. The word Olympian, used in the piece, is associated with a career in sports at the highest level. It evokes numerous associations with openness to others, a fighting spirit and determination in pursuing goals. An article published on 14 December 2010 entitled “Pieniądze biorą a dyżurów nie mają” (“They Take Money, but Are Not Available During Office Hours”) alters the image of the athlete and paints her in a bad light. Mauer-Róžańska's activities are presented in the article as follows:

(...) The citizens of Wrocław want councilors to be available during office hours as they have many issues that need to be addressed. ‘It's simply not nice. Many of us are waiting to meet with the councilors. There are issues in housing developments that need to be handled right away. Who do we turn to about them?’ says Mieczysław Cichy, 70, from the Old Town district. (...) Admittedly, a few of the new councilors thought about that and published their phone numbers at the city council's website (www.iwroclaw.pl) Others, like Katarzyna Obara-Kowalska, 32, from Rafał Dutkiewicz's Club or her fellow councilor Renata Mauer-Róžańska, 41, did not¹³.

The article points out her lack of openness. Her actions (failure to publish her phone number online) have a negative impact on her image. This decision could cause her to be perceived as a person

¹³ <http://www.fakt.pl/wydarzenia/polska/wroclaw/pieniadze-juz-biora-a-dyzurow-nie-maja/epw0f2l> [accessed: 01.10.2016]

(following her success, i.e. winning the support of a large part of the Wrocław community) who ignores the needs of people, is closed off and indifferent. The next three articles paint a more positive image of Renata Mauer-Róžańska. These are: “VIP-y kupują dzieciom wyprawki” (“VIPs Are Buying Children School Starter Kits”) (23 August 2011), “Przez EURO nie będzie medali” (“There Will Be No Medals Because of EURO”) (27 December 2011) and “Nie umiałabym tak strzelać” (“I Could Not Shoot Like That”) (13 February 2013). In the first article, the sports shooter is presented through the prism of her efforts to collect money for school starter kits for children. The gold medalist is presented as a noble person who devotes herself to charity work and helps others. The second article recalls achievements from her Olympic career:

Obviously, sports fans would like to win medals like Renata Mauer-Róžańska, 42.¹⁴

She is presented as an icon, a walking brand and a noble person. A reference to the heyday of her career attests to the recognition for her success, placing her above the average and showing her as an authority figure, an ideal. In the last referenced article, Mauer-Róžańska is presented as a specialist in her field (sports shooting). The next article is entitled “Radni Dudkiewicza podnieśli ceny biletów” (“Dudkiewicz’s Councillers Raise Ticket Prices”) (19 May 2011). At the referenced session of the city council, Mauer-Róžańska voted in favor of raising ticket prices. Because of this vote, she may be perceived as a person who is conformist and does not care about the voice of the community she is supposed to serve. The next analyzed piece is also detrimental to her image. It is entitled: “Żłobki będą droższe” (“Nurseries Will Be More Expensive”) and was published on 17 February 2012. The article references the Olympian’s name once. The author points to the councilor’s absence from a session of the city council during a vote over a hike in nursery fees. This behavior does

¹⁴ <http://www.fakt.pl/sport/inne-sporty/przez-euro-nie-bedzie-medali/2vvz5ds>, [accessed: 01.10.2016]

not paint Mauer-Róžańska in a positive light. She is presented as a person who is not doing her job. “Oto nowi radni Rady Miasta Wrocławia [LISTA]” (“Here Are Wrocław’s New Councilors [LIST]”) published on 24 November 2014 is yet another analyzed article. Mauer-Róžańska’s name is referenced once in the piece, in connection with her political career. It has a positive tone as her name is accompanied by the noun “Olympian”. This attests to the recognition and admiration the athlete enjoys. To readers she is presented as a fighter, a strong and admirable person and, above all, a sports champion.

The next publication whose articles were analyzed is *Gazeta Wyborcza*. These pieces were published in 2009-2015. The procedure was the same as in the case of the *Fakt* daily, i.e. Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska’s name was entered into the search engine field. The search results provided six hits within 0.127 s, meaning that there are six articles referencing the Olympian. The first proposed article is entitled “Snajperka Bogacka trafia dychy nawet z 300 metrów” (“Sniper Bogacka Hits Bullseye From As Far as 300 Meters”) published on 28 July 2012. The piece only references Mauer-Róžańska at the end. This mention presents the Olympian in a positive light as it recaps her sports achievements (Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000). The next article available at *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s website is “Skoczkini wzwyż Lićwinko: nie spodziewałam się teraz takiego wyniku” (“High jumper Lićwinko: I Did Not Expect Such a Result”) published on 24 January 2014. This piece also only briefly mentions the gold medalist; however, it presents her in a negative light. The author of the article references her name only in connection with information regarding Kamila Lićwinko’s need for psychological assistance. The article further reads that Mauer-Róžańska also used the help of a psychologist. Looking through the prism of the stereotype, a person using a psychologist’s assistance is weak and emotionally unstable. It also demonstrates inability to cope with stress, the pressure exerted by the environment and the failure suffered by the gold medalist.

