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Shaping the images of local politicians in social media using patriotic themes; with examples from towns in Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania

Abstract

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The purpose of the article is to examine the use of patriotic themes in social media by local politicians of selected towns in Subcarpathia (Dębica, Jarosław) and Western Pomerania (Police, Szczecinek) as part of the creation of the personal brand image of town councilors.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: The main research problem is to determine the attitude of local politicians toward patriotism as a tool for personal branding on social media. Therefore, a content analysis of posts made on the social networking site Facebook by councilors of selected cities in the period from January 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024 was conducted, and examined the audience's reaction to the posts in question. This was followed by a comparative analysis of local politicians in Subcarpathia and West Pomerania.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: The specific nature of the work of councilors, means that patriotism should be an important element in shaping the personal brand image of councilors, emphasizing their dedication to the service they perform.

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RESEARCH RESULTS: Posts of a patriotic nature accounted for 2% in Police, 3.4% in Szczecinek, 11.7% in Jarosław and 12% in Dębica of all posts published via Facebook during the period under study. Most often, these messages were about local patriotism, and least often about economic patriotism. Audience reactivity to posts of a patriotic nature was low.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS: There is a lack of consistent and conscious basing of the personal brand image of local politicians in social media on patriotism. By far, local politicians of the researched towns of Subcarpathia (Dębica and Jarosław) placed patriotic posts much more often than those from Polish Western Pomerania (Police and Szczecinek). Councilors adjust the intensity of patriotic posts according to audience expectations.

KEYWORDS:

social media, image shaping, national patriotism, local patriotism, economic patriotism

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary social media not only provides communication, but also a space in which the image of one's personal brand is constructed, either at a private or professional level, and this affects individuals (e.g., politicians), business enterprises (e.g., companies) and public bodies (e.g., towns). The ever-growing number of users of social networking sites such as Facebook (FB) or Instagram means that these have real consequences on social and professional life. One undisputed advantage of this form of communication platform is that it is accessible everywhere, anywhere, and at any time (the only limiting factor being access to the Internet) which makes the spread of information to the recipient fast. Election campaigns are increasingly conducted with the help of social media, which provide effective tools to formulate one's image and build a personal brand (Boratyn, 2020; Lakomy, 2013). In the political context, the latter becomes especially relevant when promoting relations with the younger sections of the electorate. The politicians act both at central and local levels through their profiles online: creating and sharing content with the express purpose of earning the trust and interest of the citizens; they represent their point of view and popularize the values which are guiding them

within their political activity, and because they have been elected by the citizens of a town or a region, they also bear the values of a given community. An engagement in public affairs, whether this is at the national level (taking care of state community affairs between the state and the homeland), or whether it is at the local (involvement in activities for the “small homeland”, or at the economic level (being concerned with the economic well-being of the country) would not be effective without a patriotic sentiment. Development of patriotism in these three dimensions (national, local, and economic), along with coherence of the activities undertaken in this field, are determined as two significant features of an efficient functioning of the state. Patriotism is a value in itself that is placed in service for the consolidation of national and local identity (Tischner, 1994, p. 515).

Over the last decade, through numerous publications in the Polish literature, increased interest can be observed into research on the possibility of using social media by politicians (e.g., Porębski & Karasek-Kędzior, 2015, Bodys, 2015; 2016; Szwed-Walczak, 2017), or there are narrower studies concerning the use of social media by local politicians in communication with the local community (e.g., Bąk & Kubisz-Muła, 2017; Choroś & Skrabacz, 2014; Olszanecka-Marmola, 2015), the creation of an image (Szmigiel-Rawska & Tavares, 2019; Posyłek, 2017; Adamik-Szysiak, 2023, 2014) presenting the relationship of a politicians’ activity in social media to the election result (Boratyn, 2018, 2020) or emotionality and bias of political messages disseminated on social media (Adamik-Szysiak, 2025). Equally rich is the foreign literature on the subject (e.g., Heiss, Schmuck, & Matthes, 2019; Bossetta, Dutceac Segesten, & Trenz, 2017; Bellström, Magnusson, Pettersson, & Thorén, 2016).

