On partisanship and non-partisanship in local democracy

The author presents a conceptualisation of non-partisanship as a phenomenon of local democracy. He refers to theories of political parties and sketches a theoretical frame within which the phenomenon of non-partisanship in local authorities in medium-sized and large cities in Poland may be considered. He suggests a definition of a local party, as well a classification of entities running in competition against the local branches of political parties in local authority elections. Further into the article, the author dwells on four causes underlying the occurrence of the phenomenon of non-partisanship in local authorities, related to: 1) the weakness of political parties, 2) the autonomisation of local politics with regard to national politics, 3) specific features of electoral law, 4) local political culture, including the particular Polish specifics of anti-party attitudes as a cultural feature. The author puts forward the thesis that non-partisanship in a local democracy may be institutionalised.