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## THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN STARGARD SZCZECIŃSKI IN THE YEARS 2002–2014

### Introduction

The restitution of the local government gave local communities the powers to create their own being, form a real local political scene, and select people to represent these communities in the legislative and control body. The local elections competition constitutes one of the most important conditions for shaping and functioning of the democratic system. Out of the seven characteristics essential for considering a system as democratic, there are four that Robert Dahl identifies with elections (the elections of representatives, free and fair elections, universal suffrage, and the right to be elected).<sup>1</sup> Competition – this peculiar characteristic of local elections concerns not only political groupings, but also the other entities such as independent candidates, electoral coalitions of such candidates, associations whose aim is, mainly, the elections participation, and associations considering elections as an additional point of their economic activity.<sup>2</sup> One direct effect of elections is the re/configuration of political forces.<sup>3</sup> After nearly a quarter of century of the existence of the local government, changes in the election

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<sup>1</sup> R. Dahl, *Demokracja i jej krytycy* (transl. by S. Amsterdamski). Kraków: Znak 2005: 310.

<sup>2</sup> J. Kurczewski, „Antypolityka jako polityka bez partii.” *Oblicza lokalności. Ku nowym formom życia lokalnego*. Ed. J. Kurczewska. Warszawa: IFIS PAN 2008: 218.

<sup>3</sup> A. Antoszewski, „Systemy wyborcze.” *Demokracje zachodnioeuropejskie. Analiza porównawcza*. Ed. A. Antoszewski, R. Herbut. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo UW 1997: 227.

system eventuate in e.g. the reduced number of mandatories, direct election of the executive, and implementation of single-member constituencies.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this paper is analyzing the post-electoral political re/configurations in the City of Stargard Szczeciński and to approach the following question: what cohabitation<sup>5</sup> models enabling the commune's efficient management has the local government in Stargard Szczeciński managed to develop? The study has certain limitations, the latter concerning the analysis data valid for the elections dated 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2014 in the City of Stargard Szczeciński. In the part of the paper to come the analysis of the agreements between the legislative and control body and the executive body is going to be carried out.

### **Election system in local governments**

Waldemar Wojtasik claims that local elections can provide us with certain solutions typical for a particular political system.<sup>6</sup> In our country the reference as regards holding local elections used to be the Act Electoral Law on Elections to commune councils, district councils and regional assemblies<sup>7</sup> (election in 2002, 2006 and 2010) replaced by the Electoral Code<sup>8</sup> (election in 2014) and the Act on Direct elections of the commune head, mayor and town president.<sup>9</sup> During the election in 2002, 2006 and 2010 in Stargard Szczeciński, the city with approximately 70 thousand inhabitants, there existed three constituencies comprising 7–8 councillors to be elected in each. The city council was responsible for dividing communes into constituencies. Election committees established by political parties, coalitions of political parties, associations and nongovernmental

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<sup>4</sup> The changes occurred as a result of enforcing the following: Ustawa z dnia 16 lipca 1998 r. Ordynacja wyborcza do rad gmin, rad powiatów i sejmików województw. Dz.U. 2003, Nr 159, poz. 1547 with later amendments; Ustawa z dnia 20 czerwca 2002 r. o bezpośrednim wyborze wójta, burmistrza, prezydenta. Dz.U. Nr 113, poz. 984 with later amendments; Ustawa z dnia 5 stycznia 2011 r. Kodeks wyborczy, Dz.U. 2011, Nr 21, poz. 112 with later amendments.

<sup>5</sup> French „cohabitation” – Eng. „cohabitation.” Waldemar Wojtasik wrote about it in „Systemowa specyfika wyborów samorządowych w Polsce.” *Roczniki Nauk Społecznych* Vol. 5 (41), No. 1, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. W. Wojtasik. *Funkcje wyborów w III Rzeczypospolitej. Teoria i praktyka*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo UŚ 2012: 244.

<sup>7</sup> Ustawa z dnia 16 lipca 1998 r., *op.cit.* In the years 1990–1998 Ordynacja wyborcza do rad gmin. Dz.U. 1996, Nr 84, poz. 387 with later amendments was in force.

<sup>8</sup> Ustawa z dnia 5 stycznia 2011 r. Kodeks wyborczy, Dz.U. 2011, Nr 21, poz. 112 with later amendments.