The development of the image of a politician’s personal brand with patriotic leading topics is one of the most relevant but so-far unexplored areas. In the face of this, the present article will strive to evaluate attitudes of local politicians, in selected towns of Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania, regarding patriotism in its national, local, and economic dimensions and to verify whether patriotic motives are used by town councilors in social media as part of the creation of their image as local politicians. The subjects of analysis were posts that were placed on FB by the town councilors in the period from 1st January 2024 to 30th June 2024. Therefore, based

on the performed analysis mentioned above, an attempt has been made to answer the following research questions:

1. Of the surveyed councilors in these towns, what proportion create posts concerning patriotism on FB?
2. What is the dimension of the patriotic posts, that is, national, local or economic?
3. Did more frequent patriotic posts appear during the pre-election period?
4. Were patriotic messages more frequent in the posts of politicians from the towns in Subcarpathia or in Polish Western Pomerania?
5. Did the patriotic posts spur the receiver into reacting, and if so, to what kind of reaction: as a “like”, share, or comment?

RESEARCH METHODS AND TOOLS

This paper has been prepared within the framework of the research project “Local politicians, patriotism and threat perception. Comparison of towns in Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania” realized within the framework of the program: Science for Society II at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education during the years 2024–2026. This seeks to analyze the attitudes of local politicians towards patriotism and to position them on the scale of national, local, or economic dimensions, together with the perception of threats to security in the largest towns (over 20 000 residents, referred to here as “towns”) in Subcarpathia (10 towns) and Polish Western Pomerania (11 towns). The selection of these extreme regions was dictated by the assumption that local politicians would have different approaches to shaping patriotism (taking into account the history and geographical location of both regions).

The first step in the research involved the analysis of social media platforms of the local politicians – the councilors for the 2024–2029 term of office – in two towns of Subcarpathia: Jarosław and Dębica, and two towns of Polish Western Pomerania: Szczecinek and Police. It was decided to select towns with similar numbers of residents that are not provincial cities. An attempt was also made to take into consideration the location of the outermost towns of a given region,

i.e., in Subcarpathia: Dębica in the west, Jarosław in the east; in Polish Western Pomerania: Police in the west, Szczecinek in the east. The research conducted involved an analysis of posts published by councilors of the chosen towns in social media (n=6698) in the period from 1st January 2024 to 30th June 2024 (six months). It included the time before the local elections, during the election campaign and after the elections. The source of data was FB, a social networking site most frequently used for communication by over 3 billion people around the world (Statista.com, 2024), but also by local politicians in Poland (Bał & Kubisz-Muła, 2017, p. 135; Choroś & Skrabacz, 2015, pp. 111–112). The basic research method was the content analysis (quantitative and qualitative).

The subject of the analysis was the content of posts published by councilors of the chosen towns in Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania. In this paper, every message displayed by a local politician – the owner of the given profile in the period under review – was analyzed, taking into consideration its content (e.g. text, graphics, photo, film) and the recipients' reaction to a given post with the number of "likes", comments, and shares.

The general objective of the research was to confirm that using patriotic threads by town councilors in social media is one of the elements used to shape the image of local politicians. Attention was given particularly to confirm whether the town councilor used patriotic threads as one of the elements to shape their image as a local politician. For this purpose, the general subject of each post needed to be identified to classify them. Taking into account our own observations of councilors' activity in social media and similar studies to date (see Bellström et al., 2016, Szmigiel-Rawska & Tavares, 2019), seven categories of threads were defined, classifying the topics raised by local politicians in posts posted via FB. The following thematic categories were distinguished:

- **Patriotism.** Posts composed of national, local, and economic patriotism; discussed later in this article.
- **Family, Private Life.** From what has been observed so far, a large number of the councilors use one social media account for both private or professional purposes.
- **Cultural, sporting, and entertaining activities.** Events promoted by councilors and those in which they took part.

