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**URBAN POLICY IN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS –  
THE CASE OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE BIGGEST  
CITIES OF LOWER SILESIA**

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**Abstract**

The main aim of the article is to present the relationship between urban policy and the marketing activity of the presidents of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra during the period of the 2014 local government election campaign. Analysis of the marketing activity of the presidents, conducted via chosen social media, enables presentation of the most important conditions and reasons for using urban policy in the competition for the support of citizens – potential voters. First, it will show that the marketing actions of a president during an election campaign are not the means of creating the image of a city but gaining the support of voters. Second, the analysis will prove that the election message constructed by presidents is based on the actions conducted in the various areas of urban policy.

**Keywords:** local government unit, place marketing, political marketing, urban policy, social media

## **Introduction**

The phenomenon of decentralisation describes the change in the ways and mechanisms of the functioning of the majority of European countries. It takes the form of deconcentration, delegation, or devolution, and consists of dispersing and transferring some of the powers (competencies) of the central authority to the local government level (Flejterski, Zioło 2008; Bywalec 2012). It results, therefore, in establishing a new model of state management and, hence, the system of relations between the units of public authority (Szczerski 2011).

The legal solutions adopted by the local government and administration reform of 1990 and 1998 clearly strengthen the institutional potential of communes, districts, and provinces. Local government authorities, including the municipality, fulfil a number of public duties which serve the collective needs of citizens. The plurality of the duties

leads to the increase of the importance of the correctly programmed and conducted urban policy.

The main aim of the article is to present the relationship between urban policy and the marketing actions (mostly promotional ones) of the presidents of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra during the period of a local government election campaign; especially when recognising their functional character. On the one hand, the marketing actions initiated and implemented by local authorities fit the premises of urban policy (cf. Cochrane 2003, 539). Treated as an element of place marketing, they are the factor that is important for development. Aimed at the internal (citizens) and external (tourists, investors, entrepreneurs, students etc.) environment of a city, they persuade about the city's attractiveness and create its image. On the other hand, urban policy dominates the election message of candidates seeking re-election. Analysis of the marketing activity of the presidents of the biggest cities of Lower Silesia, conducted via chosen social media, enables presentation of the most important conditions and ways of using urban policy in the competition for the support of citizens – potential voters. Therefore, for the sake of this article, the author adopts the thesis about the “apparent de-politicisation” of public policy (Hausner 2007), including urban policy treated as one of its many areas.

### Urban policy as an area of public policy

The equation of urban policy with public policy conducted by local authorities proves to be justified not only by the process of its programming but also its implementation. According to D. J. Palumbo and S. Maynard-Moody, it proceeds in a few inter-related phases (see Table 1). Phase 3 is of crucial importance for the analysis of the marketing activity of the presidents of the biggest cities of Lower Silesia. Its essence is defined by actions aimed at gaining the support for decisions and initiatives of the local authorities. The actions, based on the use of promotion instruments (mostly advertising, personal selling, and public relations), are aimed at citizens which are the closest environment of the authorities.

**Table 1.** Programming and implementing public policies

Phase	Characteristics
1.	defining the problem as one requiring actions by the public authorities
2.	formulating the solutions of the problem and planning the actions
3.	legitimizing the solutions of the problem and gaining the support for the actions
4.	implementing the actions and securing indispensable organisational, financial and human resources
5.	evaluating and correcting the actions

Source: author's compilation based on: Palumbo, Maynard-Moody 1991, 136-140.

Urban policy integrates the aims of many sector policies (Jałowicki 2013). The plurality of public duties, which it encompasses, fits the definition of T. Blackman. The author perceives urban policy as all the actions which exert an influence on the functioning of the city's inhabitants (Blackman 2003, 9). They satisfy the collective

needs of citizens by leading to the solution of particular public problems. It does not mean that only the local government constitutes a subject of urban policy. The overall institutional and legal frames of urban policy are created by the central authorities. The process of programming urban policy proceeds not only on the vertical level, but also the horizontal one; especially, as it entails the actions of the close and far environment of the local authorities, i.e., citizens, business, and research entities, etc. The cooperation of many various subjects (both in the public and private sector) causes urban policy to support the development of the local economy and increases citizens' standard of living (Blackman 2003, 5).

The undertakings from various but closely linked sector areas decide upon the dynamics of urban policy. B. Jałowiecki enumerates the actions conducted in the four areas of spatial order, housing, public transport, and marketing (Jałowiecki 2013). Obviously, they are not all areas in which the public authorities, at the local as well as the central level, satisfy the collective needs of citizens. Table 2 presents the aims and areas of urban policy in Great Britain, which can be successfully related to the aims and areas of urban policy of other European countries, including Poland.

