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Locality and emotions in the small town's politics

Abstract: The article discusses the formation of urban citizenship in a small town. It focuses on a group of urban activists in Puszczykowo (Poland) and shows how rooting in a local community influences the engagement in public activity and causes a highly emotional relationship between local politicians. On the other hand, the analyzed case study also shows that the local community activists are strongly internally differentiated, forming groups with different views and motivations. With the changing contexts and circumstances the local politicians may shift between them smoothly.

Key words: small town, urban identity, local communities, local politics, political anthropology, urban anthropology, urban activists, urban citizenship

Introduction

Despite significant interest among social researchers in the increasing activity in social and political life of local society, the topic of small towns is often being withdrew in Polish research discourse. Due to the fact that vast majority of urban population, stay in small towns make this topic immensely important¹. This issue has been acknowledged during The Second Urban Movements Congress (II Kongres Ruchów Miejskich) that took place in Łódź, 2012. One of the presented subject areas was entitled: *Small towns – big issues* (pl. Małe miasta – duże problemy). One of the main questions brought by organisers dealt with the discussion whether small towns 'problems are so different from the big cities' issues and what exactly the difference is². While doing my research during election campaign in Puszczykowo – a small town located nearby the capital city of Wielkopolska region. My first goal was to discover what is the main characteristics of small town's politics, and afterwards to have a look at how politicians and activists perceive each other. Before discussing my results, and answering the above stated questions, I would like to present some theoretical background of the study.

Neighbour relations and studying small towns

In general, a city is a collection of people populating specific fragment of geographical space. People functioning in city structures tend to create bonds and influences –

¹ According to 2012 data. Available on-line: <http://www.portalsamorzadowy.pl/komunikacja-spoleczna/polskie-miasta-duze-srednie-i-male-zobacz-jakie-sa-naprawde,61807,55422.html> (last accessed 11 December 2016).

² Available on-line: <http://kongresruchowmiejskich.pl/o-nas/ii-kongres-ruchow-miejskich/> (last accessed 11 December 2016).

either neighbour-related, political, professional or ideological. Therefore, it becomes a space of human interactions, processes and social phenomena. The space of a city is being shaped by influences of various intended actions taking place in either certain legal/political or social context (Pobłocki, Wudarski, Merfler 2013: 104; 163-164). Certainly, characteristic of small towns in many ways differs from this of enormous metropolis. According to French poet Jean Cocteau: "The difference between big and small city is that the first one offers you more to see and the second more to hear" (Krywult 2012:11). Small cities are more likely to present more complex bonds and influences. Moreover, relations between citizens are prone to be less anonymous and in many cases they occur to be much more than complicated and complex. As a result, it strongly influences local politics and shapes local activists' identity.

Hence, the character of studying smaller cities differs from studying big agglomerations in various aspects. What looms large in a town is the local community. By this I mean Odoj's concept of "a complex type of a relatively integrated socio-spacial structure that marks with a certain degree of residents' mental unity with the inhabited area that, moreover, is of a cultural value (Odoj 2007: 11). The closeness of relations in local communities leads to the situation where community members develop strong group- and spacial-identity that are entrenched in social interactions and mutual dependence. Having a closer look at local government policy of small cities requires paying scrupulous attention to the importance of a local community. It is due to the fact that such a community would have an influence on establishing the identity of local activists. It would happen through strong identity with the inhabited area and social control twice as effective as in big cities. One can not be under a delusion that communities of smaller cities are homogenous and deprived of internal division. Hence this is why Grzegorz Odoj emphasizes the fact that local community might be defined as "a complex type of relatively integrated group- and special-structure" (Odoj 2007:11).

Such complex structure of city social relations was described by Ulf Hannerz in his *Exploring the City: Inquiries Toward an Urban Anthropology* (2006). City understood as a gathering of people creates a social space as happens every time they interact. In the above mentioned social space and during the everyday life of functioning there units one might distinguish a sequence of various situations (according to Hannerz's concepts). Those various situations that occur include units that perform certain roles and are led by different motives and goals (means and awareness). According to Hannerz, they concern family life, work, leisure and freetime, relation with neighbours and even the most superficial roles that include functioning within traffic flow. In order to fulfil given roles, units are prone to take various actions that lead to concrete goals. Certainly, because of different motifs behind actions, conflicts or cooperation between units might be caused by possible interest in the same or different means (Hannerz 2006: 118-119).

Similar situation happens in case of local urban politics. Being inhabitants of a given city, politicians and local activists take certain roles in their relation with neighbour and family and professional life. Relations that are created this way might be very complex, meaning that one can get involved in various types of relationships with the same persons in different context. Basically that is why Hannerz was writing about blurring boundaries between types of roles that are taken by inhabitants of cities (Hannerz 2006:120). Moreover, I strongly believe that it is crucial to emphasize that the complexity of those relations causes that individual inhabitants being politicians or activists stop being independent units. As a result they become under various influences, hence they can influence other inhabitants of a city. Great diversity of such mutual connections might be a pose to the differentiation of the social city structure. On the other hand, such relationships support its internal integrity.