<sup>9</sup> Ustawa z dnia 20 czerwca 2002 r. o bezpośrednim wyborze wójta, burmistrza, prezydenta. Dz.U. Nr 113, poz. 984 with later amendments.

organisations as well as a group of 5 electors<sup>10</sup> who had collected at least 20 signatures of citizens with the right to elect were entitled to propose candidates for councillors. At least 150 signatures of electors had to be collected to register a list of candidates in a constituency.<sup>11</sup> At least 5 candidates had to be placed on a list, yet no more than twice the number of councillors elected in a particular constituency.<sup>12</sup> Both the establishment of a one-man executive commune body and the implementation of the commune head's (mayor or president of a town<sup>13</sup>) direct elections were revolutionary changes suggestive of liberating the executive body from the legislative body, i.e. the commune council as „in 2002 the political change in election of the executive body was made.”<sup>14</sup>

From then on „a collegial board, elected by the commune council has been replaced by a head of commune (mayor, president of a town)”<sup>15</sup> elected in direct elections. The entities entitled to propose candidates for commune councils, i.e. political parties and coalitions of political parties, associations and nongovernmental organisations as well as the electors, were given the right to propose candidates for a president. Candidates' councilors-registering lists obligatory in at least a half of constituencies in a particular commune constituted an additional condition as regards proposing a candidate for a mayor (president of a town). The number of committee-registered candidates for councillors could not be less than the number of councillors elected in a constituency. The most important change in the Electoral Code<sup>16</sup> was, however, the establishment of single-member constituencies in elections to all commune councils, except for cities with county rights.<sup>17</sup>

## **Commune bodies**

Since the 1990 local government reactivation there has been a dichotomic division of Polish commune bodies. Pursuant to Article 169 of the Constitution

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<sup>10</sup> Ustawa z dnia 16 lipca 1998 r., art. 64a and 64f.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, art. 100.1.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, art. 98.2.

<sup>13</sup> I will hereinafter use the name of the executive body prevailing in the analysed city i.e. President of the city of Stargard Szczeciński.

<sup>14</sup> A. Ptak, *Rywalizacja polityczna w samorządach lokalnych. Studium wybranych gmin*. Poznań–Kalisz: Wydawnictwo UAM 2011: 10.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>16</sup> Ustawa z dnia 5 stycznia 2011 r., *op.cit.*

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, art. 418.

of the Republic of Poland, regional administration units are divided into the legislative and the executive bodies: “at commune level, the commune council is the legislative and control body.”<sup>18</sup> As Jan Zimmermann remarks, „the same status has a council acting when it has its seat in the city located in the territory of a commune, as well as a city council and commune council.”<sup>19</sup> Art. 17 of the Act on Commune Self-government defines a statutory composition of a council.<sup>20</sup> In the elections in 2002, 2006, and 2010 councillors were elected in constituencies varying in size, whereas the number of seats („for a particular constituency was established according to the so-called proportional representation rule”<sup>21</sup>), the latter calculated by dividing the number of commune inhabitants by the number of councillors elected to a particular council.

The division into single-member constituencies was established by a resolution of the city council,<sup>22</sup> also under the proportional representation rule. Pursuant to Art. 16 of the Act on Commune Self-government,<sup>23</sup> the city council’s term of office lasts four years from the date of election. President of the City of Stargard Szczeciński is a single executive body. Both the legislative body and the executive body of a commune are elected in general, equal, direct and secret elections<sup>24</sup> with a democratic mandate to exercise functions entrusted to them. One undisputed fact is that it should be the task of commune bodies to cooperate in order to implement set objectives.<sup>25</sup> The literature on the subject mentions that:

after the local elections, in a significant number of communes, there was a state of stagnation between the democratically elected council and the democratically elected mayor [who] in extreme cases can even make the com-

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<sup>18</sup> J. Zimmermann, *Prawo administracyjne*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Wolters Kluwer 2012: 202.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>20</sup> Ustawa z dnia 8 marca 1990 r. o samorządzie gminnym. Dz.U. 1990, Nr 16, poz. 95 with later amendments.