**Table 2.** The aims and areas of contemporary urban policy

Aim and area	Actions
Education	– managing schools of different levels, creating the conditions for improving qualifications and adjusting them to the labour market
Local economy	– creating and maintaining the worksite
Sustainable development	– maintaining and developing public transport – ensuring sources of energy and taking care of their rational use – creating and developing the system of waste management – taking care of the natural environment, creating so-called green areas
Health	– ensuring access to public health care

Source: author's compilation based on: Blackman 2003, 197-280.

## Marketing in urban policy

Although urban policy treated as “the territorially oriented actions of a state for the sustainable development of cities and their functional areas [...]” (MiR 2013) is being shaped in Poland, the local authorities undertake attempts to programme and implement it. Therefore, they prepare strategic documents – plans, programmes, and strategies – which arrange the aims and directions of the actions, conducted in the mid- and long-term perspective. A part of these documents concern marketing actions. According to G. Hankinson, the development of the concept of marketing and, hence, territorial branding is connected to the development of urban policy (Hankinson 2010; 2014; Zavatarro 2013, 40; cf. Eshuis, Edwards 2013); especially, while treating place marketing as a management process aimed at ensuring prosperity and satisfy the collective needs of citizens. The achievement of this goal is not possible without marketing actions programmed in good time and correctly managed, which urge taking decisions favourable to the development

of a city. The decisions may be related to the purchase of goods produced in the city or undertaking studies at the local university. Marketing actions may be targeted at attracting investors or highly-qualified workers. According to Z. Kovács and S. Musterd, urban policy should be more and more focused on promoting the image of a “nice city”, so that it can effectively influence its internal as well as external environment (Kovács, Musterd 2013). This, in turn, is connected to the necessity of developing strategic documents. Especially, as D. N. Bengston, J. O. Fletcher, and K.C. Nelson emphasise, one of the fundamental instruments of public policy, including urban policy, is planning (Bengston, Fletcher, Nelson 2004). Table 3 presents the documents that programme the marketing activity of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra.

**Table 3.** The marketing actions of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra according to strategic documents

City	Document	Specialist document
Wrocław	– Strategy “Wrocław in a perspective 2020 plus” – Tourist Programme of Wrocław	no
Wałbrzych	– Sustainable Development Strategy of Wałbrzych until 2020 – Strategy of Wałbrzych Agglomeration Development for 2013-2020 – Local Revitalisation Programme of Wałbrzych for 2008-2015	no
Legnica	– Development Strategy of Legnica for 2004-2014 – Strategy of Culture Development in Legnica in 2007-2013 (2020)	no
Jelenia Góra	– Development Strategy for 2014-2025 – Promotion Strategy of Jelenia Góra 2006-2015	– Promotion Strategy of Jelenia Góra 2006-2015

Source: author's compilation based on: UM Wrocław 2015; UM Wałbrzych 2015; UM Legnica 2015; UM Jelenia Góra 2015.

All of the cities in question have at their disposal a document that emphasises the necessity for conducting marketing actions (mostly promotional ones) and, hence, creating an image defined as “the whole of feelings, ideas and beliefs connected to a territorial unit” (Kothler, Heider, Rein 1993, 141). But only one of them – Jelenia Góra – has a specialist marketing strategy. The Promotion Strategy of Jelenia Góra 2006-2015 not only arranges the directions of realised actions, but also describes the methods of their monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, it specifies the ways of using the components of promotion-mix (advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations).

The presidents of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra, as the organs of executive authority, are responsible for the realisation of all the programmes and strategies specified in Table 3. They delegate, therefore, specific tasks to adequately specialised officials who are subordinate to them. One of these tasks is creating the image of a local government unit.

The element that differentiates the documents specified in Table 3 is a way of defining the direct, active participation of a president in place marketing. Especially, while taking into account the marketing actions of a president aimed at persuading about attractiveness and, hence, creating a positive image of the city which he/she manages.

The documents adopted and implemented by the authorities of Wrocław only emphasise in an overall manner the necessity for conducting promotion actions. The actions targeted at citizens ("inward-oriented city promotion") play a crucial role. In this regard, one may observe the rise of the importance of "informing the citizens" and "supplying them with the knowledge concerning the elections which the city faces" (UM Wrocław 2006, 29). As in the case of Wrocław, the strategies and programmes of Wałbrzych show the increasing importance of a positive city image (UM Wałbrzych 2013). However, they do not answer the question of whether the marketing actions of a serving president are to create the image and, if so, what actions should be taken. Analysis of the strategies developed and adopted by the authorities of Legnica shows that the president takes an active, but very limited, part in the city's marketing actions. The president, as the representative of Legnica, promotes the city, i.e., on the national or international fair (UM Legnica 2004).