According to Hannerz, what characterizes a city the most accurately is its diversity. Thus, Hannerz does not understand this concept only as a ethnic or Professional diversity. Han-

nerz's concept present diversity as a result of relatively bigger choice of available roles. It is due to the fact that normally inhabitants are able to participate in manifold situations. City social life is marked with Hannerz's concept of availability. It refers to the possibility of creating relations even if there was no possibility of its existence never before. In other words, units that were anonymous to each other (not knowing their origin, characteristics etc., not being able to connect faces with names) are suddenly prone to create a deep and even intimate bond. For example they create a bond while joining one electoral committee or political organisation (Hannerz 2006: 115-136). If it was for me, I would add that those relations that are created do not require durability. A good example of this concept might be research done by Ruth Finnegan, Publisher in her *The Hidden Musicians* (1989).

Her study was focused on music groups located in one of the British cities (rock bands, folk bands, classical music bands etc.) Musicians were commuting to the places of their performances or rehearsals alone. The situation was quite different for brass bands, where she observed some signs of bonds, whereas the rest of groups was functioning more on a neighbour relations. What became the things that bonded them was their rehearsal. They were not prone to communicate with each other for other reasons but at the same time they functioned in different social communities. What is more, those groups were changing, none of them were steady and lasting, their members were leaving groups and new ones were joining.

Amateur musicians, as well as the member of local communities and political organisations, are bonded with practice, not as much as with permanent, complex relations. Each of them follows its own path, dealing with various situations that are different in terms of level of intimacy, continuity, predictability and symbolism (Barnard, Spencer 2008: 95).

It might be worthy to define neighbourhood while discussing relations in cities. This is how Hannerz explains it:

Neighbours are people that live very close to each other (or work) – it is the minimum. Moreover, normally they are aware of their own repeating presence in public space, and especially of their relationship. Probably they are signing this awareness by expressing their emotions during meetings which certainly make their relation original (Hannerz 2006: 300).

Moreover, Hannerz emphasizes that some people are more involved in neighbour relations and some are less. Those being involved are often believed to take the role of 'a star' or 'a special neighbour' (Hannerz 2006:306). He also mentions the neighbour-worker relation that is being created after the situation where because of the done job one may become a neighbour even though he does not normally inhabit this specific area. Being a city councilman is also perceived as a type of a job and what is more, running for election to the council itself transforms the inhabitant into a public person and as a result in this context his or her neighbourhood is being extended.

Neighbour bonds may be created by relating to territorial division or at least to electoral districts where units are encouraged to take group action (Hannerz 2006: 300). In my opinion, a good example here may be groups that are created in order to touch upon a certain issue in the city – here I mean genuine interest, it can relate to a concrete area. Such situation took place in case of Local Land Use Plan of the Moniuszki Street in Puszczykówko and it is important to highlight that the case is still on the go. Originally the plan was to build a market there, then a mall and finally a small housing estates. Nearby residents were gathering to stand against putting Local Land Use Plan into life and they tried to stop such investments in the future. The case has been going on for many years. There are many people involved in it; councilman of various electoral districts and other people including the chairman of Puszczykovo city council.

Politics and antagonism

I have already managed to discuss what a city is, and shown the difficulties of studying the specifics of small and big cities. In order to consider all concept related to politics I would use two theoretical concepts. First of them was introduced by Chantal Mouffe in her work *Politics and the Political* (2007) and the second one in *Politics and the Anger. Emotions in Movements and in Power* (2007) by David Ost. Both of them would be crucial in studying how exactly local politics is managed in the context of relations between activists. The main field of interest of Chantal Mouffe's work is the revocation of presumption that liberal democracy might be rational. In order to present her ideas, firstly Mouffe distinguishes between 'politics' (empirical dimension, which means different ways of managing politics, analysed by political scientists) and 'the Political' (theoretical dimension, meaning the way society is presented).

[...] by the Political I understand a form of antagonism that is a basis for every human community; by 'politics' I mean the totality of actions and institutions that during a conflict caused by the Political create order that allows people to coexist (Mouffe 2007: 151).

Therefore, Mouffe recons the Political as a concept that comes along with adversarial character of a society and politics is a tool to keep society in control. She tries to undermine the 'rational' character of politics which is to be experienced when contributing unrestrained public debate, which by means of logical exchange of views is to be leading to a certain consensus (Mouffe 2007: 151-158).