<sup>21</sup> M. Drzonek (ed.) *Wybory z Gryfem w tle. Szkice o wyborach w 2006 roku na Pomorzu Zachodnim*. Szczecin: PRINT GROUP Daniel Krzanowski 2007: 10.

<sup>22</sup> Uchwała Nr XXII/255/2012 Rady Miejskiej w Stargardzie Szczecińskim z dnia 30 października 2012 r. w sprawie podziału Miasta Stargard Szczeciński na okręgi wyborcze, ustalenia ich granic i numerów oraz liczby radnych wybieranych w każdym okręgu, <http://bip.um.stargard.pl/uchwaly/2012/2012-10-30/uxxii-255.pdf>. Accessed: 27.12.2014.

<sup>23</sup> Ustawa z dnia 8 marca 1990 r., *op.cit.*

<sup>24</sup> Ustawa z dnia 5 stycznia 2011 r..., art. 369 and 471, and Ustawa z dnia 20 czerwca 2002 r..., art. 2.

<sup>25</sup> P. Chmielnicki (ed.) *Konstytucyjny system władz publicznych*. Warszawa: Prawnicze Lexis Nexis 2010: 192.

mune unable to execute its public tasks, whereas in other cases can provoke demoralizing, ambitional personal arguments.<sup>26</sup>

The lack of agreement between the council and the president can be unfavourable in terms of a commune's functioning as well as it is negatively perceived by members of the local community.

### **Characteristics of the analysed commune**

Stargard Szczeciński is the third largest city within the West Pomeranian Province. It covers an area of 4,810 ha and is inhabited by approximately 70 thousand people. Stargard Szczeciński lies on The River Ina, at a distance of 40 km away from Szczecin. The city is the seat both of the Stargard County and the Stargard Szczeciński Commune as well as of the supracommune public administration units such as the court, prosecutor's office, tax office, police, and fire department. In the current legal situation, the city council consists of 23 people.<sup>27</sup> President of the city is the executive body, an office which existed in Stargard before 1990.<sup>28</sup>

### **Election in 2002**

The local elections was held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2002. For the first time they were scheduled in two rounds, owing to a possibility of having the direct presidential election. The electoral law was a favourable factor for the political parties, however, the statutory reduction in the number of councillors (by as much as 17 thousand seats in the entire country) resulted in the sharper competition between candidates.<sup>29</sup> The local election was held one year after the parliamentary election, where a coalition of the Democratic Left Alliance-Union of Labour (SLD-UP) with the Polish People's Party (PSL) was formed. The SLD-UP coalition won the election to regional assemblies, gaining 13 out of 30 seats.

Twelve committees registered lists of candidates for the Stargard city council, including four party committees that registered their lists in all of the con-

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<sup>26</sup> B. Dolnicki, „Pozycja prawna wójta (burmistrza, prezydenta miasta) wobec rady gminy.” *Samorząd Terytorialny* No. 1–2, 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Ustawa z dnia 8 marca 1990 r..., art. 17.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, art. 26.4.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. W. Wojtasik. *Funkcje wyborów...*, *op.cit.*, p. 251.

stituencies: the Political Party Committee of the Polish National Community; the Coalition Committee of the Democratic Left Alliance-Union of Labour, with the largest number (32) of the registered candidates of a committee; the Political Party Committee of the League of Polish Families (LPR); and the Political Party Committee of the Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland. Out of the further eight committees, five registered their lists in three constituencies. The committees were as follows: the Independent Committee NIEZALEŻNI STARGARD [The Stargard Independent]; the Independent Committee Bezrobotni Pomorza [The Stargard Unemployed]; the Independent Committee Stargardzki Komitet Wyborczy Wyborców Rozwój [The Stargard Electors Committee for Development]; the Independent Committee Local-Government Platform, with members of the Civic Platform (PO) on its lists; and the Independent Committee Local-Government Right, with members of the Law and Justice (PiS) on its lists.

Out of the remaining committees, two registered their lists in two constituencies: the Independent Committee Demokracja Bezpartyjnych [The Non-Partisan Democracy] and the Independent Committee „TERAZ MY” [The “Now, Us”]. One committee – the Independent Committee „Przyszłość z pracą” [The Future with Work] registered its list in only one constituency.<sup>30</sup> As a result of the election, with the voter turnout at 31.35%, the Coalition Committee of the Democratic Left Alliance-Union of Labour won 34.84% of the vote and gained 11 seats in the city council. The Independent Committee Local-Government Platform won 18.38% of the vote and gained 5 seats. The Political Party Committee of the LPR and the Political Party Committee of the Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland won 10.40% and 13.20% of the vote respectively thus gaining 3 seats each. The Independent Committee Local-Government Right won 8.39% of the vote and gained the remaining seat.