- **Economy, Finances, Investments.** All concerning national or local economies.
- **Politics, democracy, town council.** Posts political in their nature, connected with election campaigning or relations in the town council.
- **Education and Science.** Everything related to the scientific sphere and education, including town schools.
- **Prosocial activities.** Involvement in the local community engagement or the encouragement of prosocial activities.

To define the categories of social media posts, a pilot study was conducted, analyzing posts by selected councilors from the analyzed cities in a period prior to the research period. The goal was to determine the thematic scope of the posts and their frequency. It should be emphasized that the defined categories stem from the pilot study results and are therefore optimally adapted to the conditions in which councilors in the studied cities maintain their Facebook profiles. The introduction of additional categories was deemed inappropriate due to the fact that no posts were identified that could not be assigned to any of the categories described above.

The pilot study also allowed for the identification of an analytical problem related to the ambiguity of some posts: for example, a councilor went for a walk with his family, during which he stumbled upon a forgotten monument commemorating a local event from years past. The analysis then focused on which activity was dominant in the context of a given post: walking (sporting activity), walking with family (family, private life), or promoting local heritage (patriotism). Therefore, the authors decided to prioritize post categories from the highest priority (1), through the intermediate priority (2), to the least important (3). The study did not identify any posts that could be assigned to more than three categories. Furthermore, after collating the analysis results from all councilors, the number of posts assigned to more than one category proved to be marginal and, from the research perspective, negligible. Therefore, the presented research results concern the highest priority category (1) assigned to each post.

The analysis of posts in the main study was conducted directly by each researcher. No IT tools were used for this purpose. This decision was dictated by the authors' determination to correctly assign the context of individual posts to the appropriate categories.

However, to achieve a common understanding of the individual categories, after pilot studies and the designation of post categories, workshops were held during which the authors jointly assessed the numerous and diverse posts from councilors from different cities. The workshops were concluded when the authors achieved a common understanding of the post categories and a high level of uniformity in the assignments of the analyzed posts.

Comparative analysis then aimed at underlining differences or similarities between the two regions: Polish Western Pomerania and Subcarpathia, based on the patriotic threads of FB posts by local politicians.

PERSONAL BRANDING OF LOCAL POLITICIANS AND PATRIOTIC THEMES

The popularization of the Internet then created such conditions that nowadays nearly everybody shapes their image, their personal brand, more or less consciously. This applies especially to people holding elected functions, including the town councilors. Thanks to the construction of their personal brand, they can underline their distinctiveness, and this is extremely effective in building credibility and recognition within the social sphere (Mazurek, 2018, pp. 449–450). A personal brand is not only a person's name and surname, but also a pseudonym, the way a given person is perceived by the audience, and contributes to self-awareness. It is a set of functional features resulting from demographics, competences, experiences or declared attitudes, supplemented with an emotional element resulting from associations with the way the person is perceived by the audience. It has to be underlined that the functional parts of a personal brand can be managed relatively easily, whereas the emotional parts require not only greater involvement but also a more profound knowledge of the way the person is perceived (Niedźwiedziński et al., 2016, pp. 342–343).

It would seem that this personal brand has become one aspect of political success at all levels of government, from the central to the local. Whether this is effective depends on whether the following list of functions are correctly implemented: (1) the information: reaching recipients with information enabling identification of the

person; (2) the guarantee: effective shaping of the personal brand will permit an expectation that the person will be equally effective in carrying out commitments as in the care of their own image; (3) the promotional: to indicate positive associations with the person; (4) authenticity: the confirmation and evidence of the person's characteristics; (5) facilitating the decision-making processes of recipients: especially important in the case of politicians and members of local authorities; building a relation with a person allows electors to become accustomed to their own choices; (6) the symbolic: identification with the features personified by a given person; and, above all, (7) the function of distinction: by underlining the uniqueness and difference in relation to other candidates and building up recognition in this context (Nitkiewicz-Jankowska, 2016, pp. 25–26).