According to Chantal Mouffe, a society is some sort of a entity where manifold perspectives and value clash. Some of them being not able to coexist and that is why the whole concept of pluralists society, and its members rationally and logically creating such systems of values and consensus, appears to be too simplified. Therefore, stating that rationalism and individualism are basics of liberal society might be considered incorrect. Chantal Mouffe relate to Carl Smith and his idea of friend/enemy opposition being a footing for the Political. Moreover, consensus being a basis for liberal perceiving of the Political presents some adversarial features. Due to the fact that each consensus excludes some groups of interest, there is no possibility of achieving a fully rational consensus that would not be eliminated by someone else. That might be a basis for the 'we' and 'they' division. In contrary to above mentioned Carl Smith, Mouffe notes that 'we' and 'they' relation does not have to based on hostile action. In some cases, there are certain groups of a mutual interest, views, goals and values that on the basis of what shape their identity. Nevertheless, such a relation may reveal an adversarial nature depending on the context. Such situation happens in case of one of the groups violates the identity of another one. Having the friend/enemy or we/they division being based on common identity concept (which happens in different political party or electoral committees and local activists), it has to be emphasized that such identities do not require lasting and stable nature. What indicates if a specific unit belongs to the 'we' or 'they' group, is again context and interest (of a unit or a group). A unit is able to belong to the 'we' category and suddenly join (or be moved to by someone else) the 'they' category (Mouffe 2007: 154; 156). Mouffe also studies another important element that influences our identification with a certain group, which are 'passions' – here meaning totality of emotional and affective elements (Mouffe 2007: 158). It is due to the fact that none of human beings is deprived of such and as a result logical presumptions and dull, emotionless debate leading to a consensus is basically impossible.

Now, we're smoothly moving to the concepts presented in David Ost's article, dealing with relations between emotions, power and policy. Usually, emotions are accredited with

citizens, authorities are to be dealing with them, however authority is deprived of emotions and is based on cold and calculating behaviour. The author comes up with the idea, that in reality authority is full of emotions, especially anger. This anger is perceived not only as emotion that is displayed during objection to the authority but also it is a tool to get the upper hand and maintaining a stable politic position. Rage might also be perceived as a result of economic inequalities and may be used as a tool to win endorsement. It might be accomplished by creating the 'we'/'they' division in the electoral district; emotional bond between voters and certain political group is required. It is stated that: "it requires creating emotional bond with voters, creating some sort of identification «of us» in contrary to «them», coming from other parties, which is accomplished in the easiest way by making «them» an object of resentment" (Ost 2007: 165). Therefore, anger that comes along with antagonism being specified by Ost, and the antagonism itself (defined by Mouffe) might be perceived as "a general concept for «ordinary» policy and shapes politics in general" (Ost 2007: 165). Both, foregoing authorities and organisation struggling for the power, are forced to use emotions in order to gain endorsement of voters.

[Political parties] have to challenge emotions, in order to encourage people to vote, and social movements in order to encourage people to protests. [...] However, holding power leads to impersonality, on the other hand fighting for power requires constant mobilisation in order to maintain particular electoral identity. (Ost 2007: 169).

Why do we need rage and anger? Most importantly, to make us stand out of the others by standing against or for some issue. In order to win endorsement, voters have to identify with a party or political organisation. That is why defining one's beliefs reckons on assigning meanings: "meaning is what forestalls the interest and it is parties' obligation to convey meaning to the people in order to enable them identifying their own interest while basing on given meanings" (Ost 2007:171). Ost believes that while contemplating politics in theory, one has to take a conflict as a starting point that leads to mobilisation of emotions within political action and not redefining their roles to some sort of protests. He separates himself from Marxim, being, just as Mouffe, more keen on Carl Schmitt's theory of distinguishing between enemy and friend which might be perceived as a basis for politics. He related this opposition to international situation, but still I agree with David Ost and his theory that such a division might be also observed in internal policy of a country, including local-government's policy and local politics. Another interesting point was made by Carl Schmitt. He considered "a political Another not a «private» enemy but «public», meaning that an enemy is not perceived as «a private opponent that we hate or feel antipathy»" (Ost 2007: 172). I agree with Schmitt's theory, but on the other hand it is crucial to point out, that considering local level where political relations clash with neighbour relations, becoming a part of political world comes along with emotions influencing private relations as well.

Case study of local activists activity in Puszczykowo

The basis for studying local activists activity was field study conducted by me in Puszczykowo, located nearby Poznań. Puszczykowo is famous for its unusual history. Its establishment is dated for XIX and XX century when some smaller farm villages become one during a so called summer movement, that was very popular by then. This regions was inhabited then not only by Polish but also German societies. They were building villas that were supposed to serve a recreational purpose. It is, therefore, an example of early suburbanisation of a nearby Poznań. Puszczykowo tender to be visited by nearly thirty thousand

tourists from Poznań every weekend. Tourists were commuting by trans or ferries cruising on Warta River. The circumstances of establishing the city are also visible in its specific urban and architectonic layout. Most importantly, Puszczykowo was not ought to be having a market place as it was supposed to be a recreational, summer city. A couple of years ago the situation has changed as the market square was built during 2001 and 2013. It has led to a heated debate among citizens but also some specialists such as historians and urban planners. A couple of years ago Puszczykowo was given the name of 'garden city' and some part of local activists became the part of organising committee of Polish Garden Cities Congress and Open Gardens Festival which also has evoked some controversies. I presented Puszczykowo as a smaller city mainly because of two reasons. First of all, the number of citizens is relatively small (less than 10.000 people). Secondly, the circumstances of establishing the city also have exorbitant influence on my judgement. Here I mean the purpose of its establishing which is satisfying the touristic needs of the inhabitants of Poznań. Therefore, this is the reason of why Puszczykowo was supposed to be a smaller city, surrounded by breathtaking views of unspoiled nature.