There were 6 candidates for the city’s presidential election: Jarosław Koziółek, PiS member registered by the Independent Committee Local-Government Right; Artur Kwiatkowski, candidate of the Political Party Committee the Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland; Kazimierz Nowicki, candidate of the Coalition Committee of the Democratic Left Alliance-Union of Labour; Stanisław Orliński, candidate of the Independent Committee Stargardzki Komitet Wyborczy Wyborców Rozwój; Sławomir Pajor, registered by the Independent Committee Local-Government Right; and Bolesław Tejkowski from the Political Party Committee of the Polish National Community. None of the candidates received

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<sup>30</sup> The data obtained via the State Election Commission, [www.pkw.gov.pl](http://www.pkw.gov.pl).

the required number of votes in the first round. Kazimierz Nowicki with 35.28% of the vote and Sławomir Pajor with 24.56% of the vote moved on to the second ballot held on November 10<sup>th</sup>. Sławomir Pajor won the second ballot with an absolute majority of votes of 63.58% and defeated the candidate of the Coalition Committee of the SLD-UP who won 36.42% of the votes.

The newly elected right-wing president had to cooperate with the city council, in which representatives of the SLD-UP and the Self-Defence formed a majority coalition and elected the defeated presidential candidate for a chairman of the city council. In the same year there was a change on the position of a chairman: Kazimierz Nowicki became Member of the Board of the West Pomeranian Province.<sup>31</sup> After the ex-president<sup>32</sup> gave up his mandate, the combined forces of the LPR, Local-Government Platform, Self-Defence and the representative of Local-Government Right elected Jacek Bryła – a candidate of the same committee as the incumbent president – for city council chairman. For a short period of time an anti-leftist coalition in the city council was successfully created.

At that time, Marek Stankiewicz, candidate for president from the same list was promoted to the position of vice-president and had to give up his mandate of a councillor.<sup>33</sup> Within a month Jarosław Koziółek, representing the Local-Government Platform, joined the left wing in exchange for the position of vice-chairman of the city council.<sup>34</sup> Jacek Bryła was certainly removed and his position was taken over by councillor Adam Kisio, then a vice-chairman, from the SLD. Another vice-chairman from the Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland was replaced by a representative of the SLD.<sup>35</sup> There were no radical changes within the positions from that moment on. However, during the term of 2002–2006 the local political scene was slightly reshuffled. Together with Anna Pałaczyńska, the councillor of the Self-Defence, the three councillors in question left the Club of Councillors of the „Left Together”<sup>36</sup> and formed a separate Club of Councillors of the Democratic Forum. Another councillor of the Self-Defence, Grzegorz Chelmiński, joined the Club of Councillors of the PiS together with two councillors of the Lo-

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<sup>31</sup> Kazimierz Nowicki held this position until 2006, for the remainder of the term.

<sup>32</sup> Kazimierz Nowicki was President of Stargard in the years 1981–1989 and 1994–2002.

<sup>33</sup> <http://bip.um.stargard.pl>. Accessed: 27.12.2014.

<sup>34</sup> <http://bip.um.stargard.pl>. Accessed: 27.12.2014.

<sup>35</sup> <http://bip.um.stargard.pl>. Accessed: 27.12.2014.

<sup>36</sup> Wioleta Sawicka, Jerzy Szuber, Jerzy Kieliszek left the SLD.

cal-Government Platform.<sup>37</sup> Thereby the Club of Councillors of the Self-Defence ceased to exist.<sup>38</sup>

President Sławomir Pajor cooperated with the council with great skill, ensuring the smooth functioning of the city and developing his own power base for future elections.<sup>39</sup> In order to focus on the economic development of the city, he resigned from any significant personal changes in his immediate environment. Thereby he formed an informal power base of his closest associates on managerial positions. Moreover, working on the development strategy for the commune and on the long-term investment plan meant at the same time working on the election manifesto. The declaration of a management board of Bridgestone, issued on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2006, about choosing Stargard Szczeciński as a location for the factory was the culmination of Sławomir Pajor's first term as President. This economic success made both the Civic Platform and the Law and Justice want Sławomir Pajor to be their presidential candidate.