Building up an efficient personal brand, that is, a personal brand image via the Internet, calls for an indication of the values with which they would like to identify themselves and be identified by their recipients. The target market of recipients, together with the identification of competitors, also needs to be indicated. It is only on such grounds that the goals can be outlined for which a personal brand, and consequently its image, is set (Mazurek, 2018, pp. 452–454). One tool to define a personal brand is provided by the archetypes of personal brands elaborated by Mark and Pearson (2001) and these allow, based on images and references to broader categories, the definition of the type of desired image (Gałęcka, 2020, pp. 126–127).

Any work on the creation of a personal brand or image should always derive its starting point from the purpose for which it is to be created. Whichever the adopted range of goals, it is important that actions taken are consistent with regard to the image, be it in the private or professional spheres of a given person. It is the compatibility of personal individual activities and compatibility in values and views propounded that ensures credulity of the image of a person between public and private activity. It is worth mentioning here the concept of political authenticity as a social construction which is created and negotiated in communication processes among politicians, the media, and the audience (Luebke, 2021).

A resultant effect of choosing the target group, to whom the one's personal brand will be directed, is the selection of which channels and

tools of communication to use. Various recipients have different preferences for communication channels (either traditional or modern), tools used for this purpose, and the form of messages transmitted (Mazurek, 2018, p. 457). In social media, different groups of recipients have different preferences in regard to specific internet platforms. That often comes from the orientation of particular platforms towards particular social environments. It is well-known, for example, that LinkedIn is used by business people. By using different methods and depending on the various purposes, while building an image of a personal brand one should select such a combination of social media which would allow the best possible communication with recipients. In this respect, it was noticed during the research that, for the local government officials, FB still remained the most popular medium. FB enabled them to reach the voters directly, discuss issues with supporters or opponents, perform comparative activities by posting diverse messages, perhaps different in form and content, and perhaps containing the written word, recording, video, images, and more.

Following literature reports and our own research, the Authors resolved the following dominating categories of posts posted on FB: patriotism, private, events, economy, politics, education and science, and prosocial activity. Taking into consideration the specifics of the councilors' work, usually treated as a service for the local community, and considering the length limitation of the present paper, it was decided to analyze results of the patriotic content analysis in posts published by councilors. These were people responsible for the fate of their "Small Homeland", and part of the "Large Homeland", i.e., Poland. It would follow, therefore, that patriotism might be a necessary ingredient that needs to be a part of the candidates' image for the councilors, and the councilors themselves, in testifying to the commitment of the performed service. It is patriotism that needs to provide one support for the implementation of the function of a personal brand: involving warranty, promotion, symbolism, and, consequently, easier decisions for the electors.

According to general understanding, the meaning of the word "patriotism" has gained several explanations given by Polish and foreign authors, depending on several factors. A few definitions of patriotism in the three dimensions are given in Table 1.

Table 1. The concept of Patriotism in national, local and economic perspectives

Source	Definition
<i>National patriotism</i>	
Richey (2023, p. 358)	"the love of the nation-state"
Kopaliński (2001, p. 380)	"love of the homeland, the ability to sacrifice oneself for it, placing the good of one's country above one's own particular interests"
Heywood (2007, p. 176)	"feeling, psychological attachment to one's nation"
Kosterman & Feshbach (1987, p. 271)	"level of love and pride about one's nation"
<i>Local Patriotism</i>	
Bar-Tal & Staub (1997, p. 4)	"referring to individuals' attachment to a particular place defined mainly by geographical parameters, such as a neighborhood, village, city, and even a region"
Skorowski (1996, p. 151)	"love of the local community and affirmation of its goods, such as culture and territory"
Ossowski (1984, p. 18)	"small homeland"
<i>Economic Patriotism</i>	
Clift & Woll (2012, p. 312)	"evokes the subordination of economic objectives to the protection of homeland interests"
Sułkowski et al. (2022, p. 300)	"is steering national economy towards: statism, stronger country orientation and local entrepreneurship. From the entrepreneur's point of view, it is about making decisions that take into account the positive impact on the national community with which the entrepreneur identifies"
Obłąkowska & Bartoszewicz (2023, p. 87)	"the economic patriotism of citizens is their attitude in life and their recognition of the vital importance of the forces of the national economy to their autonomy, security and prosperity, both as a national community and as individuals"

Source: own study.