What I find interesting is also the political structure of Puszczykowo. It seems that taking an active part in political life is a indispensable element of everyday life of many citizens. Even in PRL period citizens used to protest against opening an opencast mine of brown coal which was supposed to be located lands appurtenant to Puszczykowo (recently such idea became again a topic of debates³). In order to fight such plans, Society of Puszczykowo and Wielkopolski National Park Lovers was established and one of its aims was to organise protests in cooperation of local authorities⁴. After rapid changes in system in 1989 managing the city was even more influenced by its citizens. Different authorities that changed through the years were enacting their own development strategies. As a result of interpreting the history of the city and its urban area, their actions revealed their ideas about the city and its functioning. What is interesting, modern policy of Puszczykowo does not officially include committees associated with national political parties. Existing committees are functioning directly in context of local urban politics of Puszczykowo. The situation was very similar during the campaign in 2014. After profound analysis, many people air their opinion and try to bring various committees and politicians under different political orientations being influenced by various parties.

I have conducted my field study on the cup of 2014 and 2015. The most intensive part of the study concerned the period of election campaign and the beginning of the seventh term of the city council. In my study I was using methods that are appropriate for qualitative study, meaning detailed individual interview and ethnological observation. I have conducted nineteen interviews that were based on a questionnaire. Respondents consisted of representatives of three leading electoral committees, at the same time representing different local associations and organisations. For example, people who took part in my research were: the major of Puszczykowo, local councilmen and candidates for the position of the major and councillors that did not managed to win elections – I named them as 'local activists'. Participants were aged from 25 to 65 and they had higher or technical education. Another research method I used was ethnological observation, which took place during two political meetings organised by 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo' (Let's Refersh Puszczykowo) and 'Nasze

³ See: *Nie dla kopalni węgla brunatnego w Puszczykowie* [Say no to coal mine in Puszczykowo] http://www.gloswielkopolski.pl/artykul/9191249_nie-dla-kopalni-węgla-brunatnego-w-puszczykowie-zbieraja-podpisy-pod-protestem,id,t.html – last accessed 13 January 2016).

⁴ It has to be noted that in the 30's of the 20th century, the Stowarzyszenie Miłośników Puszczykowa, Puszczykówka i Okolicy (The Association of Puszczykowo, Puszczykówka and Nearby Lovers) was established.

Miasto' (Our City) Committees. I have also managed to participate in some of the city council's sessions, meetings of Committee of Development and social consultations (relating to planning the land use of Municipal Sport and Recreation Centre). Those meetings were attended by local councillors, the Major, candidates for city council and majors and citizens (including people being involved in political campaign, citizens involved in land use planning such as building Municipal Sport and Recreation Centre, enacting Local Land Use Plans, redevelopment of railway lines of PKP, etc.) During the electoral campaign I also managed to observe the visual side of the city by photographing election posters. Moreover, I analysed texts being posted on Internet forums, blogs and the press.

During the run-up to an elections, three main electoral committees were formed⁵: 'Razem dla Puszczykowa' (Together for Puszczykowo), 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo', and 'Nasze Miasto'. The above mentioned committees got involved in actions that are called 'direct campaign' – four meetings were organised (two by 'Nasze Miasto', two by 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo'), big electoral tent of 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo' was set up in the market square. Candidates of all committees used the 'face to face' method by visiting people in their house and encouraging them to vote. Some of the candidates decided on displaying posters and banners that promoted their persons and distributing leaflets advertising their individual election program.

Due to the symbolic interactionism, human's identity is a result of its mentality and social structure one is living in (Ardener 1991: 21-24; Mead 2005: 759-768). The identity is a mixture of individual motivations, features of character of the unit that influence action being taken and various social relations (Hannerz 2006: 118; 231-232). I was able to observe the same situation during the local government campaign in Puszczykowo in local politics and the identity of local activists. Seemingly all the committees were presenting consistent election programme – by this I mean specific postulates, plans for changes etc. However, before documenting those election programmes (in order to create an aim of taken action and developing collective identity), one had to piece personnel together. Some of the candidates were forced to find a way to be in the centre of attention of committees' chairmen. The reason for it were taken actions (including goals and motivations) and contacts and neighbour relations, that evoked various political organisations (and their leaders) to notice them and identify them with their own visions of the city.