However, in the world of sports, where athletes often train at the edge of their abilities, it is a common practice to employ psychologists. They help in mental training, rising from defeats or teach athletes how to deal with stress. The third analyzed article is „25 Ludzi Wolności: kto wygra plebiscyt "Gazety Wyborczej" i TVN?" (“25 People of Freedom: Who Will Win the Gazeta Wyborcza and TVN contest?”). It was written and published on 8 May 2014. This article presents people nominated for *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s and *TVN*’s (a TV station) popularity contest. Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska was among the nominees for the main award in the sports category. The bio note about her reads as follows:

20. Renata Mauer-Róžańska - air rifle and rifle 3 positions shooting specialist. Her victory in Sydney rendered her the most decorated Polish shooter in history. In addition to two gold and one bronze Olympic medal, she also has, among others, two silver and one bronze medal in the World Cup. Quote from the justification: ‘Great achievements, medals and championships, not to mention the many unforgettable memories and emotions that Renata was a source of. She will remain an unsurpassed standard of excellence and a personification of serenity so many of us need.’¹⁵

Mauer-Róžańska’s image, as presented in the bio note, is positive. The former athlete is presented through the lens of her greatest accomplishments. The author of the article mentions her in glowing terms only and is even grateful for unforgettable emotions and memories. In addition, he portrays her as a walking icon, someone who achieved something unique thanks to her work and persistence and a person deserving of the highest honors. The next article published on the website of the newspaper is a piece written by Ł. Jachimiak on 15 February 2014, later updated on 20 May 2014. The piece is entitled „Ludzie Wolności Oni zmienili polski sport” (“People

¹⁵http://wyborcza.pl/piatekekstra/1,129155,15927146,25_Ludzi_Wolnosci__kto_wygra_plebiscyt__Gazety_Wyborczej_.html [accessed: 08.10.2016]

of Freedom. They Changed Polish Sports”). It paints a negative picture of Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska. The author describes the Olympian as a ‘sniper with astigmatism’. Reading these words makes one think that the basis of success in sports shooting requires 20/20 vision. However, juxtaposing Mauer-Róžańska's astigmatism with her Olympic medals begs the following conclusions: it shows her as someone able to overcome the impossible, break all stereotypes and popular assumptions. The conclusions do not arise after a single reading of the article, but require an in-depth analysis and knowledge of the achievements of the Olympian. Mauer-Róžańska’s other activities described in the article are her travels with her one-month old daughter, Natalia, to World Cup competitions and later, with four-month old Natalia, to the Atlanta Olympic games. The author also points out that she did not miss any competition or training, which is a prerequisite to compete in Atlanta. However, this conduct is not viewed positively. On the contrary, Mauer is portrayed as someone willing to do anything to achieve her goals as she exposes her child to numerous discomforts, taking her along for her travels. It may seem that childcare is a secondary activity to building form and achieving Olympic qualification. At the end, the article cites the words of one of two journalist sent to cover the Games of the XXVI Olympiad:

‘Ms Mauer, Ms Mauer, did you know that you are not listed among medal favorites.’¹⁶

These words make readers perceive the Olympian through the lens of her achievements. The author refers to those appearances of the former athlete which were not successful, and thus the reader sees her as a person no one believes in and is written off in advance. The next pieces follow the same pattern “Owsiak i Małysz w wśród laureatów plebiscytu Ludzie Wolności” (“Owsiak and Małysz Among Winners of People of Freedom Contest”)

¹⁶http://ekstra.sport.pl/ekstra/1,138003,15986490,Ludzie_wolnosci__Oni_zmienili_po_lski_sport.html?disableRedirects=true, [accessed: 08.10.2016]

(published on 1 June 2014). The article references the 'People of Freedom'

popularity contest, which the 'specialist air rifle shooter, Renata Mauer-Róžańska' lost, and portrays her as an unmediagenic and disliked person who is slowly falling into oblivion. The last analyzed article is entitled "Minister Anna Zalewska nie wierzyła w nominację" ("Minister Anna Zalewska Did Not Believe in Nomination") and was published on 10 November 2015. In the piece, the athlete is mentioned through the prism of political discourse, denying rumors regarding her appointment to the Ministry of Sports and Tourism. In the article, Mauer-Róžańska is only referenced once. Readers may be reminded of a certain stereotype whereby an athlete, as a famous person

with great victories during his/her sporting career, retires and enters the world of politics. The referenced publications create an image of the gold medalist as a person who deserves admiration on account of her professional achievements (numerous nominations in popularity contests), and on the other hand, a person who is not very mediagenic, weak

and fame-seeking - starting from the Olympic games through her political activity.