As in the case of Wrocław and Wałbrzych, the promotion strategy of Jelenia Góra does not raise the issue of actions conducted by local authorities. On the other hand, however, it assumes that the aim of promotion is to create a positive image of a city, but also the president (UM Jelenia Góra 2006). The strategy addressed to citizens is used to "build [...] confidence in authorities" (UM Jelenia Góra 2006, 42).

The strategic documents, which are at the disposal of the cities in question, do not define the role of president's promotion actions in creating the local government unit's image that he/she represents. Moreover, they do not mention the subjects and problems that are to constitute the essence of the actions. It does not mean, however, that a president does not undertake marketing activities. On the contrary, he/she conducts many actions that influence the way a city is perceived, both through the internal and the external environment. On the other hand, seeking re-election, he/she conducts promotion actions targeted at achieving the support of voters. He/she not only presents the plans of future undertakings (implemented after the potential election for the next four-year term) but also shows his/her previous achievements. He/she creates an offer targeted at various groups of voters by positioning himself or herself on the market.

## **The president in the urban policy system**

Direct elections, introduced by an act from 2002, have strengthened the political position of the president of a city (Ustawa 2002); especially while taking into account his or her relations with a legislative body. In compliance with the act, a council does not only have the right to elect a president but also to dismiss him or her. A president is no longer the leader of a collegial city council. On the other hand, a president, elected henceforth in a general, equal, direct, and secret vote of a city's citizens, has a strong social legitimacy to fulfil public tasks in the particular areas of urban policy. A president, as a one-person executive power, is responsible for the realisation of the tasks.

The act from 2002 fits the multistage transformation of a local electoral system in Poland (see: Alberski 2011). It also changes the dynamics of a cyclic (organised every four years) election campaigns. Candidates competing for the support of citizens use, to a various extent, a range of promotion instruments; especially as a president, in order to win elections, has to receive at least a half of the valid votes cast (an absolute majority in

the first round of elections). When none of the candidates receives the required number of votes, victory is determined by the second round of elections.

Although the act clearly strengthens the political position of a president, it is the support that he or she has in the council that decides the effectiveness of his or her actions. Stable political support in a council enables a president to successively fulfil particular public tasks. Furthermore, according to Maciej Drzonek, this support increases the chances of a president being re-elected (2012). In this sense, a council is an integral part of the system of urban policy, alongside the president and citizens (voters).

The presidential elections in Polish cities constitute the subject of in-depth analyses conducted by political scientists and sociologists. Researchers concentrate mostly on the ways of organising election campaigns, the changes of the voting behaviour of electorate, as well as the models of local leadership. Moreover, there are many papers concerning the contest in the presidential elections in the biggest cities of Lower Silesia (see: Cichosz 2009, 2012; Skrzypiński 2012).

Table 4 presents the number of candidates running for election for the presidents of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra in 2014. The compilation includes information on whether the candidates represented their own electoral committees (as the so-called non-party candidates) or political parties.

**Table 4.** Presidential elections in Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra in 2014 – candidates and electoral committees

City	Candidates		
	Total	Party committee	Non-party committee
Wrocław	10	5	5
Wałbrzych	5	1	4
Legnica	5	2	3
Jelenia Góra	9	5	4

Source: PKW 2015a, PKW 2015b, PKW 2015c, Jelenia Góra 2014.

## Social media in presidents' campaigns

The serving presidents of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra in 2014 sought re-election for the next four-year tenure (see Table 5). During the election campaign, which lasted four months (from August to November), each of the presidents realised the premises of a professional election strategy.

Table 5 shows that all of the candidates have been elected for the next term of office. It was the fourth victory in a row for Rafał Dutkiewicz and Tadeusz Krzakowski. Only one of the candidates, Roman Szełemej, received more than 50% of the votes in the first runoff. Moreover, he was the only candidate who represented a political party (The Campaign Committee Civic Platform RP). In addition, the name of the campaign committee of Rafał Dutkiewicz suggested the cooperation with a political party – also Civic Platform. Tadeusz Krzakowski and Marcin Zawila were independent candidates.