The importance of locality in Urban citizenship

There two elements that dominate respondents' statements in their interview: references to personal experiences relating to the land use and numerous existing associations and organisations wishing to influence it. These were Stowarzyszenie Przyjaciół Puszczykowa (The Association of Puszczykowo's Lovers), Stowarzyszenie Ochrony Krajobrazu i Charakteru Puszczykowa i Mosiny (The Association of Landscape and Puszczykowo and Mosina character Conservation), Towarzystwo Miłośników Puszczykowa i WPN (The Association of Puszczykowo and WPN Lovers) and Puszczykowskie Towarzystwo Sportowe (Sport Association of Puszczykowo). Many associations and their environments are supported by newspapers. For example, 'Kurier Puszczykowski' (The Puszczykowo Courier) and 'Zielone Puszczykowo' (Green Puszczykowo) blog that were shut down right after the elections. These days, their ideas are revived by those websites: 'Forum Puszczykowo', 'Aktywne Puszczykowo' (Up and Doing Puszczykowo) and 'Blog dla Puszczykowa' (Blog for Pu-

⁵ Additionally, there were two independent candidates – none of them made it to the city council.

szczykowo). Before the elections, some of the candidates were socially active by supporting charity actions, protests, sport and cultural animations. Some of them also supported such events during their school years. In many cases it turned out that their school activity was their first experience with various forms of self-government politics.

Community involvement in local urban politics was highly motivated by such values as: local patriotism, appreciation of their homelands and acting for public well-being. Those values remind us of citizenship and civil society concepts.

A citizen is a kind of socio-political construct whose function is to engage people into political systems. Therefore, citizenship is supposed to be neutral tool that allows people to make advantage of their rights. However, it is crucial to remember that it also implies some obligations (Nawratek 2008: 19).

He also notices that “the basic elements of modern citizenship are individual rights rather than obligations” (Nawratek 2008: 22). Leader of Puszczykowo’s committees related to that idea by discussing problematic candidates choice and how the reluctance to get involved in local urban politics of citizens has led to significant committee reshuffle.

In recent years, despite the above mentioned ‘crisis of citizenship’⁶, local community became more active and willing to affect the place they inhabit. Such local movements are becoming more popular and noticed in big Polish cities – such as Poznań, Warsaw and Łódź. Moreover, such actions may take place not only in big but also smaller cities or in the countries (Majer 2015: 163). Naturally the scale and character of encountered issues in smaller and big cities are completely different, however, being an open spaces, the exchange of ideas and ways of practicing ‘citizenship’ takes place. Sociologist Andrzej Majer notices that the main aim of local movements is to disable activists and ordinary citizens from influencing authorities and satisfying their own needs (Majer 2015: 164). As a result he emphasizes that:

Movements and local organisations are of political character, even though they are not ideological. They are established to express the identity of citizens, mainly because it is believed by many that current politics is against solving city problems and pro being interested in politicians own interest. [...] Local citizenships in other words means a different type of local identity – local authorities and cooperation of citizens with institutions regulating everyday issues and making their life easier (Majer 2015: 166).

During local government elections in Puszczykowo there were three main groups that really mattered. Each of them focused on different strategy. ‘Razem dla Puszczykowo’ was led by re-electing mayor Andrzej Balcerek. Mainly 2010-2014 councillors were a part of the committee. Adopted strategy was based on neutral actions – leaflets presented past accomplishments of the previous term (investment, pro-cultural actions, integrating local community etc.) What is more, when being interviewed by me, candidates mentioned their accomplishments and achievements in behalf of local community (including the development of sports, education and culture). Also they reminded that being a part of authorities helped them take actions and support social interest. The committee was not holding election meeting and only a part of candidates for councilmen has decided on face-to-face encouraging

⁶ The concept of citizenship might be understood in terms of liberal or republic perspective. According to Michał Garapich: “what is most important is the subjectivity of units, their self-development, freedom and the precedence of their community privileges. Secondly it focuses on obligations aimed at political, cultural and moral community” (Grapich 2009: 43). The above mentioned crisis of citizenship is based on eliminating moral obligations towards the community, and keeping only right and privileges of units.

people to vote for them. Many posters and banners of 'Razem dla Puszczykowa' were displayed but it was done relatively late. The general message of the electoral programme was to continue the premises of the previous term. The committee was basing on the electorate gained in the previous elections. On the other hand, candidates attending elections for the first time admitted that instead of conducting a traditional campaign they used already existing social structures.

Actions of another two committees were very interesting. They shared similar political programmes, however two different committees were established and led by two charismatic leader – Krzysztof J. Kamiński ('Odświeżmy Puszczykowo') and Gniewka Niedbała ('Nasze Miasto'). The programme of 'Nasze Miasto' was strongly influenced by urban trends of big cities – building public bookstands, establishing public city bikes, holding social consultations in the city space etc⁷. In order to make a distinction between them and 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo' they accused them of excessive conservatism when it comes to local space and excluding 'new citizens' of Puszczykowo from debates.