## **Elections in 2006**

The 2006 elections was held on November 12<sup>th</sup> in accordance with significant amendments in the the Act Electoral Law<sup>40</sup> introducing the possibility of the so-called joint lists of candidates. The idea was to allow elections participants to combine their forces before elections in order for them to participate in the distribution of seats. The possibility of creating joint lists of candidates existed only in communes with more than 20,000 inhabitants and concerned the county councils and regional assemblies elections. With the voter turnout at 45.57%, the Civic Platform won the election to the West Pomeranian Regional Assembly, gaining 12 seats. 6 committees, including 5 party committees, registered their lists of candidates in Stargard. The committees were as follows: the Political Party Committee of the League of Polish Families; the Political Party Committee of the Law and Justice; the Political Party Committee of the Civic Platform of the Republic of Poland; the Coalition Committee of the Democratic Left Alliance + Social Democracy of Poland + Democratic Party + Union of Labour

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<sup>37</sup> Wiesław Masłowski, Kazimierz Wąsaty.

<sup>38</sup> Pursuant to § 43.3 of the City Statute to establish the club, it is required to have at least 3 councillors.

<sup>39</sup> The Local-Government Platform representing power base for the president in the election in 2002 split into the PO and the PiS.

<sup>40</sup> Ustawa z dnia 6 września 2006 roku o zmianie ustawy – Ordynacja wyborcza do rad gmin, rad powiatów i sejmików województw. Dz.U. 2006, Nr 159, poz. 1127.



(SLD+SDPL+PD+UP) Left and Democrats (LiD); the Political Party Committee of the Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland; and the Independent Committee Economic Forum. There were no joint lists in the election to the city council. The voter turnout totalled 36.07% which was lower by 9% than the voter turnout in the elections to the regional assembly. Two committees failed to cross the electoral threshold: the Political Party Committee of the Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland (despite the largest number of registered candidates) and the Independent Committee Economic Forum. Despite its participation in the distribution of seats, the Political Party Committee of LPR did not gain any seat. Three political party committees did gain seats: the Political Party Committee of the Civic Platform of the Republic of Poland gained 9 seats with 33.75% of the vote,<sup>41</sup> whereas the Political Party Committee of the Law and Justice and the Coalition Committee of SLD+SDPL+PD+UP Left and Democrats gained 7 seats each with respectively 27.43% and 24.81% of the vote.

Each of the committees mentioned hereinabove had also their candidates for President of the City. Sławomir Pajor, terminating his term, was a candidate of the Law and Justice. He refused the Civic Platform of the Republic of Poland which proposed Marek Stankiewicz, the incumbent vice-president. The candidate of SLD+SDPL+PD+UP Left and Democrats was Krzysztof Ciach, District Governor in two terms. The candidates of the Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland and the League of Polish Families were respectively: Kamil Borowicz and Wojciech Kwiatkowski. Wiesław Jaworski represented the Economic Forum. Three of the candidates received little support.<sup>42</sup> The candidate of the coalition committee K. Ciach received 3,651 votes. Sławomir Pajor and Marek Stankiewicz moved on to the second ballot. They won more than 30% of the vote each. The second ballot was held on November 26th. Sławomir Pajor won 55.51% of the vote and received 8,538 votes. Marek Stankiewicz won 44.49% of the vote and received 6,843 votes. The voter turnout totalled 27.58% and was lower than during the first round.

The reelected Sławomir Pajor could count on the support of his own power base, i.e. the Law and Justice. The Civic Platform was the second grouping that joined the governing coalition in the city council in Stargard. Robert Zdobyłak from the Civic Platform was elected Chairman of the City Council.<sup>43</sup> Jerzy Szuber, also from the Civic Platform, and Wiesław Masłowski from the Law and

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<sup>41</sup> Three members of the Democratic Forum gained seats then: Jerzy Szuber, Wioleta Sawicka and Jan Kalinowski.