**Table 5.** The presidents of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra in the local government elections 2014

City	President (year of election)	The committee proposing the candidacy of president in 2014	President's result in 2014 (in %)		Term of office at the moment of election as president in 2014
			I run-off	II run-off	
Wrocław	Rafał Dutkiewicz (2002)	The Campaign Committee of the Voters of Rafał Dutkiewicz with Platform (Polish: Rafał Dutkiewicz z Platformą)	42,37	54,72	fourth
Wałbrzych	Roman Szełemej (2011) <sup>1</sup>	The Campaign Committee Civic Platform RP	84,00	-	second
Legnica	Tadeusz Krzakowski (2002)	The Campaign Committee of the Voters of Tadeusz Krzakowski	44,69	57,60	fourth
Jelenia Góra	Marcin Zawila (2010)	The Campaign Committee of the Voters of Marcin Zawila Together we are Changing Jelenia Góra (Polish: Razem Zmieniamy Jelenią Górę)	32,00	58,47	second

<sup>1</sup> Roman Szełemej won repeated elections for the president of Wałbrzych held in August 2011. He took the place of Piotr Kruczkowski.

Source: PKW 2015.

The election campaign of all presidents, defined as the process of the communication of the subjects of political competition with voters (Dobek-Ostrowska, Wiszniowski 2007, 146), was based on the use of promotion as the instrument of marketing and its typical means, i.e., social media. The candidates tried to formulate their campaign message so that it raised interest and gained the favourable reaction of as many citizens as possible. Therefore, they presented their actions in the particular areas of urban policy via social media.

The increasing importance and popularity of the Internet make social media an indispensable communication channel with potential voters for candidates; especially as the use of social media, in contrast to, e.g., websites, favours the creation of interaction between the sender and receiver of a message. Social media, based on Web 2.0 technology, enable the free creation and exchange of various messages: text, audio, and video (Kaplan, Haenlein 2010). Therefore, they are the means of the currently understood promotion based on the uncontrolled, two-way circulation of messages.

Although all of the presidents seeking re-election used social media, they did it to varying degrees and at different rates. As it is presented in Table 6, Rafał Dutkiewicz and Marcin Zawila used the biggest number of social media platforms, namely three. Tadeusz Krzakowski made use of two social media platforms, while Roman Szełemej – one. All of the candidates regularly posted on their Facebook profiles, although none of them wrote a blog.

**Table 6.** Social media in the election campaign of the presidents of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra in 2014.

<b>Social medium President</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>YouTube</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Blog</b>
Rafał Dutkiewicz	yes	yes	yes	no
Roman Szelemej	yes	no	no	no
Tadeusz Krzakowski	yes	yes	no	no
Marcin Zawila	yes	yes	yes	no

Source: author's compilation.

## Urban policy in social media

Urban policy integrates the actions of the public authorities conducted in various areas. Nevertheless, the analysis of the content of the social media used by the presidents of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra enables one to name the actions that dominated their election message. The analysis covers the functioning of the official, public profiles, and channels from August 27 (the moment of the formal beginning of the election campaign) to November 29 (the ending of the campaign before the second runoff of the presidential elections).

Rafał Dutkiewicz, who sought re-election for the fourth tenure, presented the actions of the city, which may be divided into three main groups. The first group was public transport, mainly the purchase of a new bus and tram fleet, the change of bus stop localisation, and the adjustment of timetables to citizens' expectations. The second group comprised infrastructure investments connected with building a by-pass around one of the housing estates of Wrocław – Leśnica and a museum called History Centre "Zajeźdnia". The third group included actions targeted at the creation or maintenance of worksites, i.e., introducing exemption from property tax for local entrepreneurs (Dutkiewicz 2015a; 2015b; 2015c).

The president of the second biggest city of Lower Silesia in terms of population, Wałbrzych, presented actions falling into two groups. The first group was comprised, as in the case of Rafał Dutkiewicz, by actions related to public transport, i.e., building new bus stops and the development of traffic lights. The second group was dominated by infrastructure investments – both planned (their value was estimated at 187 million zlotys in 2015) and realised ones: the renovation of the city's roads, building schoolyards, and establishing a sport and leisure centre (Szelemej 2015).

The analysis of the promotion activity of the president of Legnica, Tadeusz Krzakowski, shows that he also used particular city actions. The first and the most important group of actions concerned infrastructure investment, i.e., the renovation of the schools run by the city. The second group was dominated by the maintenance and regeneration of so-called green areas, mostly parks and sport and leisure squares. Moreover, the president of Legnica used investment related to public transport, i.e., creating new parking places (Krzakowski 2015a; 2015b).