Odświeżmy Puszczykowo' committee used completely different tactics. They demanded voting right for local issues, pointed out the mistakes of previous authorities and seduced people into protests (collecting signatures against building shopping mall in the Moniuszki Street, organising protest against enacting new Study of Conditioning and Land Use Trends). They managed to achieve that through publishing ideas both in their political programme and in 'Zielone Puszczykowo' blog and 'Kurier Puszczykowski' newspaper. During interviews, they emphasized that the foregoing authorities limit the influence of citizens on making important decisions, ignore their opinions and proposals and behave in arrogant manner. They also pointed out flawed use of public funds and poor access to information about future actions and methods of authorities. 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo' committee might be also perceived as an interesting example of bonding already existing civil traditions and new trends of civic movements. As I have already pointed out, the committee was established by people associated with Stowarzyszenie Przyjaciół Puszczykowa (Est. In 2000), 'Kurier Puszczykowski' newspaper that they published and people related to „Zielone Puszczykowo” blog. The founder of the blog Marcin Muth and one of the chief editors of the paper Maciej Krzyżański, were related to civic movement of Poznań – 'My Poznaniacy'. Moreover, Marcin Muth is the author of a short article discussing the issues of land use of Puszczykowo, which was published in *City on demand* (2014: 221-226). In his work, he rephrased the concept of 'the right to the city'⁸ that was used by civic movements into 'the right to suburb' (Muth 2014: 222).

Therefore, it might be seen that new civic movement trend is also present in local urban politics of Puszczykowo. In case of 'Nasze Miasto' committee it came forward by offered solutions to local issues (here I mean cumbersome social consultations and limiting motor traffic), and in case of 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo' committee by ways of taken actions and means used. I believe that what distinguishes local citizenship in Puszczykowo is a strong sense of indigenoussness of local activists. This was why respondents admitted that they take an active part in city life mainly because it is their civil duty and a responsibility as they believe in 'local patriotism'. Moreover, they called their city a 'little homeland'. The last above mentioned concept was used by Andrzej Majer to describe his idea of 'personal city' (2011: 20). He wishes to present that people do not perceive a city as an objective element of

⁷ It was all about pitching electoral tents and building booths where talks and debates with citizens could have been held, likewise in Poznan in recent years.

⁸ This concept was popularised by David Harvey in his *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (2012).

reality but they identify with it (or its fragment – for example with a specific district or street) through their own memories, experience, knowledge and by putting an interpretation on it by the range of personal social contacts (2015: 14-15). He explains that:

Little homeland might be analysed in different contexts, however they remain an important part of identity. It is how the closest environment is defined, and the most popular. Little homeland might be constructed of landscapes, nature, people, local traditions and culture, signs of local patriotism – all that causes that we feel identified with a certain place on earth. Such little homeland might be considered as a house, street, region, district or a whole city (Majer 2011: 21).

Locality and citizenship being viewed in such a manner really mattered for developing identity of local activists in Puszczykowo. It was seen not only by above mentioned promises of acting for the common good but also by specific actions: protests, publishing articles in local newspapers, taking charity actions, bringing help to excluded social groups, animating local community and active performance in committee's meeting and city council sessions. It was also presented in the way of choosing candidates in particular committees. In such case, a crucial role of personal contacts within society and Hennerz's neighbour relations was visible. Therefore, it has to be seen that social activism being participated by units and groups of citizens, in order to solve issues, is of a local nature especially after realising current issues with community functioning. In such context, group actions of integrating participants become a crucial factor in developing local identity. Moreover, the dynamic nature of such actions and changing circumstances result in identity becoming a "constant identification process" (Odoj 2007: 145-146). Important element in this dynamic process of identity development of local activists is the part and parcel of politics – emotions. I would discuss this concept below.

The manifestation of emotions in local urban politics

During conducting my field study, often I came across the manifestation of emotions in local policy of Puszczykowo. Generally, conflicts (between committees and often personal ones) were clearly visible on electoral Internet forum. The idea of the forum was that it ought to be a place of airing opinions, professional debates and exchanging ideas but in reality it became a fighting arena of mutual acts of antagonism, accusing of secret coalitions and unfair intentions of candidates. There were many accusations made of candidates being connected to various parties. It is worth noting that during 'official' campaign, the majority of candidates dissented from any connections to political parties. One of the interviewees stated that they were supposed to be affective as they limit one's actions and freedom in making decisions. However, such connections were traced in 'unofficial' campaign discourse and it became an element of struggle between followers of certain committees.

A wave of emotions was caused by various rumours of blackmailing and destroying electoral posters. According to the forum, one of the members of honorary committee supporting 'Nasze Miasto' organisation suffered from severe stress and required hospitalisation after becoming a target of political pressure. This incident was also the topic of electoral meeting of 'Nasze Miasto' and one of my interviews. Another seedbed for a conflict occurred to be relating to the policy of former mayor of Puszczykowo – Małgorzata Ornoch-Tabędzka (who was also related to Stowarzyszenie Przyjaciół Puszczykowa). Moreover, the opponents focused on posting their beliefs on mayor Andrzej Balcerek and his deputy acting against the city. Additionally, habitation of the deputy mayor became the topic of discussion, as he does not live in Puszczykowo but in small, nearby town Dopiewo. As a result, the

connections to Dopiewo parish were the trigger for emotional posts appearing on the forum.