This article consequently uses the division of patriotism into national, local, and economic. An attempt has been made to single out, after getting acquainted with the literature on the subject and the studies of public opinion research institutions (CBOS, 2017, 2016), the factors – characteristic elements – testifying to the occurrence of a specific type of patriotism.

It is thus that national patriotism occurs and manifests itself in the following aspects, among others: learning and cultivating the history of Poland; remembering the anniversaries of important events; passing to children respect for the homeland; promoting the native

language; participation in the celebration of national holidays; pride in the successes of Polish athletes; and educating the young generation in the spirit of patriotism.

The following may be evidence of local patriotism: participation in the celebration of local holidays; rooting for the local teams; support for local athletes; study of local history and traditions and their cultivation; memory about local heroes whose achievements are known to a wider audience; taking part in local elections; volunteer work for the local community; display of local symbols (coats of arms, flags, bugle calls) testifying attachment to the town; and creation and care for the places of remembrance, e.g., monuments, museums.

The third dimension to patriotism – economic – as seen from the consumer, producer and state perspectives (Krzemień, 2019, pp. 65–71) includes evidence showing the promotion of Polish origin (was the product produced in a Polish company? Was it made in Poland? Does this company pay taxes in Poland?); the buying from shops with local ownership; paying taxes honestly; and further: the investment and development in local businesses; popularisation of the local economy; and formation of an economic identity of the town.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Each of the towns had a town council composed of 21 councilors. During the first half of the year 2024, 18 councilors of Police, Dębica and Jarosław and 17 councilors of Szczecinek had an active FB profile account (Table 2). In fact, in the case of Polish local government officials, their private accounts were joined in most cases with professional activity (in Szczecinek for 14 councilors; Police, 17 councilors; Jarosław, 12 councilors; and Dębica, 9 councilors). That is why information about their private lives so often gets intertwined with the political message and socio-economic life in the town.

Table 2. Profiles of town councilors, on the FB social networking site, from selected towns in Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania

Town	No. of town councilors	No. of councilors on Facebook	No. of councilors with a profile		Total number of posts in the research period
			Private	Professional	
Szczecinek	21	17	14	3	1550
Police	21	18	17	1	2290
Dębica	21	18	9	9	2160
Jarosław	21	18	12	6	698

Source: own study.

Analysis of posting of patriotic posts in the first half of 2024, i.e., in the period covering the time before, during, and after the elections showed increase in active work of the local politicians, especially in the pre-election period. Moreover, many of them became more active in late February/early March, keeping an extremely high posting frequency until election day. Afterwards, the activity either stopped completely or the posts appeared seldom. Yet in over 2000 posts, the activity of local politicians from Police and Dębica was definitely higher on the FB social networking site in the first half of 2024 when compared to Szczecinek, which had 1550 posts and much greater than in Jarosław, with less than 700 posts.

Table 3. Patriotic threads in posts by councilors of selected towns of Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania

Town	% patriotic posts	% of councilors that didn't publish a single patriotic message	Maximum % of patriotic posts
Szczecinek	3.4%	35%	18%
Police	2.0%	39%	10.4%
Dębica	12.0%	17%	31.9%
Jarosław	11.7%	39%	30.8%

Source: own study.

The contents of messages posted by town councilors mainly referred to two areas: First, local politics, i.e., information on the activity of the town council or a specific political group; they usually were of a nature to encourage support for a specific political option, especially

avored during the election campaign. The second most frequently appearing topic concerned cultural, sports, or entertainment events taking place in a given town or region.