<sup>42</sup> K. Borowicz, Wojciech Kwiatkowski and Wiesław Jaworski won 3–4% of the vote.

<sup>43</sup> <http://bip.um.stargard.pl>. Accessed: 2.01.2015.

Justice were appointed vice-chairmen. There was no division of powers within the executive body, Marek Stankiewicz was replaced by official Rafał Zajęc. The other vice-president had held this position since 1990 and was not at risk of dismissal. Nevertheless, the PO-PiS coalition did not function for the entire term. In the mid-term the Civic Platform began the election campaign before the next local election, a move which forced the incumbent president to take a decisive action. In 2008 the Civic Movement „Polska XXI”<sup>44</sup> was established. The response for that socio-political initiative was the Local-Government Association Stargard XXI established in 2009 whose president was Sławomir Pajor; Wioletta Sawicka and Jan Kalinowski, councillors of the PO, were vice-presidents; and Stanisław Bartniczak, councillor of the SLD – a treasurer.<sup>45</sup> These new initiatives led also to modifications within the city council. Sebastian Sz wajlik, until then the member of the SDPL, was appointed chairman of the city council.<sup>46</sup> Jerzy Szuber was replaced by his old club colleague, Jan Kalinowski. The left-wing councillors willing to share political power gladly took advantage of the changes. Five councillors of the SLD+SDPL+PD+UP Left and Democrats joined Sławomir Pajor’s Association, whereas three councillors left the Civic Platform.

### Local elections for the 6th term

The local election in 2010 was held on November 21th, seven month after the Smolensk Crash and five months after the presidential election with Bronisław Komorowski elected. The Civil Platform’s victory in the elections to the regional assembly was unquestioned. The voter turnout totalled 45.95%. In Stargard Szczeciński<sup>47</sup> five election committees registered lists with 190 candidates. There was a very small number of independent committees, as many as four were political party committees. The Political Party Committee of the Law and Justice re-

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<sup>44</sup> The organisation was established in 2008 by local XXI associations operating in Poland, whose activities were related to the socio-political initiative centred around the portal „Polska XXI” initiated by former MP of the Civic Platform Jan Rokita, President of Wrocław Rafał Dutkiewicz, former MP of the Law and Justice Kazimierz M. Ujazdowski, political scientist and journalist Rafał Matyja.

<sup>45</sup> [www.stargard21.pl](http://www.stargard21.pl). Accessed: 2.01.2015.

<sup>46</sup> M. Rumiński, „Rewolucyjne zmiany w Radzie Miejskiej Stargardu,” <http://radio-szczecin.pl/1,48393rewolucyjne-zmiany-w-radzie-miejskiej-stargardu>. Accessed: 2.01.2015.

<sup>47</sup> Joanna Kot covered the subject of the 2010 Stargard local elections. “Apolityczność prezydenta Stargardu Szczecińskiego źródłem sukcesu rozwojowego miasta? Analiza rządów Sławomira Pajora po wyborach w 2010 r.” *Partyjnicy czy bezpartyjni? Szkice o zdobywaniu władzy lokalnej*. Ed. M. Drzonek. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego 2014.

gistered the largest number of candidates for councillors. The Independent Committee of Sławomir Pajor – Stargard XXI was the new entity participating for the first time in the electoral competition on the Stargard political scene. The voter turnout totalled 37.83%. As a result of the elections, four committees shared seats. The Civic Platform received the biggest support, winning 31.49% of the vote and gaining nine seats, the SLD won 15.90% of the vote and gained three seats, the PiS won 18.83% of the vote and gained four seats. The association of Sławomir Pajor won 27.34% of the vote and seven seats. Four committees proposed candidates for President. The Law and Justice gave up its representative and supported Sławomir Pajor<sup>48</sup>. Marcin Badowski, both the candidate of the Civic Platform and the president of the county party structures was the most serious rival for the applying for re-election president.<sup>49</sup>

Despite the presence of the “dirty campaign<sup>50</sup>” elements, Sławomir Pajor won undisputably in the first round with 61.76% of the vote. Marcin Badowski from the Political Party Committee of the PO won only 25.08% of the vote. The unethical campaign against the president made the PO the biggest loser of the election regardless of its gaining the largest number of seats. Sławomir Pajor formed the coalition of the SLD and PiS which lasted throughout the entire term. The chairman of the city council was Wiesław Masłowski from the Law and Justice;<sup>51</sup> the remaining commission functions were also shared between these two clubs. This rather frustrating situation led to the disintegration of the PO club which three councillors left. They joined the local government association established by District Governor Waldemar Gil<sup>52</sup> forming a separate Club of Councillors Stargard County League (LPS).