There were no bio notes or interviews in the articles nor pieces fully devoted to Renata Mauer-Róžańska.

The third item in the ranking of the most frequently-read dailies is *Super Express*. The newspaper's Internet site has been subjected to the same search procedure as the previous outlets (the newspaper's website - search engine - 'Renata Mauer-Róžańska' search term). The search provided six hits. First of them, "Zapaść się pod ziemię" ("Curl Up and Die"), was published on 20 August 2004. It is an interview related to the Olympic Games in Athens and specifically concerns unsuccessful shots during the second shooting, i.e. rifle 3 positions (3x20 shots). The journalist asked the Olympian questions insinuating that this was the most painful defeat in her life and why she

performed so poorly and alleges that her weakest shots came from a standing position. The message communicated by the article presents a neutral image of Mauer-Róžańska. The athlete's name is accompanied by such epithets as Olympic champion, an obviously positive connotation. The Olympian herself responds that it was her defeat, but not the end of the world, though she did want to curl up and die. She also said that she needed to get a grip and keep shooting. These words attest to her fighting-spirit, awareness and show the place she is at right now. In the interview, Mauer-Róžańska builds an image of herself as an athlete who wants to win for her country and at the same time realizes that defeat is a part of competition. The next article is entitled "Mauer daje ognia" ("Mauer on Fire"). It was published on 29 October 2007. This is another interview with the athlete relating to her sporting defeats. The article seems rather neutral with slightly negative tones. The athlete's failed shots come to the fore, her age is also mentioned - 'it does not work to her advantage,' as well as her work with a sports psychologist. The interview also addresses Renata Mauer-Róžańska's retirement from sports. All these claims are confronted by the Olympian who declares continued participation in competitions, training using a new method that should provide good results and awareness of her age and the strengths following from it. This approach paints a picture of a woman who constantly overcomes stress, is a fighter who rises to numerous challenges and constant expectations, but has poor stamina. Through her statements, she presents herself as a fighter (as she wishes to continue her sports career), open to new possibilities (new form of training) who recognizes her weaknesses (relaxation training and working with a psychologist). She is also aware of her abilities saying that she still has potential and it would be a pity not to use it. The next item proposed by the search engine is an article entitled "Bez szczęścia ani rusz" ("No Luck, No Gain"). This article was penned by Renata Mauer herself and was published on 08 August 2008. It does not mention the Olympian by name, but her name is hidden in the

phrase 'six shooters'. The person who wrote this piece assumes the attitude of a superstitious person, a fairly common occurrence in sports (listing the names of contestants before a competition brings bad luck or the Olympic flagbearer curse)¹⁷ and claims that in the world of sports 'no luck means no gain'. In the next article, entitled "Renata Mauer została radną, wykłada na uczelni i przygotowuje się do igrzysk w Londynie" ("Renata Mauer Became a Councilor, Is an Academic Lecturer and Is Preparing for the London Olympic Games") from 8 December 2010 portrays her as person who is very hardworking, ambitious and willing to serve others. The piece also states that the Olympian started working at three universities (Academy of Physical Education in Wrocław, Lower Silesian Sports College and University of Social Sciences and Humanities). In addition, she was elected as a Wrocław councilor and is actively training for the next Olympic Games. Mauer-Różańska herself says:

'I am very hard at work to start in the Olympic Games in London. I barely made it on time from training for the swearing-in ceremony for councilors. I hope to return to good form. (...) I am positively surprised by the amount of support, I promise to do my best.'¹⁸

In these words, the athlete communicates to the environment that she is a hard-worker, does not shy away from challenges and is dedicated to her passion. She makes absolutely no mention of the sheer amount of duties she is facing, which attests to her resourcefulness and time-management skills. The author, Roman Skiba, mentions the number of votes cast for the Olympian (4.7 thousand), which demonstrates the widespread trust she enjoys among to residents of Wrocław, as well as the community's hope for change driven by a fighting-spirit and determination worthy of an

¹⁷ <http://eurosport.onet.pl/lekkoatletyka/olimpijska-klatwa-chorazego/glbtdw> [accessed: 20.02.2017]

¹⁸ http://sport.se.pl/inne/mauer-nie-sklada-broni_163215.html [accessed: 04.12.2016]