The social media used by Marcin Zawila definitely presented the largest number of actions conducted by the city. The first group of actions comprised various infrastructure



investments, such as establishing a new industrial estate in Jelenia Góra, building shopping centres, developing the city's sewage system as well as rebuilding the city's stadium, swimming pools, and the district court. One should also mention the regeneration of town houses and chapels located in the city and building two bypasses: in the south and in the Maciejowa housing estate. The realised and finished infrastructure investments have been complemented by the architectural and urban concepts of rebuilding the particular housing estates in Jelenia Góra that were presented via social media. The second group of actions included attempts by the local authorities to increase the number of workplaces in newly created or emerging factories. The third group was dominated by actions related to so-called green areas: creating cross-country skiing routes and increasing the length of bike lanes. The fourth group of actions used by Marcin Zawila comprised cultural undertakings connected with the functioning of the city's museums, theatres, and concert halls. The president seeking re-election was the only candidate who presented actions in Jelenia Góra related to the functioning of health care (the city's hospital), nurseries, and kindergartens (Zawila 2015a; Zawila 2015b; Zawila 2015c).

Using the classification of T. Blackman described earlier in the article enables a synthetic presentation of the areas of urban policy that dominated the message delivered via social media (see Table 7).

**Table 7.** Urban policy in the promotion action of the presidents of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra

President Area of urban policy	Rafał Dutkiewicz	Roman Szelemej	Tadeusz Krzakowski	Marcin Zawila
Education	no	no	yes	no
Local economy	yes	yes	yes	yes
Sustainable development:				
Public transport	yes	yes	yes	no
Energy	no	no	no	no
Waste management	no	no	no	no
Green areas	yes	no	yes	yes
Health	no	no	no	yes

Source: author's compilation

As presented in the compilation above, all of the candidates seeking re-election used actions related to local economy targeted at increasing the number of workplaces in their promotion activity. The official profiles and channels of the four candidates also presented actions comprising sustainable development. The third area of urban policy, highlighted by Blackman, was dominated by undertakings connected with public transport and so-called green areas that were used by three candidates. Importantly, none of the presidents competing for the support of voters presented the city's actions related to energy and waste management. Only one of them, Tadeusz Krzakowski, emphasised the importance

of education policy for the city, while only Marcin Zawila mentioned actions from the area of public health.

The area of urban policy, which was not mentioned by T. Blackman but dominated the election messages of all the candidates presented via social media, was connected with infrastructure investment having the key importance for the functioning of the city and its citizens.

## Summary

Marketing activity, which fits the premises of place marketing, plays an important role in the functioning of cities. Targeted at creating a positive desirable image, it is simultaneously an area of urban policy. As presented in the analysis of the strategies of the four biggest cities of Lower Silesia, all of the cities conduct marketing actions that stimulate the decisions of their environment – both internal and external decisions.

All of the analysed documents do not define the role and forms of the promotion activity of the presidents of Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica, and Jelenia Góra; especially while taking into account the promotion actions that shape the feeling of auto-identification of citizens with a city, attract investors and tourists, and persuade people to undertake studies at the local university, etc. There is a lack of adequate regulations of this activity irrespective of the fact of whether a city has at its disposal a specialist marketing strategy (Jelenia Góra) or not (Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica). Nevertheless, the presidents of the cities in question conduct promotion actions using a number of resources (advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing, public relations) and means of promotion. Social media are one of these means.

The promotion actions conducted by the presidents during the election campaign were not to create the image of the city. Their aim was to gain the support of citizens – potential voters, irrespective of whether a candidate represented a political party or was an independent candidate. In this sense, the promotion actions of the presidents fits the premises of place marketing treated as one area of urban policy – an expression of the competition for power.

On the other hand, presidents seeking re-election make use of actions from many areas of urban policy. This can be observed on the profiles and channels of social media – Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. While formulating the election message, the president chooses the areas of urban policy (and the characteristic actions) that is aimed at capturing the attention of voters.

Infrastructure investment constitutes the area of urban policy used by all four candidates. These investments concern roads, the modernisation of housing, and sport and leisure facilities. It is difficult to give a reason for such a situation, but one of its causes may be the will to present “tangible” evidence of the actions of the local authorities, including presidents.

The smallest city in question, Jelenia Góra, differs in a clear manner from the other big cities of Lower Silesia. First, the formulated promotion strategy, which was adopted by the authorities of Jelenia Góra, clearly shows that the aim of the promotion actions conducted by the city is also to create the image of the president. This may be justified by the use

of the areas of urban policy for the promotion of Marcin Zawila. Second, in the case of Jelenia Góra, the amount of investment presented in social media is the greatest largest among all four cities.

As shown in the data in Table 4, all of the candidates – Rafał Dutkiewicz, Roman Szełemej, Tadeusz Krzakowski, and Marcin Zawila – were elected for the next four-year term of office. This raises the question concerning the relation between the use of urban policy in the promotion actions of a candidate and the support he or she gains in elections. However, the presentation of this relation requires further research.

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