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<sup>48</sup> ZEK. „PiS się posypało i nie podejmie walki o prezydenturę w Stargardzie,” [www.gs24.pl](http://www.gs24.pl). Accessed: 4.01.2014.

<sup>49</sup> „Prawyborcy z Głosem: Pewniak Pajor zdeklasowany przez Badowskiego. Zobaczcie kto wygrywa w Stargardzie,” [www.gs24.pl](http://www.gs24.pl). Accessed: 4.01.2014.

<sup>50</sup> The then MP of the Civic Platform, Sławomir Preiss, notified the police of a possible crime by S. Pajor who was supposed to have hit a girl on a pedestrian crossing and left the scene of an accident. M. Synowiecki, „Pajor: to element brudnej kampanii,” <http://radioszczecin.pl>. Accessed: 4.01.2014.

<sup>51</sup> <http://bip.um.stargard.pl>. Accessed: 4.01.2014.

<sup>52</sup> The District Governor in Stargard established the Local-Government Association Stargard County League, existing to this day in Stargard.

## Local elections in 2014

The local elections were held in accordance with the new formula, in single-member constituencies on November 16<sup>th</sup>, six months after the elections to the European Parliament. The Civic Platform received the biggest support, with 37.49% of the vote in the 13th constituency comprising the Provinces of Lubuskie and West Pomerania. Nevertheless, the Platform did not have any serious candidate who could successfully compete with the incumbent president, terminating his third term in Stargard Szczeciński. The local party authorities resolved to conclude the agreement with Sławomir Pajor resulting in the establishment of the joint Independent Committee of Sławomir Pajor and Zofia Ławrynowicz,<sup>53</sup> with Sławomir Pajor as a presidential candidate. In addition to the mentioned committee, the remaining ten registered their candidates for a city council. Three party committees: the Political Party Committee of the PSL (which registered its candidates in only 5 out of 23 constituencies), the Political Party Committee of the Law and Justice, and the Independent Committee SLD Left Together. There were seven independent committees, of which only one registered its candidates in all of the constituencies. Two committees registered their candidates in only one constituency. Out of 11 election committees, as many as 7 shared seats.

As a result of the elections to the city council, six people from the Committee of Sławomir Pajor and Zofia Ławrynowicz gained seats, with two of them being representatives of the PO and four – of the Stargard XXI,<sup>54</sup> whereas the Law and Justice and the Left Together gained three seats each. The non-party Independent Committee of Marcin Przepióra – LPS gained six seats, where one person did not join the club and remained the councillor with no club affiliation. The remaining five councillors were representatives of the Independent Committee Nasz Stargard and the Independent Committee Stargard w Moim Sercu and one councillor represented his own committee.<sup>55</sup> 5 clubs of councillors were established in the city council. The councillors from the Independent Committee Nasz Stargard established a club and accepted councillor Sereżyński. The characteristic of the city council elected in 2014 is a large number of councillors (14) elected for the first time.

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<sup>53</sup> Zofia Ławrynowicz is a councillor of the PO and president of the PO in the Stargard County.

<sup>54</sup> The Local-Government Association Stargard XXI being a power base for Sławomir Pajor. It registered its candidates for the county council.

<sup>55</sup> Wojciech Sereżyński was a candidate of the Independent Committee Moje Osiedle Wojciecha Sereżyńskiego on the Pyrzyckie housing estate.

There were five candidates for President: Edward Kormański from the Independent Committee Wspólnie dla Społeczeństwa [The “All for the Society”], Sławomir Pajor nominated by the Independent Committee of Sławomir Pajor and Zofia Ławrynowicz, Marcin Przepióra, candidate of the Non-party Independent Committee of Marcin Przepióra – Stargard County League, Ireneusz Rogowski, candidate of the Political Party Committee PiS and Amadou Sy from the Independent Committee Left Together. The first round of the elections failed to bring forth a winner, the president Sławomir Pajor applying for the fourth term lacked a few hundred votes. The second ballot was held on November 30th and brought victory to the president, undefeated for 12 years. The Independent Committee of Sławomir Pajor and Zofia Ławrynowicz, the Political Party Committee of the PiS and the Independent Committee Left Together shared the power. Rafał Zajac and Andrzej Korzeb, both from the association “Stargard XXI,” remained vice-presidents. Amadou Sy from the SLD, a recent competitor of the president, was vice-chairman of the city council.