Olympian. The next stage of the analysis of the third most popular daily in Poland shows Mauer-Róžańska as a specialist as she is asked to analyze and assess the chances for success of her colleague, Sylwia Bogacka, in an article entitled "Londyn 2012. Renata Mauer-Róžańska: Sylwia, idź w moje ślady!" ("London 2012. Renata Mauer Róžańska: Sylwia, Follow in My Footsteps!") published on 31 July 2012. In this piece, Mauer-Róžańska has nothing but praise for Sylwia Bogacka and talks about the possibility of defeat, but is confident that Bogacka will put in a good performance. She shares her abilities, experience, is open and tries to help to the best of her abilities. Her behavior and manner of speaking attest to her skills in building a positive image based on experience, rather than by acting superior. The last item is an interview with Mauer-Róžańska's coach, Andrzej Kijowski. The interview is entitled "Londyn 2012. Sylwia Bogacka powalczy o kolejny medal. 'Presja jej nie przeszkodzi'" ("London 2012. Sylwia Bogacka will Fight for Another Medal. 'Pressure Will not Stop Her'"). The interview was published on 4 August 2012 and later updated on 4 January 2013. In the interview, coach Andrzej Kijewski talks about his Sylwia Bogacka who he currently coaches and Mauer-Róžańska:

'Renata and Sylwia are very much alike, they are both extremely ambitious, successful and very demanding towards their coach. You have to work hard to rise up to their expectations,' says Kijowski. 'In terms of character they are, however, polar opposites. Sylwia is lively, cheerful, likes extreme sports and fast cars. Renata is a much calmer presence.'¹⁹

The Olympian is presented as a person who is demanding towards both herself and others. She builds her image as a person who is resourceful, steady but surely pursues her goals, organized and courageous in making decisions.

¹⁹ http://sport.se.pl/londyn-2012/londyn-2012-sylwia-bogacka-powalczy-o-kolejny-medal-presja-jej-nie-przeszkodzi_272077.html [accessed: 04.12.2016]

Summary

The research scope of this paper was the image of an individual. An attempt was made to clarify the definition of image and to distinguish it from the reputation and identity of an individual. This involved analyzing the image of an outstanding Olympic gold medalist and former sports shooter, Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska.

Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska's image was analyzed based on daily press. For this purpose, three outlets were scrutinized: *Fakt*, *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Super Express*.

The first newspaper presents a positive image of the Olympian, though its first article portrays the athlete in a bad light, through the prism of her new position. The new councilor fails to rise to the local community's expectations of a better life, preferring instead to remain behind the scenes. The subsequent articles neutralize this image by showing her charity efforts and reminiscing her victories. The gold medalist is shown as a noble person who lends help to others. She is also portrayed as a walking icon, fighter, perfect person and a role-model.

The next analyzed daily was *Gazeta Wyborcza*. This newspaper paints a negative image of Mauer-Róžańska. She is presented through the lens of her greatest accomplishments and it is also mentioned that she used the help of a psychologist. According to Kahneman's automatic thinking (stereotype) this will form an image of the athlete as a person who is weak, unable to cope with stress, pressure and failures, on the other hand, a person interested in the world of sports will perceive this as something natural, a common practice among athletes. Further articles continue along those lines as they use such epithets as 'sniper with astigmatism' and mention that Mauer-Róžańska was not considered a favorite to bring home a medal. The final piece references the former Olympian's loss in the 'People of Freedom' popularity contest. This shows Mauer-Róžańska in a bad

light as someone no one believes in, who is not mediagenic and well-liked.

Super Express. Neutral image with a positive trend. The analysis of the articles published in *Super Express* shows that once again the Olympian is considered through the prism of her sporting achievements. Journalists enquire the former athlete about her defeats. She does not try to spin her failures or distort the facts, but rather openly states that defeats are bound to happen and you need to bounce back and keep moving forward. This shows that Mauer-Róžańska is a fighter. Next, journalists suggest that maybe she is past her prime and again mention that she is working with a psychologist. The interview also addresses Renata Mauer-Róžańska's retirement from sports. She counters by saying that she was not considering retirement, thus presenting herself as a fighter. She also points out that she was aware of her abilities and was seeking new forms of training and looking into relaxation training. Moreover, she is presented as a hard-worker (extensive professional activity) who enjoys the trust of the local community (election as councilor). In conclusion, the articles published in *Super Express* portray Mauer-Róžańska as a person who sets the bar high for herself and others. She is a calm person, slowly but surely pursuing her goal.

In summary, Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska image, as portrayed by the individual articles published in daily newspapers, is moderately positive.

The analysis of the entirety of the research material validates the conclusion that Renata Małgorzata Mauer-Róžańska has a moderately positive image. On the one hand, she is presented through the prism of her Olympic victories, as a walking icon, an authority figure willing to share her knowledge and experience and a person always available to her students who supports the local community and does charity work.

On the other hand, she is withdrawn, afraid to leave her comfort zone and is not involved in media events and social media life.

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