Despite the Internet, allowing anonymous airing opinions, also posters became a mean of political fight. Additionally, iconosphere of Puszczykowo became a political battlefield. This phenomenon was named 'posteroclasm' (pl. 'plakatoburstwo') by Marcin Szporko (Szporko: 1997: 134). Posters are being destroyed, pictures of candidates are ridiculed and caricatured – by drawing glasses, moustache, demonical and animalistic features or even plucking out the eyes from the posters. According to Szporko: "the death of perception might be more or less a sign of the death of a prototype" (Szporko 1997:140). Therefore, those actions might be considered symbolic that aim at humiliating and destroying the candidate. Moreover, they are the unofficial emancipation of a political struggle. On the other hand, such actions might be counted as the expression of fun and sense of humour. During the campaign in Puszczykowo, the destruction of political posters also took place. It evoked strong reaction from all committees, resulting in posting denouncing declarations on their websites and Facebook fanpages. Posters have been devastated, sealed with other posters and remade. It is crucial to remember that during the campaign, the Halloween celebration took place and, therefore, it is suspected that some of the posters might have been destroyed by the local young folk.

Emotions and personal conflicts were also expressed in human relations. They were indispensable part of determining the composition of the commissions. Conflicts and internal breakups became the main reason of the division of many electoral alliances. To a lesser extent all of the committees were influenced. During my interviews I managed to gather a lot of data including negative opinions about my interviewee's colleagues from their committees. The most frequent objections were regarding the lack of substantive knowledge, social incompetence that are prerequisites for being a good councillor and for having good communication with the community. Personal opinions were viewed. For example Mrs. X being a "tabby", Mr. Y being a "jerk"; the candidate for the mayor is not a right man for the position because all of his decisions were made by his deputy; Mr. Z cheated on his committee as he wanted to "make a deal" with other committees⁹. One of the interviewees stated that he used to be blackmailed by one of the candidates – he was threatened to take responsibility for his past political actions in the council. However, the interviewee did not feel threatened at all knowing that the leader of this committee used to steal car radios in his youth. Another participant of my study admitted that right after announcing election results, her committee's members had an argument and all of the 'dirt' emerged.

In fact, right after the end of electoral campaign, the support environments of three leading committees were divided. For example, the above mentioned 'Zielone Puszczykowo' blog being a part of 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo' committee was shut down and some of its co-authors continued their press work in other places¹⁰. After elections all the candidates that managed to win the position of a councillor admitted that earlier division into specific committees does not really matter to them. Indeed, in the first weeks of new term, some prominent changes were visible. I have managed to observe that first meetings of city council, where both chairmen and their deputies were chosen, were very emotional. It resulted from the need of each committee to gain the best strategic position in the city council.

The most emotional and vivid meeting are session of particular committees of the city council. During such session, many important issues, such as various resolution, Local Land

⁹ All of the quotes come from the notes taken during conducting interview with participants.

¹⁰ Which are contrary to each other. See: *Pomówienia i insynuacje* [Accusations and insinuations] (<http://forum-puszczykowo.pl/p-omowienia-i-insynuacje-macieja-krzyzanskigo/> – last accessed 15 April 2016).

Use Plans, investment, distribution of funds etc. are discussed. According to two candidates of 'Razem dla Puszczykowa', the biggest problem is a group of overly active citizens that share interesting solutions for many problems. Even though, they are too emotional to convey their ideas and to hold a successful dialogue. One of the participants of my study stated that: "the way they try to present their ideas is unattractive and they setting themselves up as lunatics"¹¹. The tension that comes along with discussions and conflicts during those political meeting is a huge emotional burden. Two participants admitted that it happened to them, to walk out of a meeting and start crying as they were literary choked with negative emotions. Also, they said that one has to really control oneself to stop blowing up during a meeting.

It might be stated that other forms of emotions are presented in official and unofficial discourse. Officially, anger caused by problems become a trigger to gathering electorate that is crucial to win the election (Ost 2007: 165, 171). This kind of anger was exemplified by political meetings. In the unofficial discourse, the anger was aimed more personally, at the specific persons which might have been observed on Internet forum and in the city space. Suspicions, conflicts and to some degree randomness in choosing candidates for committees resulted in breakup of various environments supporting them, after they have lost their chance to win. Participants of my study were fully aware of the presence of such an intense emotions in actions related to local policy. During the campaign, anger loomed large, as it was evoked by the need to distinguish between 'we' and 'they', 'friend' and 'enemy'. Also, it was noticed that such emotions are caused by the hard effort being put in elections and willingness to create as good image of a candidate as possible and winning the endorsement¹². However, they emphasizes that some of the involved people (both candidates and proponents of committees) are not capable of separating political and private life.