## **Conclusions**

Analysing the above, it can be concluded that the relationship model adopted both by the legislative and the executive body is efficient. The environment where the two bodies are located concerns a relatively small territory. The close connection between the authorities and the territory exerts a positive influence on their exercised functions. The incumbent president was able to expand his power base and organisational background, partly by eliminating some political parties from the political scene, taking councillors who had been previously candidates of the political party committees, knowing that a candidate’s affiliation to a particular election committee was not the only guideline for the local community in Stargard and the essential criterion for the choice was the candidate himself. Moreover, these persons did not have any experience as opposition activists.<sup>56</sup>

One of the purposes of this study has been attempting to approach the question of a cohabitation model enabling the efficient management of the commune that the local government in Stargard managed to develop.

In Stargard Szczeciński a peculiar political structure has been created attributing the executive body’s authority and power to the effectiveness of an experienced president for whom the poorly prepared councillors did not pro-

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<sup>56</sup> It refers to the the SLD and the SDPL councillors.

vide a counterbalance; a reason why they can be perceived as an advisory body subordinated to the presidential leadership and hence, to the efficient management responsible for governing the city. The main centre of local politics has been the executive body and its immediate environment, the two able to use experienced activists and local authorities for the purposes of local politics, e.g. involve them in the city administration work. Such a state of affairs has resulted from decaying party politics at the local level, this being due to the lack of political disputes, favourable for building the party identification<sup>57</sup> and because of pursuing the political career by party leaders. Moreover, the weakness of local political parties has been demonstrated via unsuccessfully recruiting staff for political needs, due to a party's image acting as a deterrent.

Stargard has always been a city where party groupings dominates in the local government, and the incumbent president builds his power base in the city council which, in turn, provides him with a stable support. This mechanism has been based on the broad political consensus strongly conditioned by the local context. S. Pajor considered proper relations with the parties particularly important, regardless of the relatively high degree of autonomy of the local politics, because the authorities of the regional assembly<sup>58</sup> decided on the distribution of European funds for investments. The political groupings resolved to work together by forming coalitions and participating in the city council's power-sharing. The position-sharing in the city council and its commissions has been the usual element of agreements tantamount to the support of the executive body – the president.

The position-sharing of the city's vice-presidents has not been an element of coalition forming.<sup>59</sup> The elections' results of the direct power base for the president determined the way to secure the majority in the council and, consequently, had an impact on the relations between these bodies.

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<sup>57</sup> When it comes to making decisions on strictly local affairs, ideological disputes rarely take place.

<sup>58</sup> The Marshal Office is dominated by political parties.

<sup>59</sup> Rafał Zajac and Andrzej Korzeb have been vice-presidents invariably since 2006.

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### Summary

This article aims at analysing the post-election political structure in Stargard Szczeciński in the years 2002–2014. The author presents the theoretical considerations on the subject together with the results of Stargard local government elections in the first part of the paper. She particularly emphasises the existing political configurations as well as analyses the intertwining of the political and administrative spheres at the local government level.

**Keywords:** election, local election, president of a town, city council, local government



**STRUKTURA POLITYCZNA WŁADZY LOKALNEJ  
W STARGARDZIE SZCZECIŃSKIM  
W LATACH 2002–2014**

**Streszczenie**

Przedmiotem artykułu jest analiza powyborczej struktury politycznej w Stargardzie Szczecińskim w latach 2002–2014. Autorka, obok rozważań teoretycznych w pierwszej części, przedstawia wyniki wyborów do organów stargardzkiego samorządu. Akcentuje układ polityczny oraz rozpatruje przenikanie się sfer polityki i administracji na poziomie samorządu gminnego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wybory, wybory samorządowe, prezydent miasta, rada miejska, władza lokalna.