According to data in Table 3, patriotism was not an issue that has been exploited while the local politicians built their images. Patriotic posts which appeared in the towns of Polish Western Pomerania accounted for only 2% in Police and 3.4% in Szczecinek of all posts published in the first half of 2024. As many as 7 councilors (39%) in Police did not publish one message that touched on patriotic topics in the period under review. A similar situation was observed in Szczecinek, since every third councilor did not touch patriotic topics in their posts on FB. In Subcarpathia there were far more than the average within the entire group – the frequency of patriotic content in messages published by councilors from Jarosław and Dębica was 11.7% and 12%, respectively. There were only 3 councilors who did not publish patriotic content messages in Dębica (17%), while in Jarosław as many as 7 councilors did not publish this type of message (39%). All discussed towns have local politicians who outshine the rest of the members in terms of the number of patriotic messages.

Table 4. Reaction to patriotic messages of councilors of selected towns in Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania

Town	% comments on patriotic posts	% "likes" on patriotic posts	% shares of patriotic posts
Szczecinek	1.9%	4.3%	1.3%
Police	1.4%	2.8%	2.1%
Dębica	9.0%	11.8%	11.5%
Jarosław	3.9%	10.3%	9.9%

Source: own study.

The reaction to patriotic posts was practically without interest and motivation of the recipients for discussion (Table 4). Yet here, too, a difference between the towns of Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania was maintained. Less than 2% of all comments appeared under patriotic posts in Szczecinek, but even fewer did so in Police – 1.4% had comments. Similar values appeared in the shares of patriotic messages, i.e., 1.3% in Szczecinek and 2.1% in Police. In Dębica, on

the other hand, under patriotic threads 9% comments and 11% shares were found, while in Jarosław almost 4% had comments and 10% had shares resulting from the posts with features of patriotism. Most often posts gained so-called “likes”, which are a sign of approval from the recipient. Almost 12% of posts had likes in Dębica, and over 10% in Jarosław – on patriotic content which appeared within the analyzed period on the pages of local politicians. In the towns of Polish Western Pomerania there were three times fewer likes: 4.3% of posts had likes in Szczecinek, and less than 3% had likes in Police.

Table 5. Patriotic threads according to the type in the publications of councilors of selected towns in Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania

Town	Number of posts		
	National patriotism	Local patriotism	Economic patriotism
Szczecinek	32	45	2
Police	50	28	3
Dębica	61	198	31
Jarosław	29	81	21

Source: own study.

According to the chosen methodology, the content analysis of posts published by local politicians on FB allowed us to distinguish three types of patriotism: national, local, and economic (Table 5). Messages with manifest local patriotism were the most common, apart from in Police, where more posts were created on the subject of national patriotism than on the subject of local patriotism. It is significant to note that Dębica had more than six times more posts regarding local patriotism than Police did (198 and 28 posts, respectively). Comparing the three types of patriotism, economic patriotism occurred the least; only a few appeared in the profiles of town councilors from Szczecinek and Police, though slightly more were seen from local politicians from Dębina and Jarosław: 31 and 21 respectively.

Posts on national patriotism were mainly about:

- The following free national holidays and anniversaries: Constitution Day, May 3rd; Flag Day; National Day of Remembrance for Victims of German Nazi Concentration Camps and

Extermination Camps; and the National Day of Remembrance for the Cursed Soldiers.

- National heroes and distinguished persons, e.g., Maksymilian Kolbe, Captain Witold Pilecki, the blessed Ulm family, and Polish sports champions (e.g., Iga Świątek, Natalia Kaczmarek).
- Activities for the good of the Homeland, e.g., reminding people of the importance of going to the elections and casting a vote, or cheering for Polish teams and athletes.