The concepts of 'friend'-'enemy' and 'we'-'they' described by Carl Schmitt and Chantal Mouffe were easily observed in Puszczykowo's local policy. Indeed, decisions (for example completing electoral committee) were taken under the influence of emotions, past conflicts or even anger – and not always being a result of political calculations. Moreover, as was claimed by Mouffe and Schmitt, opposition is not lasting and they exist to serve a specific goal, and later on they might appear and disappear – changes that took place in Puszczykowo's policy are one of the effect of such (Mouffe 2007: 154; 156). It happened right after announcing election results when two of the main committees ('Nasze Miasto' and 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo') fallen apart. According to all respondents, affiliation to specific political groups does not matter, after one enters city council. On the other hand, those who did not manager to become a part of the city council, perceive the win of other candidates as betrayal and qualified their former friends to the category of 'enemy' from the opposing political movement.

An extremely interesting example of using anger, emotions and divisions were actions of 'Nasze Miasto' committee against 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo'. I have already mentioned that both programmes of those groups were very similar. However, 'Nasze Miasto' committee was established later and did not manager to win as much endorsement as 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo' committee did, as they were supported by Stowarzyszenie Przyjaciół Puszczykowa that existed for nearly sixteen years. It evoked the need of 'Nasze Miasto' candidates to identify themselves with their ideology, which resulted in accusing 'Odświeżmy Puszczykowo' of disabling new citizens from being a part of authorities, ignoring their needs and problems and forgetting about the development of the city.

¹¹ The quote comes from the interview's transcription.

¹² It was clearly visible on the electoral leaflets, on which candidates were presenting their own biographies, and during my interviews, especially those that were conducted during electoral campaign.

It might be seen that indigenoussness has a crucial influence on the local policy of Puszczykowo. This city is rather small, and many families live here for decades. All of it results in creating complex social relations as memories and family histories influence them. In this context, Carl Schmidt's statement that "political Other is an enemy in «public» and not in «private» sense, [...] an enemy is not a «private opponent that we hate or feel antipathy»" (Ost 2007: 172) does not always find its reflection in reality. The example of Puszczykowo presents that political activity becomes very emotional even in personal life, as political relations often clash with neighbour or family relations.

Conclusion

The topic of local government policy and local activism occurred to mirror the way of functioning local communities that are strongly linked to their inhabited space and neighbour relations at the same time, perfectly presenting their internal diversity. The above analysis presented two concepts introduced by Ulf Hannerz. Firstly, the diversity of a city that presents wide range of social roles and means of their fulfilling. According to Hannerz main feature of a city is availability, which means that relations that have been impossible to exist, suddenly appear. It used to happen that new candidates for various associations did not followed already existing relations but the need to act caused by some already existing issue. This could have been a protest against building a shopping mall, extension to the Road or a controversial topic of Local Land Use Plans. Secondly, it turned out that already existing social connections have a huge influence on politics as they help to create interpersonal relations. Those social connections occurred exorbitantly important when it comes to forming political groups in Puszczykowo, as they helped to guarantee complacency and trust towards people from the political group.

However, one needs to remember, that relations that formed between candidates, being the basis for their group identity, were also based on the sense of certain unity of ideas (that candidates were identifying with or already were identified with). Most importantly the relations were based on collaborative effort, that aimed at winning the election. Those relations were reformulated right after announcing the election results. As a result, some of the candidates of the same committees faced their colleagues and even started cooperating with their former opponents, as their past division was forgotten. Ruth Finnegan described a very similar phenomenon when analysing groups of British musicians – when they had a mutual goal they were cooperating, however after looping that goal they started to abandon their past relation, creating completely new ones. The character of a smaller town where citizens establish a local community that often occurs complex and the emotional influence of politics resulted in Puszczykowo becoming more "spectacular".

Locality became crucial in establishing identity of local activists and the existence of 'urban citizenship'. Both, the involvement of citizens in solving local problems and their interest in those issues resulting in creating:

The social microcosm and its element of everyday contacts is not Any more of general topice but of local issues. As a result of such contacts, a certain specific method of common understanding is being created by referring to the associations of symbolic sphere made by citizens of specified village or town (Wódz 1991: 48).

This is because the concern about actions against the city were observed during election meeting, my interview and on the Internet forum. Also, this might be the reason for the big variety of associations, organisations, newspapers, blogs and websites concerning Puszczykowo, as they became a mean to influence the city functioning and a way to solve various problems.

During the establishing of local activists identity in Puszczykowo, the concept of the Political defined by Chantal Mouffe and David Ost was clearly visible. Under the influence of this concept, the society will always be a battlefield for different perspectives and values. In the rhetoric of all committees, the division 'we'/'they' and 'friend'/'enemy' were present. I believe that during the campaign it happened because committees wanted to stand alone and win as many votes as possible. Conflicts were also started by different motivations and goals of individual units and whole groups of activists. All of this has led to baseless accusations made against some of the candidates and committees. They were believed to ignore what is the best for the city, excessive conservatism, allowing investment that threaten the city, populism and incorrect enacting of local spatial law. All of these above mentioned elements present the ideas of Hannerz and his concept that the entity of a city (including politics of a smaller city) might be compared to a kaleidoscope, that has a "countless elements that keep forming new configurations" (Hannerz 2006: 26).

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