Further, announcements published by town councilors showing local patriotism concerned:

- Current and historical local events: the 40th Anniversary of the Osiński Race in Szczecinek; the Dominican Family Picnic in Jarosław, the birthday of Dębica.
- Important and distinguished persons for the town or region.
- Places of remembrance which are typical of the local identity and representative for the town or region, such as: The Szczecinek Regional Museum, roundabout with a great white and red flag in Dębica.

Economic patriotism was articulated in contents either encouraging people to buy Polish and local products, and praising local services and products.

CONCLUSIONS

The few threads of patriotism in the contents posted on FB by the local politicians hint that patriotism has of late been a subject taken up by the local government officials to a small extent for building up their personal brand image. Interestingly, many electoral slogans, such as “Szczecinek in our hearts”, and “Together for Dębica” could be found in election materials, but while presenting the activity in social media it was quite rare to see patriotic attitudes called for, or if so – they were not demonstrated greatly from examples of the politician’s own actions. Among those that did call for patriotic attitudes, local patriotism was the one more frequently called upon by the locally elected politicians in their messages, while economic patriotism remained the least frequent. It is interesting to underline that an analogous number of councilors did not publish patriotic

posts in the three towns under study, excluding Dębica, which had the smallest number of councilors who did not publish any type of patriotic posts during the research period.

There was no correlation between the number of postings containing patriotic content and the period examined, i.e., the election campaign period compared to the pre- and post-election campaign periods. It was rather hard to trace any notable time-dependent trend in patriotic posts for the four towns under consideration. However, one could say that the patriotic posts had to do more with the dates of national holidays, such as Constitution Day on May 3rd; National Remembrance Day of the Cursed Soldiers; local events, e.g., the birthday of a given town or the birthday of an important figure for this town; and nationwide events, such as local elections or football championships. It was, therefore, rather a campaign and an ad hoc activity, not a permanent element of conscious shaping of a personal brand image.

The local politicians of the researched towns of Subcarpathia (Dębica and Jarosław) placed patriotic posts much more often than those from Polish Western Pomerania (Police and Szczecinek). It is difficult to clearly indicate the causes for such a fact in the researched towns. A conclusion that the residents of Subcarpathia, including the councilors, might have deeper roots, might be judged from the much higher number of posts of a local patriotism character in Jarosław and especially Dębica. However, this requires further in-depth research on this topic.

In each of the towns, only individual exceptions were identified: people who treated the patriotic category as important for their image. Another interesting issue that requires further work will be to extend the analysis to other towns in Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania and to examine the patterns of patriotic attitudes typical of Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania. One possible trend that the Authors have noticed is the fact that the personal brand image of councilors, set in social media, was not consistently or consciously based on patriotism, irrespective of type. Taking into account the relatively low percentage of patriotic posts in all the towns under research, an investigation of recipients' reaction to patriotic posts, in comparison with the rest, was carried out according to the number of "likes", comments, and shares. It can be seen distinctly that the

reactivity of recipients to patriotic posts was not higher and, in the majority, was lower than to posts from other thematic categories. This was seen especially in comments: if we consider the percentage of comments under patriotic posts in comparison with the percentage of comments under other posts, and comparing this with the actual number of posts, we noticed that the degree of interactivity among the recipients was much lower with patriotic posts. Similar conclusions can be drawn based on the analysis of the number of shares. Only “likes” were at a level corresponding to the percentage of patriotic posts. It might therefore be hypothesized that candidates for councilors and councilors have varied the strength and frequency of their patriotic posts in relation to the expectations of their recipients. If the patriotic posts were to become more in demand than they are presently, their reactivity would surely become much higher. The local politicians who build their own brand are probably conscious of the recipients’ lack of reaction to the patriotic posts; they therefore do not take up this problem in a systematic way and limit themselves to campaign activities related to current events or anniversaries “which they cannot miss”. In each of the towns, just a few exceptions were found: the people who treated the patriotic category as important for their image.

An interesting issue that requires further work will be to extend the analysis to other towns in Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania and to verify that the patterns of patriotic attitudes shown above are typical for Subcarpathia and Polish Western Pomerania.

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